

Snead State Community College e-Learning Handbook

2009-2010

SSCC e-Learning

Flexibility.

Convenience.

Advancement.

(All Without Leaving Home)



Extend beyond the classroom. Learn anywhere!

A Brighter Future is Only a Click Away

A Brighter Future is Only a Click Away





Distance Education

Dr. Robert Exley
President

Dear Distance Education Student:

Welcome to Snead State Community College. e-Learning continues to be an exciting opportunity for both our students and our faculty. Our program continues to grow due to our determination to meet the needs of students who are limited by time, career, and family obligations.

This handbook provides important information that will assist you in reaching your goals as a successful distance education student. e-Learning education courses offered by Snead State will continue to meet the high standards established on our campus and make use of the most current technology.

Thank you for considering distance education as a part of your educational goals. Our staff is here to assist you with any problems you may encounter. If you have questions regarding our distance education program, please contact me at (256) 840-4106 or Jerri Gullion at (256) 840-4180.

Welcome,

Greg Chapman, Ed.D.
Distance Education Coordinator

*Small Enough to Know Your Name...
...Large Enough to Shape Your Future*

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Staff

Distance Education Department Staff



Jerri Gullion
IT Specialist

General Information

This handbook is prepared for the convenience of e-Learning students in order to provide new and current e-Learning students with quick reference information about SSCC's e-Learning program.

We hope the information in this handbook answers most of the questions you may have concerning e-Learning.

While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy of the material stated herein, the college reserves the right to

change any provision listed in this handbook without actual notice to individual students.

It is important to check with your instructor for any last minute changes to this handbook. Please refer to the College Handbook for additional information concerning admissions, financial aid, etc.

As an adult student, you are responsible for using the information in this handbook and in your course syllabus in an appropriate manner.



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Introduction

Academically, SSCC e-Learning classes are identical to classroom college classes. Instructors require research papers and projects, quizzes, exams and other forms of participation through e-Learning just as they do in the classroom. e-Learning instructors demand time and effort from students just as the college classroom instructor does.

The overall time commitment that is needed to complete an e-Learning course will be comparable to the time and work involved in successfully completing a classroom-based course, if not more time consuming.

Students should keep in mind that while the schedule for viewing lectures or accessing Internet resources might be more flexible than classroom-based courses, the assignment and exam completion deadlines for all e-Learning courses are not flexible.

Regardless of the technology or format used, e-Learning courses will have deadlines and due dates just as the classroom-based courses do. Therefore, it is very important that students enrolled in e-Learning are able to manage their time and workload in order to stay on track.

e-Learning at SSCC



e-Learning is any formal educational process in which learning occurs when the student and the teacher are not in the same place.

SSCC offers e-Learning online and blended through the Internet (World Wide Web).

Registration for e-Learning

Registration for e-Learning occurs during the regular registration.

Online Courses Offered

For a complete listing of classes offered for any given term, please check the Snead State Course Schedule. These are available in the office of Student services, as well as online at <http://www.snead.edu>.

Course descriptions may be found in the Snead State *Catalog*. The *Catalog* is also available on the Snead State Website, in the office of Student Services, office of the Chief Academic Officer, Recruiting Office, and various other offices around campus.

e-Learning vs. Campus-Based

e-Learning classes are the equivalent of a campus-based class in terms of objectives, content, thoroughness, and transferability. Students are required to meet stated prerequisites or assessment scores, when applicable.

The course requirements for e-Learning classes are also the same as the Campus-based classes. The central difference in an e-Learning class versus a Campus-based class is the degree of flexibility that e-Learning classes provide the student.

Web Courses

Snead State Community College offers Internet-based online instruction that features courses delivered over the World Wide Web directly to the student's home or corporate desktop. Students are able to receive instruction, interact with instructors, and complete lessons via threaded discussions and electronic mail.

Online courses are designed to accommodate the educational needs of students who have access to and experience with a computer and the Internet.

Web courses follow the same strict standards for instruction and grading applied in on-campus courses. Students register for web courses during the regular registration period, pay the same tuition, have access to the same student services, receive the same credit, and study under the same regulations as all other students.

e-Learning Courses Offered at SSCC

Purpose of e-Learning Online Courses

The purpose of online (BlackBoard) courses is to provide quality educational coursework through non-traditional means, allowing students to acquire knowledge in academic, professional and technical education, and skills for lifelong learning.

Requirements for Taking Online Classes

1. *All students registered for online classes are encouraged to complete an online orientation session. This session may be accessed through SSCC's Distance Learning page: <http://www.snead.edu/distancelearning/> The link is located on the left side of the page, fourth from the top (white area), entitled "BlackBoard Online Orientation."*

Log-on Instructions for Online Students

1. On the first day of class, log on to the Snead web site at <http://www.snead.edu>
2. On the middle of the screen, under "Helpful Links", click on the icon labeled "Snead State Blackboard."
3. Enter username and password as described below:
 - **Username:** firstname.lastname in lowercase letters.
 - **Password:** 5-digit student number. To obtain your 5 digit student number, go to www.snead.edu, click on "Students," "SSCC Online," then click on "View My Information."

