

# Tactical Techniques For Excellence in Online Learning

Presented by:

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Berkeley College Online

NJEdge March 16, 2012

# Objectives

- **The Online Classroom**
  - The Model
  - The Students
  - The Faculty
- **Issues and Goals**
  - Engagement
  - Skills and Standards
  - Retention
- **Practical Tactics**
  - Standards and Skills
  - Engagement
  - Mentoring and Coaching
- **Managing Yourself, Your Class and Your Time**

# The Online Classroom

- Modeled on the Correspondence School
  - Decreased interpersonal interaction
  - Transactional students
  - Non-traditional students
    - Older
    - Full time workers
    - Child and parental responsibilities

# The Online Student

- **Transactional focus**
  - Advance in career
  - Change jobs
  - Get their “ticket punched”
- **May be poorly prepared**
  - Writing skills may lack
  - Critical intellectual reasoning needs development
- **Priorities differ from traditional students**
  - Work/Career
  - Family
  - School

# The Online Faculty

- Faculty goals may be at odds with students
  - Learning for the sake of learning
  - Traditional focus on training scholars
    - 20 – 30 page research papers
    - Arcane topics
    - Obscure sources such as refereed journals
  - Expectation that students are likewise motivated

# Major Issues in the Online Classroom

- Tendency of students and faculty to “phone it in”
- Decreased student involvement
- Increased student dependency and anxiety
  - Number of pages
  - What font
  - Double-spaced
- If it gets too hard - quit

# Online Goals

- Build skills that enhance student job prospects
  - Clear and effective writing
- Demonstrate clear linkages between education and job skills
  - Timeliness, accountability and quality
- Improve student knowledge
  - Improve critical thinking

# Online Goals (con't)

- Improve student engagement
  - Make it relevant
  - Make it interesting
  - Make it about them
- Reduce anxiety, build confidence
  - Drive behaviors that will make them successful
  - Measure what matters
  - Give them tools



# Online Goals (con't)

- Hold to standards
  - Students “get it” when your expectations are clear, consistent and purposeful
  - Don’t be pompous; you’re just being a jerk
- Improve retention
  - Model behaviors
  - Be genuine
  - Be transparent and honest

# Best Practices; Don't 'Go It' Alone

- Before you begin class, coordinate with your Academic Success Center
  - Give ASC Team Member faculty status and access to your “classroom”
  - Give ASC Team Member a Discussion Board to address student concerns such as work load, projects, research and writing assistance

# Best Practices; Enlist Support

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Blackboard Learn interface. The browser's address bar shows the URL: [https://my.berkeleycollege.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab\\_tab\\_group\\_id=\\_2\\_1&url=%2Fwebapps%2Fblackboard%2Fexecute%2Flaunch](https://my.berkeleycollege.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab_tab_group_id=_2_1&url=%2Fwebapps%2Fblackboard%2Fexecute%2Flaunch). The page title is "1119\_BERKC\_BUSNADMN\_BUS100\_SECOL BUS BUS100 Contacts".

The interface includes a navigation menu with options: Home, Courses, Content Collection, Library, Faculty Self Service, E-Mail, Online Card Office, and Community. A "NEED HELP? CLICK HERE" button is visible in the top right corner.

The main content area is titled "Contacts" and features two buttons: "Create Folder" and "Create Contact". Below these buttons, two contact entries are listed:

- Prof. Cathy Ko**  
Email: [cak@berkeleycollege.edu](mailto:cak@berkeleycollege.edu)  
Work Phone: By appointment. Email me to set up an appointment.  
Office Location: Online  
Office Hours: Online  
Notes: Some information about me: I have been with Berkeley College for 4+ years and have been part of the Management Department. I have a Bachelor of Science degree from Cornell University and an MBA from Harvard Business School. I have 20+ years of experience in the consumer package goods industry (Kraft Foods, Campbell Soup) working in both the domestic and international businesses. My expertise is in marketing/brand management, communications, strategic planning and business development. I also have extensive experience in the non-profit sector, through my work as Executive Director of a local non-profit organization and through many years of service as a volunteer Board member. I also do volunteer consulting to help non-profits. I look forward to getting to know each of you, so feel free to communicate with me often, either through the Q&A Message Board or by email.
- Andie DiMarco**  
Email: [WriteAid@BerkeleyCollege.edu](mailto:WriteAid@BerkeleyCollege.edu)  
Personal Link: <http://berkeleycollege.libguides.com/content.php?pid=197278&sid=1650965>  
Notes: All Berkeley College students may use the Writing Center, Online. Students will receive the same type of feedback they would receive during a face-to-face session, only via email. Students should send the writing tutor the necessary assignment parameters and a clear request for feedback. (Example: Topic sentences, thesis statement, citation format, etc.) Feedback from the tutor includes: questions and observations about student writing and suggestions for revision to improve the writing. Email writing and writing questions to [WriteAid@BerkeleyCollege.edu](mailto:WriteAid@BerkeleyCollege.edu).

