

**SPECIAL  
POINTS OF  
INTEREST:**

- **Technology**
- **Blackboard**
- **Electronic Classrooms**
- **Teaching Techniques**
- **Delivery Facilitation**

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## What's Better Than a Good MERLOT?

Just as with any fine wine, Merlot just seems to get better with age. However the MERLOT referred to in this case is not a beverage of choice but a tool of the trade; educational trade that is. MERLOT, the Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching, is a growing resource for faculty and students alike.

MERLOT is free and is one of the fastest growing online based educational resources available. It houses different types of materials that can be used in various course settings. Links and descriptions are provided for thousands of learning materials. After materials are submitted to MERLOT, each resource is then peer reviewed making it easier to select quality material quickly. MERLOT organizes its items by discipline for easy access.

For faculty and staff, it can save time and frustration by not "re-inventing the wheel." MERLOT also promotes collaboration between colleagues

to help get the most from the resource. Users can create their own personal collection of materials for use personally and in teaching.

So, how did this wonderful, tasteful MERLOT originate?

Established in 1997, MERLOT

was modeled after a National Science Foundation project for building shared knowledge bases of learning materials and was supported by the California State University System Center for Distance Learning (CSU-CDL). By 1998 MERLOT as part of the CSU-CDL was identified as one of six best practices centers in North America. California was joined by North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Georgia systems to form an informal consortium representing almost one hundred campuses serving over 900,000 students and over 47,000 faculty. The initiative grew to expand the collection of digital learning material to include peer reviews and also added student learning assignments. By July, 2000, twenty-three (23) systems and institu-

tions of higher education had become Institutional Partners of MERLOT. After ten years, MERLOT continues to serve the current and future academic technology needs of faculty, students, staff, and institutions internationally... and remains free of cost for the end user. (Excerpted from "MERLOT Tasting Room" at [www.MERLOT.org](http://www.MERLOT.org).)

Membership is easy. Visit [www.MERLOT.org](http://www.MERLOT.org) and click on the "Membership" link. Enter the requested information (first & last name, email address, organization, etc.) and submit. A password and directions will be emailed to the address submitted. It's that easy! Now, go and enjoy the MERLOT.

Note: The VCCS is one of 23 partnering institutions.



This will be the last issue of DLT until the beginning of the fall semester. Please continue to send ideas for Distance Learning Today throughout the summer to [lanna.lumpkins@sw.edu](mailto:lanna.lumpkins@sw.edu).



Visit [MSN's Local Gas Price](#) site for gas prices in the area.

## Website of the Month

One gripe that I hear almost daily is the rising cost of gasoline. Everyone seems to be looking for the cheapest gas in the area. Now MSN hosts a site that will give the rundown of the cost of gasoline in any area by simply entering the zip code. You might consider taking a look at the [MSN Local Gas Price](#) site if you know a fill-up is in the near future.

Each day, MSN and partner OPIS obtain pricing data from

participating credit card transactions, direct feeds from participating retail chains and other survey methods. Pricing records are for gasoline sales for most stations in the U.S. and Canada. As of today, the lowest priced gas in the country was



\$1.99 at the Trail-side General #34 in Pocatello, ID and the highest was \$3.90 in Kailua, HI.

MSN does note however, there may be minor discrepancies in their listing and

actual cost based on volatility of the market.

Suggestions or comments: [lanna.lumpkins@sw.edu](mailto:lanna.lumpkins@sw.edu)

## How Do I Activate My Classes in Bb?

The end of the semester is near. So it's time to gear up for summer! Classes are loaded for the summer semester and students are being loaded. Summer courses are available for students to view at this time. When ready, please activate your classes.

How do I activate or "turn on" my class?

1. You must log into BB and go to the class you plan to make active.
2. Click on the Control Panel
3. Select Setting. Setting is located in the Course Option section (First column-3 option in group) Choose Settings.
4. Select Course Availability
5. Select Yes
6. Click the submit button
7. Click the OK button

After you have finished your spring class, please make spring classes unavailable. If you have students who have incompletes, you need to leave those active until all students have completed the course.

For more information, please contact [Stacy Harris](#).



**What do you want to see?**  
All SwVCC faculty and staff are encouraged to submit items or request topics for inclusion. Email comments or suggestions to: [lanna.lumpkins@sw.edu](mailto:lanna.lumpkins@sw.edu)

## Don't Forget to Clean Out That Mailbox!

As the semester draws to a close and summer awaits, don't forget to clean out email accounts, turn off classes in Blackboard if students have checked their grades and activate new classes before leaving. Have a great summer!



Summer courses are available for students to view at this time.