Example: An example for a student named John Smith with student number 98765 would be john.smith (**notice that username is lowercase. The username is case sensitive**). The password would be 98765.
4. After entering username and password, click the "OK" button or hit "enter." This will take students to "myBlackBoard" screen, which will list the appropriate online course. To enter a course, click on the course title.
5. Once in the correct course, read the Syllabus and Outline for course information. Be sure to check the Calendar and Discussion Board often for due dates and course information.

Orientation

Orientation

All students registered for online classes are encouraged to complete an online orientation session. Orientation is not mandatory, but highly recommended, especially for first-time BlackBoard students. This Orientation session may be accessed through the SSCC Distance Learning website:

<http://www.snead.edu/distancelearning/>

Click the link located on the left side of the page (fourth from the top) entitled "BlackBoard Online Orientation." This link will carry you through a brief tutorial encompassing all aspects of BlackBoard.

Exams

Snead State Community College BlackBoard exams are typically given online. However, at the discretion of the instructor, an on-campus exam may be scheduled. If a student is unable to come to campus to take the exam because of geographical location, he or she may request test administration at an off-campus location. If a student has a conflict with test days and/or times, he or she should contact the Instructor to make alternative arrangements.

***** Please Note ***** Any questions about exams and assignments (missed items, unavailable items, accidental access of an exam when student is not ready to complete it, grade or question disputes, etc.) must be addressed **to the course instructor**. If a student misses an exam or assignment or accidentally opens one and it becomes unavailable, the

student must contact the course instructor either by email or phone to discuss the matter. At their discretion, instructors can allow a student to re-take an exam or assignment. The instructor will reset the item and inform the student when it will be available. Instructors may authorize the Faculty Development Specialist to reset and/or re-open an exam. However, the Faculty Development Specialist has no authority over the administration of academic material in a BlackBoard course and, therefore, cannot make decisions on whether or not to allow students to take make-up items.

Final Grade

In accordance with Snead State Community College policy, final exam grades will not be posted. Grades also will NOT be given out in person, over the phone, or by email. Students may access final semester grades online at www.snead.edu by the following procedure: Click on Students and SSCC Online, enter Student Number and Personal Identification Number (six-digit birthdate—mmddyy), and click on My Grades. Grade reports are not mailed to students. Students should check semester course schedules to verify when grades will be available online each term. Students wishing to know their final examination grade and/or final grade for the course prior to grades being posted online should bring a self-addressed stamped envelope to their instructor no later than the day of the final examination.

Online Attendance

Instructors normally determine attendance by the number of assignments and tests completed on time; however, attendance in online classes may be demonstrated in terms of log-in and log-out times, time spent in chats and online discussion, quality and quantity of chat and online discussion content, quality and quantity of Email, quality and quantity of course work, test participation, and other considerations.

e-Learning courses at Snead State Community College are Instructor-led classes, not independent study or correspondence courses. Students are expected to engage actively in the course content, participate in student-teacher and student-student communications, and complete assignments and tests according to the requirements and schedule of the course instructor. Failure to participate or communicate with the instructor may reduce the student's overall grade for the course.

The instructor will email the student when he/she has missed 15% of a class. A "W" will be assigned to a student who misses more than twenty-five percent of class time during a term. Online instructors will define 15% and 25% of a course by the number of assignments/tests in the course. ***Students are responsible for keeping up with their number of absences in a class.*** If students stop attending class, **THEY SHOULD WITHDRAW OFFICIALLY.** If students experience extenuating circumstances, they may appeal to the instructor. The instructor may or may not choose to accept extenuating circumstances. Students may then appeal to the Division Director then to the Dean of Academic Services, whose decision is final.

Test Your Readiness for the Technological Part of Online Courses

Answer the following questions to evaluate your readiness for the technology involved in an online course.

1. Do I have access to a computer for an entire academic semester?
2. Can I download files to the local hard drive?
3. Can I browse to find files on the local hard drive?
4. Do I have a reliable Internet Service Provider (ISP)?
5. Does my computer hardware meet the minimum requirements?
6. Does my computer software meet the minimum requirements?
7. Do I know how to send and/or receive files (attachments)?
8. Do I have basic computer literacy skills?

If you answered “yes” to the above questions, e-Learning classes may work for you.

System Requirements for Access to SSCC Online Courses

Snead State Community College recommends a minimum setup for your computer system that will allow you to access all the tools required for your BlackBoard course. This includes the following:

- an up to date Operating System (like Windows XP or Mac OS 10.4).
- Java version 1.5.0.50.
- a certified browser (like Internet Explorer 6 and Firefox 1.0.7 on Windows or Safari 1.2, 1.3.1 or 2.0.2 on the Mac).
- Internet service provider (ISP) connection, preferably broadband (fast access).

These requirements are also detailed at http://www.webct.com/exchange/viewpage?name=exchange_browser_tuneup

Software Recommendations

Students must use MSWord for papers and assignments. This program offers the most flexibility. If you do not have MSWord, you can download a viewer at <http://www.microsoft.com/office/000/viewers.asp>

If you experience problems or have questions concerning your BlackBoard class, please contact the Snead State IT Specialist either by phone or Email.