The bottom of the browser window shows the system tray with the date and time: 10:17 AM, 3/15/2012.

# Best Practices; Team Effort

The screenshot shows a Firefox browser window displaying an email in the Blackboard Learn system. The browser's address bar shows the URL: [https://my.berkeleycollege.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab\\_tab\\_group\\_id=\\_2\\_1&url=%2Fwebapps%2Fblackboard%2Fexecute%2Flaunch](https://my.berkeleycollege.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab_tab_group_id=_2_1&url=%2Fwebapps%2Fblackboard%2Fexecute%2Flaunch). The page header features the Berkeley College logo and navigation links: Home, Courses, Content Collection, Library, Faculty Self Service, E-Mail, Online Card Office, and Community. A "NEED HELP? CLICK HERE" button is also visible. The email content is as follows:


Posted on: Tuesday, October 4, 2011

Hello, everyone! My name is Andie DiMarco and I am the Director for the Academic Support Center (ASC) Online. As part of the ASC Online, the Writing Center Online is committed to supporting writers in the Berkeley College community as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing!

I would like to thank Professor Ko for providing some of your class time so that we can assist you with your writing assignments and MLA Formatting and Style. Writing is fun and often one of the best ways to discover what you think!

I will be available throughout your course to assist you with the preparation and revision of your writing. You can also email the drafts of your writing prior to submitting your final drafts, so we can offer you positive feedback and suggestions for revision. Email papers to [WriteAid@berkeleycollege.edu](mailto:WriteAid@berkeleycollege.edu). Response time on essays is 24-48 hours for papers 1-6 pages and 72 hours for papers 7 or more pages.

I look forward to working with all of you!



# Best Practices; Standards Still Matter

- Make your expectations and standards clear, consistent and unambiguous
  - Post in your syllabus
  - Post on the Announcements or “splash” page for your class
  - Post in all your assignments
  - Post them in an FAQs discussion board
- Don't go overboard
  - These are adults; give them some flexibility
    - Don't micromanage

# Best Practices; Be Clear

- **From the Announcement page of Blackboard:**

- ***“Realities of Online Learning***

- Online classes are great because they give us all a level of flexibility - but that does not mean missing deadlines. Online classes may not be so great when you think about all the work you need to do each week - it is like running a marathon. Take stock of what you need to do to be successful, make a schedule and keep to it! Some MUSTS:

***You absolutely have to read the ASSIGNED READINGS each week, along with any POSTINGS from the instructor.***

***You absolutely need to manage your time and meet DEADLINES. You absolutely have to check your Berkeley EMAIL and Post to the DB.***

- 
- Please make sure that you are prepared to dedicate the necessary time and energy to this course. Also, see the "Non-Negotiables" in the Syllabus. Please let me know if you have any questions - post them to the Wk. 1 DB, and best of luck to you this Quarter!

- 
- **These are the Non-Negotiables:**

- You must have access the Online Course Resources in Bb regularly and use them!
- Expect to spend about 3 hours a week in preparation for this course.
- All assignments must be posted before their deadline. The link disappears when the deadline passes. *There is no makeup work, no extra credit and late work is NOT accepted.*
- All excuses must be documented, scanned and sent to the Professor. Emergencies include, but are not limited to medical situations, computer/Bb failures, deaths, power outages, car accidents, etc... Documentation does not guarantee a change in Course Policy, which is at the Professor's sole discretion.
- Each student must access and use *only* their Berkeley email account to communicate with the professor. No other email will be replied to and they will be deleted.

