

EDG 6931

Virtual School

Philosophy and Pedagogy



The mission of the College of Education is to prepare exemplary practitioners and scholars; to generate, use and disseminate knowledge about teaching, learning and human development; and to collaborate with others to solve critical educational and human problems in a diverse global community.

Syllabus

Course Number:	EDG 6931
Course Title:	Virtual School Philosophy and Pedagogy
Number of Credit Hours:	3
Required or Elective:	Elective
Term:	Summer 2008
Day and Time:	Online
Course web site:	http://online.education.ufl.edu/
Professor:	Dr. Cathy Cavanaugh
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Instructor web site:	http://education.ufl.edu/faculty/cathycavanaugh/

Required text:

Cavanaugh & Blomeyer, 2007. *What works in K-12 online learning*. Eugene, OR: International Society for Technology in Education. (This book may be ordered from www.iste.org or www.amazon.com)

Moore, G. & Anderson, T. 2003. *Handbook of distance education, 1st ed.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. (Selected chapters.) Online at UF library:
<http://uf.catalog.fcla.edu/permalink.jsp?20UF003081330>

Moore, G. & Anderson, T. 2007. *Handbook of distance education, 2nd ed.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. (Selected chapters provided in Moodle.)

Course Description

This course provides educators with experience and skill in the online teaching approaches known to be effective for K-12 learning. In this course, students examine prevalent North American models of virtual schooling, their underlying philosophies, and their implications for teaching. Historical background, documented effective practice, recent research and literature, as well as current and future trends in K-12 online learning will form the foundation for course activities. Designed for K-12 educators and leaders, as well as professional developers and instructional designers, the course focuses on the interpretation and application of theory, research and standards-based effective practice to the analysis and design of distance education experiences for elementary and secondary learners. Skills and knowledge acquired in the course will contribute to distance and classroom teaching capabilities.

Topics include:

- Theoretical and philosophical bases for current virtual school models
- Critical issues in pedagogy for K-12 distance learning
- Design and facilitation of K-12 online instruction
- Application of design and learning standards for a range of teaching and learning tools

Course Goals

This course is about K-12 distance education, specifically virtual schooling in North America. The history of virtual schooling is closely related to the evolution of interactive technologies, but the study of virtual schooling practice encompasses much more than technology. It focuses primarily on teaching, learning and all the pedagogical issues -- as well as leadership and support issues-- that are associated with teaching and learning of a special kind. In short, this is a course about *education of elementary and secondary students*, not technology. We will be discussing such questions as:

- What is virtual schooling?
- How has distance education evolved since the mid-1990s?
- What forms has virtual schooling taken in different settings?
- What unique needs does a K-12 online learner have and how can a teacher meet those needs?

This course is paced, which means that there is an established start and end date, and it is a cohort based course, meaning you are one of a group that will proceed through the course at a similar pace. One of the benefits of this is that the course is designed to give you opportunity to have regular interaction with other students who are reading the same subject as you. Course resources include a textbook written specially to integrate with the course, and online readings. Additionally the course web site contains a study guide together with supplementary resources as well as access to the discussion board and the course email system.

The aims of this course are:

- to provide you with an overview of current practice, development tools, and delivery technology in today's virtual schools
- to provide awareness of the context of current and emerging practice
- to provide an introduction to research and theory based on the literature of K-12 online education
- to develop skills of learning at a distance.

This course is project-oriented: development efforts culminate in an outline for a K-12 content-focused instructional module. However, the goal of the course is not to develop products per se, but to provide opportunities to practice disciplined and collaborative processes for inquiring about K-12 online learning problems and opportunities, and for inquiring about the value of alternative strategies for addressing these problems and opportunities.

Diversity Considerations and Accommodations

The course includes methods for designing instruction to meet the needs of all students. *Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.*

Standards Addressed

*National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers (NETS-T),
International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE). 2008 draft edition.*

[http://www.iste.org/Content/NavigationMenu/NETS/ForTeachers/2008Standards/NETS for Teachers 2008.htm](http://www.iste.org/Content/NavigationMenu/NETS/ForTeachers/2008Standards/NETS%20for%20Teachers%202008.htm)

1. Facilitate and Inspire Student Learning and Creativity, parts a-d
2. Design Digital-Age Learning Experiences and Assessments, parts a-d

3. Model Digital-Age Work and Learning, parts a-d
4. Promote Digital Citizenship and Responsibility, parts a-d
5. Engage in Professional Growth and Leadership, parts a-d

*National Standards for Quality Online Teaching,
North American Council for Online Learning (NACOL), 2008 edition*

<http://www.nacol.org/nationalstandards/index.php#teaching>

- B. The teacher has the prerequisite technology skills to teach online.
- C. The teacher plans, designs and incorporates strategies to encourage active learning, interaction, participation and collaboration in the online environment.
- E. The teacher models, guides and encourages legal, ethical, safe and healthy behavior related to technology use.
- F. The teacher has experienced online learning from the perspective of a student.
- G. The teacher understands and is responsive to students with special needs in the online classroom.
- I. The teacher develops and delivers assessments, projects, and assignments that meet standards-based learning goals and assesses learning progress by measuring student achievement of learning goals.
- L. The teacher collaborates with colleagues.
- M. The teacher arranges media and content to help students and teachers transfer knowledge most effectively in the online environment.