Jerri Gullion, phone (256) 840-4180,
Email jgullion@snead.edu

Top 10 issues to Consider Before Taking Online Courses

Snead State Community College offers the largest e-Learning program of any two-year college in the state. Online courses are popular choices for students because of the flexibility and convenience they provide. However, before enrolling in an online class, students should consider 10 issues that could affect their success.

- 1. Ease of Use** - SSCC uses Blackboard as its platform for online courses. Some courses also make use of video-streaming technology. The ease of using these courses depends greatly on how up-to-date students' computers are and how well students know how to use the computers. Students can succeed in online courses if they have limited knowledge of computer use and if they have dial-up Internet connection; however, they must show patience and endurance as they will have to spend a good deal of time getting their system to work properly. Even if students have new computers yet do not know how to use them, they can expect some technical difficulty. SSCC uses state-of-the-art servers for housing online courses; however, access problems do arise occasionally. When problems arise, the SSCC Information Technology department informs instructors, who have traditionally altered their deadlines to compensate for any down time.
- 2. Student-Teacher Interaction** - SSCC requires online instructors to interact with online students at least five days per week either through e-mail, assignments and tests, chat, discussion boards, or other methods they choose. Students who want or need immediate feedback are often frustrated with online courses. Students who are self-directed and do not need a lot of personal interaction with the instructor have more success with online courses. Some students need or prefer face-to-face instruction.
- 3. Time Management** - Students sometimes take online courses, thinking they will have to spend less time with the course than they would in on-campus classes. The opposite is true. Online courses require more time (sometimes significantly more time) than on-campus courses. The vast majority of students who struggle in online classes do so because they are unable to spend as much time online as they need.
- 4. Computer Accessibility** - There are students who succeed in online courses without owning a personal computer; however, complications habitually arise when a lab is closed or a friend is out of town on test day. The majority of students who succeed own fairly updated computers and know how to use them.

5. **Technical Support** - SSCC has a full-time person, Ms. Jerri Gullion (jgullion@snead.edu 256-840-4180), to help students and faculty members with technical issues concerning Blackboard and streaming video. Though she is not a support person for computer hardware or other software products, she does have some general knowledge of computer systems and oftentimes can help students who are having technical difficulty.
6. **Basic Computer Skills** - Students who know how to make adjustments to their Windows and Internet browser settings and who are generally comfortable with using computers have the best success rate. Microsoft Word is the accepted word processing program for Snead State. Familiarity with Word and other Microsoft Office products helps insure student success.
7. **Self-Discipline and Motivation** - Online courses require a great deal of independent learning and personal responsibility. Students who do not succeed tend to get behind and miss deadlines. When students allow assignments to stack up, their task becomes overwhelming. The most successful students are those who keep a daily check on their courses and have the self-discipline to complete all assignments in a timely manner.
8. **Clearly Stated Requirements** - The most successful online students are those who have discovered what will be required of them prior to registering for online classes. Potential online students can go to the SSCC *e-Learning* web page (<http://www.snead.edu/distancelearning/>) to learn what will be expected of them and their computer equipment. Links such as “Introduction to *e-Learning*” and “Do I Have What It Takes?” guide students through information they need to consider before becoming online students. As far as individual course requirements are concerned, each online instructor posts a course syllabus that outlines weekly requirements. Many online instructors also post items on calendars and give students weekly reminders via email or discussion boards.
9. **Convenience and Flexibility** - The No. 1 reason students give for taking online courses is convenience. Students with busy lives need the flexibility that online courses provide; however, SSCC’s online courses are not self-paced. They require that students follow a timeline as they progress through each course. One goal of distance-Learning course designers is to create courses that closely match their on-campus counterparts. Students must be mindful that there will be regular assignments and deadlines with online courses.

10. **Reading Ability** - Online courses depend on students being willing and able to read texts. Assignments, tests, e-mails, discussion boards, and chat rooms require students to read. There is a direct correlation between students' reading comprehension and success in online courses. Though RDG 085 is not a required course for any major, students who have trouble with reading comprehension and critical thinking and test-taking skills might do well to consider taking the course before jumping into online instruction. Students who score less than 70 on the reading portion of the COMPASS exam should consider that they will have to spend more time and effort than usual in order to comprehend material and succeed in online courses.

There are other factors beyond these top ten that affect student success. Learning styles and preferences, misperception of course difficulty level, lack of personal contact, prior knowledge, course design, and other factors affect success and should be considered, but students who review these top ten factors before they decide whether or not online learning is for them will save themselves some headaches and heartaches by knowing what is needed for online student success.

Students are also encouraged to review the following self-assessment to determine if they possess the technical skills needed to succeed in an online class:

Is Online Learning for You?