# Best Practices; Be Consistent

- **From the Course Information page of Blackboard**
- A few guidelines...**BlackBoard gives us sections for different uses, so I use them.**
- Under **Course Information** you will find specifics like the course description, the syllabus, etc.
- **Online Course Resources** includes PowerPoint slides for the chapters as well as lecture notes and eLectures and videos if they are available.
- **Assignments** is a folder located in Course Materials. It is the section where you will find homework, etc. Here is where the quizzes are located. **Quizzes** are available for 1 week. There will always be an announcement and link for the quizzes posted on the splash page for this class. Do not click on the quiz unless you are ready to take it. You only get one opportunity to take it so be careful. *The Help Desk or I will reset you if you accidentally get knocked off or locked out.*
- **I go over every single quiz.** If you think your answer was correct, *don't email me* until I have corrected the quizzes. Then check first to see if I gave you credit for the answer. There are MANY reasons why a correct answer can be marked wrong. There may be an invisible character the machine reads and either wants in the answer or doesn't. It could be a mis-spelling, mine or yours, an extra word in the answer (usually with fill-in-the-blank), or it can be the difference between a single and plural answer format. *I look at every wrong answer and adjust for these issues.*
- **The Discussion Board has a section called FAQs.** If you have a question about how to do something; an assignment or course expectations, etc. ask it in the FAQs Discussion Thread. I will respond. Likewise, check there first if you have a question, someone else may have asked it too.
- **If a matter is urgent you should call me.** I will make every effort to respond to your telephone call within 24 hours. *Email replies have a 48 hour response time.* Like all of you, I too have a busy life and I am not on the computer, or in my office 24/7. My family and I are observant Jews so I do not typically return calls on Friday nights or Saturdays. Obviously there are exceptions. When in doubt, call and leave me a message. (Although you need to know that my office phone also rings beside my bed so think about the time when you dial...) If I am going to be out of town, or otherwise unavailable, for a few days, I will post an announcement with instructions in case of an emergency.
- **BlackBoard is like human beings – it is not perfect.** If you have issues with BlackBoard as to how something may display – or not, or a password, or anything else - I can't help you! I can only reset your quiz access. You will need to contact the Help Desk. Always get a ticket number for any problem. It lets the Help Desk analyze whether there is a pattern to the issues students are encountering.

# Best Practices; Content

- Create unique and personal content
  - Tell them about yourself in the introductions
    - It is wonderful that you have all those degrees and awards
      - Tell them something they can relate to
    - Create a PowerPoint with voice over about what it takes to succeed
    - Create a video welcome
    - Create video lectures or chapter introductions



# Best Practices: Personal Content

Firefox Blackboard Learn

berkeleycollege.edu https://my.berkeleycollege.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab\_tab\_group\_id=\_2\_1&url=%2Fwebapps%2Fblackboard%2Fexecute%2Fflaunc Secure Search

Margaret Biner My Places Home Help Logout

**NEED HELP? CLICK HERE**

Home Courses Content Collection Library Faculty Self Service E-Mail Online Card Office Community

Online Course Resource  
My Course Page  
Virtual Lab Instructions  
Course Evaluation

COURSE MANAGEMENT

- Control Panel
- Content Collection
- Course Tools
- Evaluation
- Grade Center
- Users and Groups
- Customization
- Help

**New announcements appear below this line**

**Welcome**  
Posted on: Tuesday, March 13, 2012

Professor Biner  
Consumer Behavior

Click "PLAY" to view the video. Click [HERE](#) to download a PDF transcript of the welcome video. Please note, you need [Flash](#) to view this video.

Posted by: Loren Kleinman  
Posted to: 1124\_BERKC\_MKT\_241\_SECO  
MKT MKT241

**ASC Welcome**  
Posted on: Tuesday, October 11, 2011

Please [Click Here](#) to view a welcome video from the Academic Support Center Online... if you need help, just ASC!

Posted by: Blackboard Admin  
Posted to: 1124\_BERKC\_MKT\_241\_SECO  
MKT MKT241

**DISCUSSION BOARD**  
Posted on: Thursday, March 1, 2012

Here are my expectations for the Discussion Board.

You cannot post all your comments on a single day!

You should post your first comment between Monday and Friday of the week the DB is active.

You must respond to my post in a substantial and unique way.