About Online Learning

This online course is time and place-independent and incorporates a degree of individual choice in assignments and projects, to capitalize on the diversity of experience and prior knowledge of the students; but is not entirely self-paced. Online discussions will be most productive if everyone completes the reading as assigned. Deadlines will be imposed to keep us on track, but sufficient time should be available to complete the assignments in your own time frame. If you find yourself in a situation where you will not be able to meet a deadline for any reason (i.e.. business trip, I was in the hospital, the dog ate my computer, etc.) it is your responsibility to let me know, preferably prior to the due date! Accommodations can be made if I am notified of the situation. Credit is deducted for each week your assignments are late, but if one is turned in on time and you receive a grade lower than you would like, you are encourage to resubmit the work (along with the feedback you received) with improvements to increase your score. I will allow one resubmission of each assignment but late work cannot be resubmitted. Discussions take place quickly and resubmission of discussion will not be feasible, so please take this into consideration.

Although this course does not meet face-to-face for 6 hours weekly over the 8-week course term, it still has a requirement for hours of instruction. For this reason, you should expect to spend the 6 hours you would normally spend in class plus the time you would normally spend studying on your own for a graduate level course on reading and participation in the discussions or synchronous sessions. This is just a guideline that relates to the more familiar example of face-to-face courses. You may need more or less time depending on your learning style and experience. You will also need time to accomplish the assignments and reflect on what you are learning. Please be sure you plan the time necessary for you to be successful in this course.

Course Expectations and Grading Procedures

The course is 8 weeks in length and is segmented into modules as follows:

1. *Introduction to virtual schooling.* Affordances and constraints of K-12 online education. Benefits and challenges for students, educators, and other stakeholders. History of and rationale for the development of virtual schools.
2. *Virtual school models and philosophies.* Current research and policy in virtual schooling. Trends in virtual schooling. Learning theory in the virtual course.
3. *The role of learning communities.* Facilitation of synchronous and asynchronous collaboration. Tools for interaction and social networking.
4. *Learning how to learn.* Facilitating discussion and questioning. Engaging learners through development of 21st Century Skills and Information Literacy.
5. *Digital creativity.* Authentic learning through creation of digital content. Media libraries and digital creativity tools.
6. *Assessment of online learning.* Formative assessment strategies embedded in assignments and activities. Project-based and portfolio assessment. Self- and peer-assessment. Summative assessment for mastery learning.
7. *Responsible learning.* Legal and ethical issues. Accessible teaching. Mentoring struggling students.
8. *Synthesis.* Project sharing and peer review. Plans for further development, implementation and dissemination of learning.

The course is organized into modules. The beginning of each module is devoted to reading the texts; then the main focus is participation in an online discussion group. Reading continues as you prepare a written assignment. In general, you should plan on spending 6-10 hours per week on the course.

GRADING PROCEDURES

Course grades are based on activities, projects, and assignments. Assignments will be placed in Moodle (<http://online.education.ufl.edu>).

Professional Conduct is necessary to earn an excellent or good grade.
All written work must be turned in electronically.

Activity / Requirement	Point Value
Assignments (3 @ 15 points each)	45
Discussion participation (4 @ 10 points each)	40
Development project	15
Total for course	100

All assignments have a 10% penalty per week for lateness, with no work accepted two weeks after the due date.

A	90-100	Excellent performance
B	80-89	Good performance
C	70-79	Fair performance

D 60-69 Poor performance

Assignment details and rubrics:**1. Professional conduct**

Read assignments and engage in a positive way in all class discussions and activities. On-time participation is required. Know and follow university policy regarding academic honesty. In your online work, follow standards of netiquette: be accountable for what you send, acknowledge online sources you reference.

2. Assignments

Assignment descriptions are located in Moodle (<http://online.education.ufl.edu>), and are based on the tasks in each course module. Take notes, keep a journal, or use a personal wiki to track your thoughts and reactions as you travel through the readings and tasks.