The following self-assessment is provided to help you determine if you possess the **technical skills** needed to succeed in an online course.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 1. Can you identify your computer's operating system and version number? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 2. Can you restart your computer if it becomes locked up? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 3. Can you safely turn off your computer? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 4. Can you explain the terms: icon, menu, window, click, select, drag, button? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 5. Can you use the mouse to select and deselect text? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 6. Can you use a mouse to open and close a program by clicking on an icon? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 7. Can you use the "Start" button to open programs? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 8. Can you choose a command from the menu? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 9. Can you move, resize and close windows? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 10. Do you know the difference between close and exit? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 11. Can you use the scroll bars? |

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 12. Can you switch between open windows? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 13. Can you switch between open applications? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 14. Can you create folders and move files? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 15. Can you save a file and browse to locate a file? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 16. Can you copy and paste text? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 17. Can you rename files? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 18. Can you download and install programs and plug-ins? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 19. Can you connect to an Internet Service Provider (ISP)? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 20. Can you open a web browser? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 21. Can you create a bookmark or save a favorite webpage? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 22. Can you copy a URL? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 23. Can you use a search engine to locate information on the Internet? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 24. Can you identify the browser and access Internet preferences or options? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 25. Can you use email to create and send a message? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 26. Can you attach files to an email message? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 27. Can you reply to an email message? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 28. Do you understand and abide by standard Netiquette? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 29. Can you open a word processing file? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 30. Can you save a word processing file, and save as Rich Text Format (.rtf)? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | 31. Can you edit and print a file? |

Evaluating Your Score

Your Total:

How many of the above questions did you respond with a 'Yes'? Use the following scale to assess how technically prepared you are to complete an online course:

31 - 26: Excellent More than likely you will do quite well with an online course.

25 - 21: Fair

Contact the course instructor before enrolling to find out if your lack of certain skills will jeopardize your ability to complete the course.

20 or less: Need improvement

We recommend that you access coursework, workshops, or tutorials that will help you improve your basic computer and internet skills before enrolling in an online course.

Send inquiries to:

Jerri Gullion
IT Specialist
Snead State Community College
Boaz, AL 35957
256.840.4180

jgullion@snead.edu

Points to Remember About Taking Online Classes

1. e-Learning students sometimes neglect their courses because of personal or professional circumstances. Having a compelling reason for taking the course helps motivate the student to stick with the course.
2. Some students prefer the independence of e-Learning; others find the independence uncomfortable and miss being part of the classroom experience.
3. e-Learning courses give students greater freedom of scheduling, but they can require more self-discipline than on-campus classes.
4. Some students learn better by interacting with other students and Instructors. Others learn better by listening, reading and reviewing on their own. e-Learning courses provide less opportunity for group interaction than most on-campus courses.
5. e-Learning requires students to work from written directions.
6. It may take as long as two to three weeks to get comments back from the Instructor in e-Learning classes.
7. e-Learning requires at least as much time as on-campus courses, if not more. Students surveyed say that e-learning courses are as hard or harder than on-campus courses.
8. Most people who are successful with e-Learning find it difficult to come to campus on a regular basis because of their work, family or personal schedules.
9. Printed materials are the primary source of directions and information in e-Learning courses.

Students who do well in e-Learning courses are usually comfortable contacting the instructor as soon as they need help with the course.

Traits of a Successful e-Learner

You can be just as successful with online classes as you can be in a traditional classroom with face-to-face instruction. To be successful in the e-Learning environment, you need to consider your learning habits and aptitude, work arrangements, and lifestyle. The following traits can help you assess whether or not e-Learning is the answer for you.

1. **Motivated**—To be a successful online learner, you must be self-motivated. Being responsible for your own learning can be challenging at times; however, in the end you will find a higher level of understanding when you discover it for yourself.
2. **Goal Oriented**—Setting goals is not only a technique for success in one's daily life but also in e-Learning. Before you enroll in an online course, it is important that you know why you are taking that course.
3. **Involved**—If you feel comfortable interacting with other students and your Instructors, you will fit right in to the e-Learning environment. Participating in class discussions and chats is essential to your success in e-Learning courses.
4. **Organized**—Keeping all facets of your course organized, from the files on your computer to the calendar you keep, will help you be successful in e-Learning courses. Not only will you be more aware of when your assignments are due, but you will also be more productive if you are organized.
5. **Comfortable with Technology**—It is vital that you have a basic understanding of computer skills.



Keep the Lines of Communication Open

The communication process between student and instructor is very important in e-Learning. Don't hesitate to contact your instructor whenever you need clarification of an assignment or just want to discuss information pertaining to the course. Keep in mind that your willingness to ask questions is one of the characteristics of a successful student.

The following are several means of communicating with your instructor:

- **OFFICE HOURS:** During office hours your instructor is available to meet with you in person or consult with you on the phone
- **TELEPHONE OR VOICE MAIL:** Your instructor's phone number is listed in the class syllabus. If you call your instructor, but he or she is not available, you can leave a message on the instructor's voice mail.
- **EMAIL:** Email plays an important part in e-Learning courses. For Internet courses, it is usually the main form of communication between you, your Instructor, and your fellow students.

NOTE:

- Remember that your instructor is there to help you. If you have concerns or just feel confused, don't hesitate to contact him or her.
- Please allow a reasonable amount of time for your instructor to get back in contact with you.
- In emergency situations, instructors can be contacted through the Snead address. If adjunct, 1st name.last name@adjunct.snead.edu. If full time, 1st initial last name@snead.edu.

Student Guidelines and Responsibilities

Academic Integrity

If you are enrolled in e-Learning classes at Snead State Community College you are expected to uphold the standards of academic integrity. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and untruthfulness in the process of completing academic work. Be honest and do your own work. Violators will be punished.