You must respond to at least two (2) other student posts in a substantial and unique way.

Posted by: Margaret Biner  
Posted to: 1124\_BERKC\_MKT\_241\_SECO  
MKT MKT241

Secure Search McAfee

10:40 AM  
3/15/2012

# This is Professor Biner

My name is Margaret Biner

I have 3 children; one is a Captain in the US Army recently returned from Afghanistan; another son is a junior at Rutgers in Camden and my daughter is a senior in high school.

I have a BA in Economics, an MBA in Finance and I have completed all my coursework for a PhD in Marketing.

I have been with Berkeley for 10 years. Before that I was a senior executive specializing in the commercialization of technology. I still do a little of that on the side for corporate clients.

I teach online full time but you may see me from time to time at different campuses.



# Read the Syllabus

- The important stuff is on the syllabus
  - How you are assessed and graded
  - Expectations regarding timeliness and participation
- You are responsible for everything included in the syllabus
- If you have a question ask
  - Email, telephone or use the FAQs DB
- Read what is posted under "Course Information" as well



# Best Practices; Assessment

- Create frequent objective assessments
  - Chapter quizzes keep students on track with reading and discussion boards
  - Avoids the “out of sight, out of mind” issue
  - Creates a grade history to assess performance
    - Add some fill-in-the blanks or short answers
      - Helps you to know individual students and their progress
    - Provides flexibility in emergencies

# Best Practices; Frequent Assessments

vebapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab\_tab\_group\_id=\_2\_1&url=%2Fwebapps%2Fblackboard%2Fexecute%2Flaunch

Margaret Biner My Places Home Help Logout

NEED HELP? CLICK HERE

Faculty Self Service E-Mail Online Card Office Community

note: the table is static and grades may be entered on the Grade Details page accessed by selecting the table cell for the grade. In the interactive mode of the Grade Center, directly in the cells. Use the arrow keys or the tab key to navigate through the Grade Center and the Enter key to submit a grade. [More Help](#)

Create Calculated Column Manage Reports Filter Work Offline

Email Sort Columns By: Layout Position Order: Ascending Hide Color Coding Last Saved: March 14, 2012 9:57 AM

First Name	Chapter 1	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 6	Chapter 8	Chapter 9	Chapter 10
Marlene	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	96.15%	86.96%	70.00%	92.00%
Kendra	104.00%	109.09%	82.40%	84.62%	95.65%		
James	104.00%	113.64%	88.00%	80.77%	91.30%	90.00%	96.00%
Leslie	0.00%	113.64%	80.00%	69.23%	95.65%	90.00%	104.00%
Sharice	0.00%	84.55%	72.00%	0.00%	73.91%	75.00%	104.00%
John	96.00%	104.55%	88.00%	69.23%	82.61%	100.00%	112.00%
Teri-Ann	112.00%	113.64%	104.00%	103.85%	100.00%	100.00%	112.00%
Sharon	56.00%	90.91%	88.00%	42.31%	78.26%	100.00%	88.00%
Myrna	0.00%	109.09%	0.00%	0.00%	82.61%	100.00%	108.00%
Barbara	0.00%	109.09%	88.00%	84.62%	86.96%	90.00%	113.60%

Email Icon Legend Edit Rows Displayed

Secure Search McAfee

10:47 AM 3/15/2012

# Best Practices; Assignments

- Keep assignments relevant
  - Training productive managers is different than training academic scholars
  - Look at the assignment's purpose, the outcomes expected and the skills involved
- If you assign it you must review it
  - Posting 140-240 character notes in an online platform is not useful feedback
  - Give complete feedback; on ideas and writing

# Best Practices; Faculty Behaviors

- Touch students in person
  - Be real and share yourself
  - When you are online your role is mentor and coach
  - Catch a student doing something right and shoot off a quick email
  - Contact students who are not doing something right and tell them what they need to do to succeed

# Best Practices; More Faculty Behaviors

- This is not correspondence school
  - Ask for student phone numbers or Skype names
  - Reach out in the first half of the course
    - Tell them you are going to call them
    - Call them
      - Enjoy saying hello
      - Embrace the opportunity to find out what isn't working
      - Offer tips to students who need them
- Give them a phone number to contact you
  - It will not be abused