Assignment rubric: (15 points for each assignment report)

Value	Meets/exceeds all criteria: 3	Meets some criteria: 1-2	Meets few/no criteria: 0
Professional appearance and structure	Formatted according to instructions, free of language errors	Improper formatting, language errors	Requirement absent
Clear description	Described in writer's words	Incomplete or erroneous description	Requirement absent
Quality of discussion	Relation of task and questions to writer is clear	Superficial or inappropriate discussion	Requirement absent
Appropriate references	Full citations, properly formatted, with web links	Incomplete citations	Requirement absent
Completeness	Addressed all aspects of the assignment	Incomplete information	Requirement absent

3. Discussion participation

Discussions will use both asynchronous discussion board tools (located in Moodle) and synchronous discussion tools (located in Moodle and online). Discussions will involve class members and occasional outside guests and experts.

Active participation is a critical component of building an effective online learning community. You are expected to be a regular and active participant in online discussions. This means you will post original material and thoughts as well as reply to posts submitted by others. Reading assignments will be made from a variety of online resources to prepare you to engage in the discussion. The quality of online asynchronous discussion will be driven by the extent of your preparation. The purpose of the discussions is to promote a learning community and encourage **critical thinking** skills in order to assimilate the information that is being provided. The discussion questions have been specifically designed to encourage critical thinking and group discussion, so hopefully you will be encouraged to play an integral role in this process.

Discussion topics will be open as assignments are posted. Start early to allow everyone to complete the assigned postings and responses before they are due. Each topic will be officially closed following the due date, so that we can move on. This process leaves a few days for everyone to finish discussing the topic and keeps us from continually having to revisit old discussions. We have a lot of material to cover in this course in a short amount of time, so it will be important that we move through the material at a certain pace. You will not be responsible for reading postings in old topics once the topic has closed; however, if the conversation is still of interest to you, it can be continued.

Assignment rubric: (10 points for each discussion)

Value	Meets/exceeds all criteria: 5	Meets some criteria: 3	Meets few/no criteria: 0
Quality of comments	Responses address the initial question; additional information to advance the discussion	Superficial or inappropriate discussion	Requirement absent
Level of participation	Responses address other comments in constructive ways	Responses address only the initial question or do not contribute constructively	Requirement absent

4. Development project

You will design and plan a lesson or module for online delivery. It could be a lesson for a specific content topic or standard or the lesson could address a more general learning strategy such as note-taking or creating a portfolio. Think of the project as a proposal to a teacher team or coach who will decide whether the project will be supported for development. Projects will be evaluated on the depth of analysis and the application of knowledge you should have gained in this course. **This is not a life's work**, so keep it concise. The document, synthesizing the three assignments and added project requirements, should be somewhere in the area of 10-20 pages double-spaced. You will also be asked to share, through a document or link to online materials in the project sharing and feedback forum, the content and context of your project to the rest of the class in order to get feedback on your ideas.

Assignment rubric:

Plan	Points	Score
Audience description: social background, experiential background, developmental level, motivation, knowledge level, and learning style	1	
Content outline for lesson, with framework or context of course	2	
List of lesson goals and objectives	2	
Description of activities for teaching and learning	3	
List of materials and media with rationale for selection	3	
Synopsis of assessment experiences	1	
References to learning theory or educational literature justifying decisions	2	
Professional, clear and logically organized	1	
	15	

Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Module readings, plus online reading	Assignment due <i>before Midnight on the last day of the module</i>
1	June 16-22	Introduction to virtual schooling	CB: 1 & 5	Discussion 1
2	June 23-29	Virtual school models and philosophies	CB: 2 & 11 HDE 07: 13 & 36	Assignment 1
3	June 30-July 6	The role of learning communities	HDE 07: 7	<i>Project planning</i>
4	July 7-13	Learning how to learn	CB: 9	Discussion2
5	July 14-20	Digital creativity	HDE 07: 27	Assignment 2
6	July 21-27	Assessment of online learning		Discussion 3
7	July 28-August 3	Responsible learning	CB: 8 HDE 07: 16	Assignment 3
8	August 4-9	Synthesis		Development project Discussion 4

Readings:

CB = Cavanaugh & Blomeyer chapters

HDE 03 = Handbook of Distance Education, 2003 edition, chapters

HDE 07 = Handbook of Distance Education, 2007 edition, chapters

Moodle course: <http://online.education.ufl.edu>

INSTRUCTOR POLICIES

- Academic integrity: Follow the guidelines of the Student Honor Code located at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/procedures/studenthonorcode.php>
- Assignment and quality of work: Completion of all assignments is expected during the week indicated. Assignments submitted after the due date are considered late, and a 10% reduction in grade will occur for each class day the assignment is late.

Bibliography/Webliography

My online lists:

<http://del.icio.us/ccavanaugh/k-12oll>

<http://www.twine.com/twine/virtual-schools>

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- Zucker, A., & Kozma, R. (2003). *The Virtual High School: Teaching generation V*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.