Netiquette/Etiquette

It's all in your words! There are appropriate and 'not-so-appropriate' ways to communicate on the Web. "Netiquette" refers to "Etiquette," or the proper way to conduct yourself on the Internet. Be careful about your tone of voice when writing.

Important Rules

1. Don't say anything you wouldn't say to a person's face or that you wouldn't mind anyone else reading.
 - When you write a letter, you are sending written words through cyberspace via email or in discussion groups. You have no control over where they go or who will see them.

IMPORTANT: Remember you are talking to a person ... not a computer. It's easy to forget that there is a person on the other end of the email or discussion group when you're sitting alone typing at your computer. Be clear with your words. It's easy for someone to misinterpret your meaning when they are not able to see your expressions or hear the tone of your voice.

2. Don't expect instant responses to emails or posts that you make to a discussion group. Instructors are required to log on five days a week.
3. Use the Subject Line. Make your entry in the Subject Line concise and informative.
4. Capitalize words only to highlight an important point or to distinguish a title or heading.
 - Capitalizing whole words that are not titles is generally termed as SHOUTING!
5. Never give your userID or password to another person.
6. Never assume your Email messages are private or that they can be read by only yourself or the recipient.
7. Never send something that you would mind seeing on the evening news.
8. Include your name at the bottom of Email messages.
9. Be professional and careful about what you say about others. Email is easily forwarded.
10. Do not forward personal email to groups without the original author's permission.
11. Be careful when using sarcasm and humor. Without face-to-face communications, your joke may be viewed as criticism. When being, or trying to be, humorous, use "emoticons" to express emotion.

Emoticons are a series of keyboard characters that, when viewed sideways, look like a face! There are many emoticons that 'chatters' on the web use. Here are a few:

:)	:	:o	:D
:(:p	8-)	:\
;-)	;p	8-D	>:-)

e-Learning Course Evaluation

Student Appraisal of Faculty

Students are asked to complete course evaluations and student satisfaction surveys online at the end of each course. Their opinions will be used for the improvement of courses. See Appendix A for the e-Learning course evaluation.

Bookstore

Ordering Books Online

Books can be ordered and delivered to e-Learning students by mail.



Snead State Community College Book Store



Contact Information
256.593.1861 or email:
gkitchens@snead.edu

Library

Your Library's Web Page

The Snead State Community College Library offers e-Learning students a wealth of valuable information. The Virgil B. McCain Learning Center is online:

<http://www.snead.edu/library/>

Accessing Your Library From Home

Students may gain remote access to the Alabama Virtual Library from their home location by obtaining an AVL card from the Snead State Library. Snead students may also obtain a library card by visiting the library and filling out a registration card at the Circulation Desk.

Contact a Librarian

Having trouble finding what you need? Students can now “Contact a Librarian” from their home computer. “Contact a Librarian” is a reference service that provides students with answers to brief, factual questions. Students submit their questions through an online form or in an email message.

By clicking on the “Contact a Librarian” button as shown below, students are provided with the following:



- Suggestion Box
- Ask a Reference Question
- Order Request Form
- Interlibrary Loan Request Form (for books and articles)

Be sure to bookmark your Library’s Web site for future use.



Basic BlackBoard Features

BlackBoard is a course management tool that facilitates the creation of an educational environment through the World Wide Web. Some of the more common features include, but are not limited to, a chat room, bulletin board, private Email, access to grades, online quizzes, homepages, discussions, and a calendar.

Using Email in BlackBoard

Accessing Your Email

Click on the **Mail** link on the course tools menu located on the left side of your BlackBoard class main page.



The number of new e-mails you have will appear beside your "Inbox" folder on the left. You can access them by clicking on the email subject located on the right of the screen.

Checking Your Inbox

Click **Inbox** to check for incoming mail.

Viewing A Message

Click on the subject to display the message in a new small window.

Replying To A Message

To reply to the message, click "Reply" in the message header. The "Compose" window will open, and the new message will retain the previous message's subject and will automatically be addressed to the sender.

Type your reply and click "Send." (If you click on "Quote" instead of "Reply," the new message will show the quoted contents of the original message.)

Composing A New Message

To start a new message, click on "Create Message" then choose a recipient from the class list by clicking on "Browse for Recipient"..., put a check beside the recipient's name in the "To" column. Click "Save" at the lower left of the recipient list box. type a subject, type your message, and then click "Send."

You may also attach any document from your local computer to send with the email.

In the "Compose" window, click on "Add Attachment" to select a file from your local hard disk. Select the file and click "OK". This will place the name of the file in the field space.

Chat

Chat allows you, your classmates, and your instructor to engage in online conversations in real-time. Your course may have regularly scheduled meetings or a specified time when the instructor will be available to chat.



Chat

Accessing Chat

To access the "Chat Tool" from the Homepage, click the link labeled "Chat" located on the Course Tools menu at the left

of the class main page. A separate window containing the chat module will pop up. Be sure all pop-up blockers are turned off or the chat window will be blocked.

Chat Rooms

In your BlackBoard course, there are several 'rooms' set up to organize the chat by class groups or topics. Your Instructor will specify which rooms are to be used for specific tasks or times. To access a "room," simply click on the appropriate room title.

