

WaveLength

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The DDL Student's Key to Insider Information

Welcome to DDL's newsletter, *WaveLength*; our way to keep students informed about what is happening at SwVCC—particularly in distance learning. Ongoing topics include Blackboard tips, website of the month, technology geared articles and related DDL items. Since this newsletter is created exclusively for SwVCC distance learning students, we want suggestions, comments and story ideas. Please let us know what would be helpful or interesting by emailing thoughts to:

lanna.lumpkins@sw.edu.

The purpose of our department is to provide the same support to DDL students that traditional on-campus students have including:

- Communicating with professors and other departments when a student cannot
- Providing basic information about registration and payment
- Helping add or drop courses
- Providing technical support and guidelines

- Assisting with Blackboard or other online problems

DDL is located on the SwVCC Richlands campus on second floor of Russell Hall. Staff can be reached 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday – Friday. DDL can be reached by phone @ 276.964.7279, fax @ 276.964.7686 or by email, sylvia.dye@sw.edu.



My Course Listing in Bb

"Why do all of my courses not show up in Blackboard?" This seems to be a common question for students in this digital age in reference to Blackboard, the student learning management system. Most courses have some Blackboard component such as class syllabus, posting of grades, homework assignments or other related items. However, not every course utilizes Blackboard. Often at the beginning of a semester, there may be a slight delay in course activation. If questions arise regarding the amount of Blackboard's usage, please contact the instructor for more information.

For additional assistance with Blackboard accounts, please contact the Blackboard Administrator at

stacy.harris@sw.edu.



Questions provide the key to unlocking our unlimited potential.
—Anthony Robbins

Learn to P.I.P.

According to students, some of the most important factors for success in distance learning courses include:

- Good time management skills
- Asking questions when in doubt
- Balancing personal, work and academic life

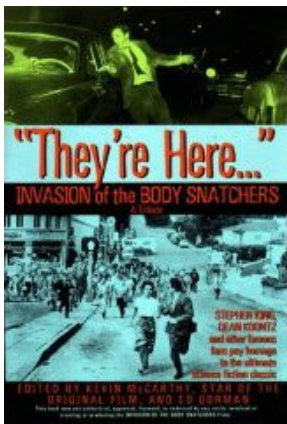
Learning to apply these three principles can greatly increase a student's ability to handle the stress and the unpredictable curves life can throw. The bottom line is that a student will get back whatever he/she puts into a class, so make sure to plan, inquire and prioritize, (also known as P.I.P.).

Special points of interest:

- Technology
- Blackboard
- Distance Learning
- DDL, Inside & Out



Visit <http://picasa.google.com/> for a free download.



Website of the Month

Now managing, editing and sharing pictures on a computer is a snap thanks to a new freebie software download from Google called **Picasa**.

By using Picasa, photos move easily from a camera to a computer. Each time Picasa is opened, it automatically locates all pictures and sorts them into albums organized by dates and

folder names.

With Picasa,, basic image fixes such as redevye, contrast, color and enhancement are easy. Captions can be created that are attached to the images and if the picture is not the perfect angle, Picasa even zooms, pans and tilts. Photo sharing is easy and collections can even be password protected. There is

even a function called "instant picture chat for sharing while chatting.

For more information or the freebie download, visit <http://picasa.google.com/>.

To submit a website feature suggestion, please contact lanna.lumpkins@sw.edu.

Breaking the Chalk: Invasion of the Podcasters

By Ken Fairbanks

Every time I hear the word iPod, I think of the 1956 science fiction movie "Invasion of the Body Snatchers." You remember the one: where aliens invade earth in plant-like pods and assume the identities of their human caretakers. It was a classic.

Now, fast forward 50 years and we are experiencing a real life invasion of "pods." Of course, I'm speaking of Apple's iPod and all the other mp3 players that are quickly becoming an extension of who we are, how we are perceived and through which we are entertained and informed. The very word iPod and podcasting have quickly become a part of the everyday lexicon used by young and old.

For those of you who may not own an mp3 player... remember back to the 1980's (current students may need to refer to their history textbook) and the introduction of Sony's Walkman. The "Walkman" and its many imitators was a wonder of technology that allowed us to carry our music with us everywhere. The same attraction holds true for all the mp3 players on the market today. They are small, light-weight and ready-to-go. Just download programming from the Internet or your favorite

CDs and take it with you. Mp3 players or media players are miniature hard-drives capable of storing hours of audio and photos (and now, even video) for your listening and viewing pleasure.

Just like many other advances in technology, media players have driven the need for the creation of specialized content. In the case of mp3 players, this content has taken the form of "podcasts." Podcasts are RSS feeds featuring audio and video files that can be pushed from websites to people's media players through the routine synchronization of their devices. Podcasts have exploded in popularity in recent months with most of the shows you listen to on the radio or view on television offering podcast versions of their content.

Distance & Distributed Learning at Southwest is also riding the podcasting wave with the development of an iPod enabled sociology class. We are one of the first community colleges in the VCCS to develop an iPod enabled course. The class resembles our other online sociology sections with one exception: The lectures are all available as podcasts for download on a student's mp3 player. Links to the podcasts are made available through

Blackboard and are enabled using the proven technology of Apple's iTunes. DDL is currently testing the format and plans to promote the course for spring and summer registration.

Distance & Distributed Learning is working on other applications that utilize podcasting technology. The department recently recorded video of a lecture by author Sharyn McCrumb. DDL will be releasing the lecture as both an audio and video podcast for students and faculty. The simplicity and widespread adoption of mp3 and other media players makes this technology very appealing for education. For our students, the application of the technology in education represents an unprecedented level of flexibility. Podcasts will allow students to listen or view lectures when and where they want. Distance & Distributed Learning is also developing a training class for faculty interested in creating podcast material of their own. So, keep on the lookout for those pod people... they may be knocking on your door next!

For more information on podcast offerings at SwVCC, contact Ken Fairbanks at ken.fairbanks@sw.edu.