# Best Practices; Use the Phone

The screenshot displays a web browser window with the following elements:

- Browser:** Firefox, Blackboard Learn. Address bar: [https://my.berkeleycollege.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab\\_tab\\_group\\_id=\\_2\\_1&url=%2Fwebapps%2Fblackboard%2Fexecute%2Flaunch](https://my.berkeleycollege.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab_tab_group_id=_2_1&url=%2Fwebapps%2Fblackboard%2Fexecute%2Flaunch)
- Page Header:** Berkeley College logo, user name Margaret Biner, navigation links (My Places, Home, Help, Logout), and a "NEED HELP? CLICK HERE" button.
- Navigation Menu:** Home, Courses, Content Collection, Library, Faculty Self Service, E-Mail, Online Card Office, Community.
- Course Context:** 1121\_BERKC\_MKT\_220\_SEC03 MKT MKT220
- Left Sidebar:** Course navigation menu including Announcements, Faculty Information, Course Information, Course Material, Discussions, Groups, Course Tools, Berkeley Tutoring, Virtual Lab Instructions, Online Course Resource, and Course Evaluation.
- Main Content Area:**
  - Contacts** section with "Create Folder" and "Create Contact" buttons.
  - Contact Profile:** Professor Margaret Biner. Includes email ([margaret-biner@mymail.berkeleycollege.edu](mailto:margaret-biner@mymail.berkeleycollege.edu)), work phone (908-889-4019), office location, office hours, and notes.
  - Profile Photo:** A portrait of Professor Margaret Biner.
- Bottom Sidebar:** COURSE MANAGEMENT section with links for Control Panel, Content Collection, Course Tools, Evaluation, and Grade Center.
- Taskbar:** Windows taskbar showing icons for Internet Explorer, Firefox, and other applications. System tray shows the time as 10:59 AM and McAfee security status.

# Best Practices; Drive Student Behaviors

- Measure what matters
  - Identify what behaviors breed success
    - Figure out how to encourage and reward them
      - For example: Doing the assignments and participating in the discussion board typically generate successful assessment grades
    - Call these your “Easy As”

# Test Equivalent Grades (TEG)

- A TEG is a Test Equivalent Grade
  - Counts as a test grade
  - Computed as a percentage
  - Usually calculated weekly
  - Easy "A"!
- You will get a TEG for participation in the Discussion Board (DB TEG)
- You will get a TEG for completed homework (HW TEG)



# Best Practices; Be A Role Model

- Don't hide behind the keyboard
  - Talk to students, don't just email
  - Congratulate the good students
  - Prod the marginal students
    - Celebrate these students' achievements
  - Fix problems that arise
  - Admit errors and mistakes
    - Apologize and fix it

# Best Practices; Coaching and Mentoring

- Be empathetic
  - Bad stuff happens to you, to me, to students
    - Elderly parents and children fall ill
  - These things are never convenient
    - If you have lots of grades, exempting one or two assessments won't affect learning
    - If you leave an assessment open until Monday night with a minor penalty, it doesn't hurt

# Best Practices; Faculty Sanity

- Sanity is highly over-rated
- However it helps

# Best Practices; Faculty Sanity

- **Online Teaching Can Be 24/7**
  - Set your schedule
  - Establish emergency protocols
  - Maintain your downtime as sacred
- **Maintain your Discussion Board Sanity**
  - Set up a regular schedule
  - Make trade-offs
    - Suspend the DB in a week you are trying to contact each student
      - They appreciate it and you need the break
- **Maintain your Assignment Sanity**
  - Stagger your assignments between classes
    - Give major written assignments every 3-4 weeks, alternating courses
    - Students appreciate it and so will you!

# Best Practices Summary

- Involve your Academic Support Center as peers before class even begins
- Make expectations and standards clear
- Create unique and personal content
- Provide frequent objective assessments
- Keep assignments relevant
- Measure what matters
- Don't hide behind the keyboard



# Best Practices; My Colleagues

- Andie DiMarco; Academic Support Center; Berkeley College Online
- Cathy Ko; Adjunct Professor of Business Administration; Berkeley College (WST)
- Anthony Avellone; Professor of International Business; Berkeley College Online
- John LaValle; Professor of Psychology; Berkeley College Online
- Mary McDonough; Vice President-Academics; Dover Business College