Discussions

To access Discussions from the "Homepage," click the link labeled "Discussions" located on the Course Tools menu at the left of the class main page.

Viewing Discussion Messages

- A list of topics will be displayed along with the number of messages in each. Select a topic to see its messages. Click on the subject to read the message.
- Use the **All/Unread** buttons to toggle between seeing all messages in a topic or only new posts.
- You can also choose to display messages as either **threaded** (grouped into cohesive Discussions) or **unthreaded** (ungrouped, appearing chronologically).
- You can show all replies to a topic by clicking on **Expand All** or show only

the first entry in a thread by choosing **Collapse All**.



[Discussions](#)

Posting Messages in Discussions

- Create a new message using the "Create Message" command. This was discussed earlier in "Composing New Mail Messages."

Replying to Discussion Messages

- Using "Reply" keeps your new message in the same thread as the message to which you are responding. Your message will appear indented below the message you replied to. The message you are replying to is automatically quoted.

Assignments

Assignments

1. Click on the Assignments link located on the Course Tools menu at the left of the class main page.
2. Make sure you are on the Inbox tab and click on the title of the assignment you wish to submit.
3. Either type your assignment into the box provided or click "Add Attachments" under submission.
4. If you click "Add Attachments", a browse box will pop up to allow you to select a file from your local hard disk. Click on "My Computer", select the file, and click "Open". When it is done, your file will be listed under 'Attachments.'
5. Click "Submit".



[Assignments](#)

If you wish to verify the upload, return to your Assignment page and click "Submitted" at the top of the screen. This will show all assignments successfully submitted.

Assessments



The BlackBoard **Assessments tool** can be used in a variety of ways in your course. Instructors may create quizzes that are merely considered homework assignments, or they may take the form of actual quizzes and tests.

Accessing Assessments

To access quizzes, tests, or quiz-like assignments, click on the Assessment link located on the Course Tools menu at the left of the class main page. From there, you will be taken to page containing a list of assessments (quizzes) to be completed in your course. This page will show a list of all assessments that are stored in the unit, but they may or may not be released or available to students. If students are allowed access to an assessment, it will be underlined as a link, and clicking on it will let you commence the test. Simply click on the title of the assessment in the list that you wish to access and follow the directions from there.

Example of an Online Assessment

This is an example of the start of a typical assessment.

1. The header information shows the name of the assessment, the student's name, the starting time, time allowed (if imposed) and the number of questions in the quiz.
2. The panel on the right shows which questions have been answered (saved) by the student.
3. The red dots are replaced by blue checks and the remaining time is updated as each answer is saved.
4. Some assessments consist of a single long web page where students can freely scroll up or down and return to earlier questions to change their answers, providing they remember to click the Save Answer button after each change. However, some quizzes may be administered one question at a time with or without the ability to re-visit a specific question.

At the end of the assessment (and at the start) are the "Finish" button and the "Save All" button. Clicking the Finish button will submit the assessment for marking by BlackBoard. The student will be able (if allowed by the lecturer's settings) to go back into the assessment straight away to review his or her marks and score. The student may then proceed to make further attempts at the assessment if multiple attempts are allowed.

The Save All button allows the student to save all answers at one time if the exam has been administered as showing all questions at once.

Calendar

Accessing Your Calendar

To access your Calendar from the Homepage, click on the "Calendar" link located on the Course Tools menu at the left of the class main page.

Viewing Calendar

If there are any new entries, they will appear as a link on that specific date. Click on the link to view more details of the entry.



[Calendar](#)

Campus Announcements

From time to time there will be important items of information that you need to be aware of concerning your online class. The Faculty Development Specialist will post these items on the Campus Announcements section of your "My BlackBoard" main page. This is the first page you see when you log in to BlackBoard. The Campus Announcements section is located below your Course List. These announcements will sometimes be made available in a pop-up window that comes up automatically when you log in.

In addition to new items of relevance to your class, you will also be able to find previous announcements that may be able to assist you if you are having technical problems.

Importance of Java

BlackBoard is a Java based program. Therefore, it is very important to have the correct version of Java installed on your computer. If you do not, the features and functions will not work properly. If you are experiencing problems like not being able to send or open e-mail, attach documents, save assessment answers, etc. it is probably the version of Java on your computer that is causing the problems.

To correct the problem, you will first have to un-install all versions of java and try the one recommended by BlackBoard. **DO NOT use the one from the browser checker.** It is not compatible.

To uninstall previous versions, go to Start, My Computer, Add or Remove Programs. Click on the Java Program and then click Remove. Then click the link provided below, or type it into your browser's address bar, to install the correct version.

http://www.snead.edu/java-1_5_0_05-windows.exe

Once you get to the site above, you will choose "Save". Next, select "Desktop" as your destination and click "Save" again. When the program has downloaded, double click on the icon placed on your desktop, then click "Run". This will install the BlackBoard recommended version of java on your computer.

Firewalls

Firewalls (protection sometimes built into your anti-virus/security program) can sometimes interfere with the normal operation of BlackBoard. In some cases, they can also disallow the viewing of course lecture videos. You will need to configure any security software such as anti-virus and firewalls to allow access. Make sure you go into the software and add the Snead State BlackBoard site as a trusted site.

Pop-up Blockers

Be sure to **disable all pop-up blockers** while on BlackBoard. BlackBoard is a pop-up based program. Email, exams, calendar postings, chat module, etc., all appear in pop-up windows. If you have a pop-up blocker on, you will not be able to view these items.

For example, if you click on the chat module and no box pops up, there is a pop-up blocker somewhere. You will have to turn them all off. Pop-up blockers can be located in your browser and in your anti-virus program. There can be more than one, so you have to make sure to get them all.

For blockers located in the browser, you can usually just right click on the icon located on the tool bar and choose to disable them. For the ones located in the anti-virus program, you have to open the program and search for the pop-up blocker to turn it off.

If, however, you get an error message instead, the problem is probably the version of java you are using. (Please see the Importance of Java to find the solution for this.)

Making Changes to Your Computer (Effects Of)

Please remember that any updates, additions, downloads, etc. to your computer can potentially interfere with the normal operation of BlackBoard. One change to be especially aware of is any change involving the version of Java on your computer. The BlackBoard recommended version of Java is available under Campus Announcements in a message entitled, "The Importance of Java". If you either accidentally or purposefully change versions of Java and BlackBoard ceases to perform normally, you may have to refer back to this message to delete the new version(s) and get the old version back.

Also, if you have more than one version of Java on your computer, they can interfere with and cancel one another out. You should have only the BlackBoard recommended version installed on your computer.

Additionally, downloads of toolbars, etc. sometimes contain built in pop-up blockers which will interfere with BlackBoard. And, some programs such as Kazaa will also stop BlackBoard from working properly.

Log-in Problems

When trying to access Blackboard, make sure that your browser security is set to medium or lower. To do this, go to Tools, Internet Options, Security (Security level for this zone). If it is anything other than medium or lower, click on Default Level, Apply, and Ok.

Also, under Tools, Internet Options, check your Content Advisor. Make sure it is off.

Finally, if you have a firewall, you will first need to try adding the BlackBoard link as a trusted site. If this doesn't work, you may have to turn the firewall off. (See Firewalls above)

Alternate Browsers

While Internet Explorer is the most BlackBoard compatible browser (and BlackBoard recommended), some times there may be issues with your browser that can not be diagnosed or resolved that interfere with the normal operations of BlackBoard. If this is the case, an alternate browser may have to be used. One alternate browser that BlackBoard recommends is Mozilla Firefox. This is a free download and is available at:

http://www.download.com/Mozilla-Firefox/3000-2356_4-10208565.htm

Please note, however, that you may not be able to watch video recordings of lectures in Firefox. These have to be watched in Internet Explorer.

Problems Uploading Assignments

When an instructor asks you to save your assignment outside of BlackBoard and upload it as an attachment, be sure to save your document in Microsoft Word. BlackBoard will not accept other file formats. You can upload it, but the instructor will not be able to view it. Some may have Office 07, but the safe action for now is to save assignments in the old format.

Viewing Instructor Materials

Instructors will sometimes post files saved in PowerPoint or Word. To view these files, you will have to make sure your computer contains the software that created them. If you do not have Microsoft Word or PowerPoint on your computer, you can either purchase them, or download the viewer for free. The viewers can be downloaded here:

Microsoft Word Viewer:

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=95e24c87-8732-48d5-8689-ab826e7b8fdf&DisplayLang=en>

PowerPoint Viewer:

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=048dc840-14e1-467d-8dca-19d2a8fd7485&DisplayLang=en>

Viewing Recorded Lectures

Some BlackBoard courses contain recorded lecture videos or movies relevant to your class. To view these videos, you need to make sure your system has a current version of Windows Media Player installed. If you do not have Windows Media Player, it can be obtained here:

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/download/AllDownloads.aspx>

Viewing Recorded Lectures for Mac Users

You must have Windows Media Player 9.0 from the following website-

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/player/mac/mp9/default.aspx>

1. Copy and paste the link into Safari or Firefox.
2. Click on download and wait for it to finish, but do not try to open the file. You will need one more program to open that file, which is located at the following link:

http://download.cnet.com/3001-2250_4-

[10653042.html?spi=9e292989a97cc1b963c98fb9fb11142c](http://download.cnet.com/3001-2250_4-10653042.html?spi=9e292989a97cc1b963c98fb9fb11142c)

Download will start automatically. If it does not, click where it says:

“Your download will begin in a moment. If it doesn't, [click here](#) to try again.”

After everything is downloaded install “Stuffit”. It is the second program you will download. Next double click on the first program you downloaded. It should be called “Windows Media.” Wait for it to decompress. The program will show up wherever you selected to download the initial file from the Internet. Finally, install and you are done.

Unfortunately you still cannot watch the video on the website. You will have to download the video and watch it from your computer.

That is all that is required, but here are some more useful links for video players. These will allow your Mac to play almost any kind of video file there is.

1. <http://www.videolan.org/vlc/download-macosx.html>
2. <http://perian.org/>
3. <http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyId=915D874D-D747-4180-A400-5F06B1B5E559&displaylang=en>

All of these websites are legitimate websites. There should be no security risks involved. These have been tested and run on a Mac with no problems. But if any issues arise the SSCC I.T. Department will not be held responsible. If you have any problems related to Apple Products Feel free to contact Alex Mclemore at alexmclemore@gmail.com

Appendix A

Instructor Evaluation

In an effort to assist instructors in becoming more effective, please complete the following survey. Be assured that responses to survey items are anonymous.

Instructor:

Course being evaluated:

1. How much did the instructor use a variety of options for learning in this class (lecture, audio-visuals, small groups, projects, online resources, etc.)?
 - a. Very much
 - b. Somewhat
 - c. Not very much

2. How much did you learn in this class?
 - a. A lot
 - b. Enough
 - c. Not much

3. How much did this class help you become a better student/thinker?
 - a. Very much
 - b. Somewhat
 - c. Not very much

4. How active were you in the class?
 - a. Very active
 - b. Active
 - c. Not active

5. How much did the technology used in the class enhance learning?
 - a. Very much
 - b. Somewhat
 - c. Not very much

6. How much would you rate your experience in this class as positive?
 - a. Very much
 - b. Somewhat
 - c. Not very much

7. How much did you interact and collaborate with other students in this class?
 - a. Very much
 - b. Somewhat
 - c. Not very much

8. How much has taking this class made you a better person?
 - a. Very much
 - b. Somewhat
 - c. Not very much

9. How much has taking this class helped you "learn how to learn" so that you will be a better "lifelong learner"?
- a. Very much
 - b. Somewhat
 - c. Not very much
10. The College's philosophy is that students and teachers must be equally committed to student success. How well did this instructor communicate that philosophy?
- a. Very well
 - b. To some extent
 - c. Not well

Comments:

Appendix B

Distance Learning Survey

In an effort to assist instructors in becoming more effective, please complete the following survey. Be assured that responses to survey items are anonymous.

Instructor:

Course being evaluated:

1. Prior to this course, have you ever taken a course that is considered "distance learning?"
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

2. Of the following course types, choose those in which you are interested.
 - a. Online
 - b. Videocassette
 - c. Cd
 - d. Public television
 - e. Interactive television

3. How far away from the Boaz campus do you live?
 - a. 0-20 miles
 - b. 20-50 miles
 - c. more than 50 miles

4. Which of the following is the major reason you chose to take a distance learning course? Choose all that apply.
 - a. Distance from campus
 - b. Family situation
 - c. Job conflicts
 - d. Course schedule conflicts
 - e. Personal preference

5. How did you find out about the Snead distance learning program?
 - a. Direct mail
 - b. Course schedule
 - c. Word of mouth
 - d. Web Site
 - e. Advertisement

6. Thus far, what is your overall impression of the distance learning program at Snead?
 - a. Satisfied
 - b. Somewhat satisfied
 - c. Somewhat Dissatisfied
 - d. Dissatisfied
 - e. Neutral

7. How likely are you to take another distance learning course?
- a. Very likely
 - b. Likely
 - c. Not likely
 - d. Never
 - e. Not applicable - I have finished my Snead coursework.
8. As a distance student, how accessible did you find student support services (counseling, admissions, financial aid, bookstore, library) to be?
- a. Very accessible
 - b. Accessible
 - c. Not very accessible
 - d. Not applicable - I had no need of support services.

9. Is there some aspect of student services that needs improvement?

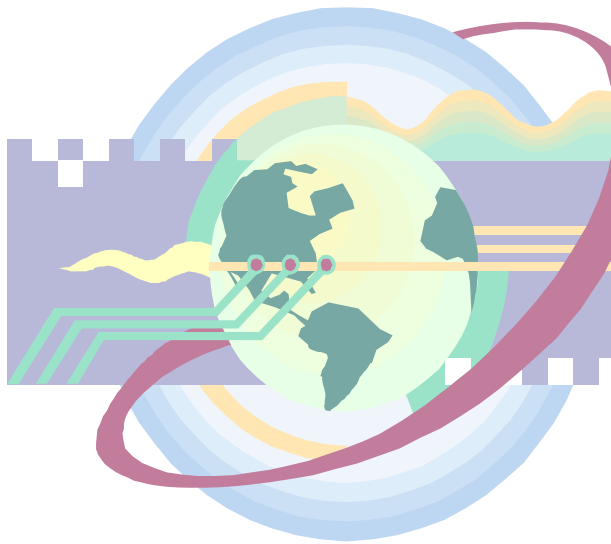
10. How helpful was having a separate course listing for distance learning courses in the printed schedule?
- a. Very helpful
 - b. Helpful
 - c. Not helpful
 - d. It made no difference

11. Where was the computer you used for the majority of the course housed?
- a. At my home
 - b. At a friend's home
 - c. At work
 - d. At a public access point (like a library)
 - e. Other

12. How does this online course compare to an on-campus course?
- a. Better
 - b. Worse
 - c. No Difference

Additional Comments:

Snead State Community College
Distance Education



For More Information

Phone:
(256) 840-4180

Web Site:
<http://www.snead.edu/distancelearning>

E-Mail:
hgullion@snead.edu

Mail:
Snead State Community College
Distance Education Department
P.O. Box 734
Boaz, AL 35957