

TIMOTHY BELL / Clackamas Print

Instructor Linda Vogt and student Carlyne Troutt explore "Digital Deadlines," an online journalism course being test-driven by Clackamas reporting students.

Distance learning expands student opportunities

MIKE GARCIA
Staff Writer

Imagine taking classes from Britain's Oxford University while living in Oregon City. Or taking classes from Clackamas while living in Britain.

The developing ideas of distance learning might make these ideas reality very soon. Clackamas is among the hundreds of colleges that have already begun putting together a distance learning program.

Among the courses Clackamas students may see on the Internet soon are: the Physical Science department's Chemistry 104-106 sequence, an Auto Parts Merchandising class taught by Mike Mattsen and a Computer Science 121 class taught by Linda Anderson.

Also being considered are two high-school credit courses: U.S. History (taught by Brenda Inglis) and Career Exploration (taught by Mike Watkins). All of the proposed courses have a target date of Fall Term 1998 for completion.

Before leaving last week for a distance learning conference in Bend for Oregon's community colleges, Journalism Advisor Linda Vogt tested out the sound features of a CCC course that is already partially online—J 216, Introduction to Reporting. This class is being created by Vogt and Ken Roth, who works for Clackamas through the Oregon Advanced Technology Center in Wilsonville.

Roth generated the idea because he "didn't see anything else he thought was very interesting [in other online journalism courses]... He saw a need and an opportunity," Vogt said.

"[Ken's] a genius in terms of multimedia and what you can do," Vogt said. "I feel really lucky. And with excellent support from the administration", she added, referring specifically to Dean of Instructional Services Liz Goulard, "it's really coming together well."

So what does an online course offer that a classroom setting doesn't? For one thing, distance and time factors are eliminated. A student can "go to class" while sitting at home at 2 a.m. In addition, the class can come alive with computer-generated pictures and sounds. It can be "a lot more interesting than writ-

ing stuff out of your textbook," Vogt said.

Roth is still working on the virtual-reality aspect of J 216. Vogt outlined what they've done so far: a digital camera was set up just east of the Community Center. It took a 360-degree picture of the campus from that point of view.

A scenario was made up in which a small airplane "crashed" in the grass between the Community Center and Barlow Hall. False wreckage set up in the grass was caught by the digital camera. The voices of students who pretended to be witnesses to the crash were digitally recorded and placed on the web site.

With the new sound cards installed in the McLoughlin computer lab, students can listen to the recordings on headphones, see the photos, and go from there to writing a practice-news story about the incident, as if they were at a real airplane crash. It adds to the experience of the class. "It's like you've got a bunch of guest speakers in your class," Vogt said.

Students and computers are "a great match", Vogt said, because many students are computer-literate, even to the point where they surpass their instructors' knowledge. "It becomes a learning experience for the teacher, too."

"We're so tied to the notion: 'I want you sitting right there; I want to see what you're doing'", Vogt said, "that some teachers might not get into distance learning."

Add this to the argument that the quality of a course might decline online. Vogt said that some instructors have reacted coldly to distance learning because online classes don't seem as personal as the traditional classroom environment. "But in many cases the opposite is true," she said, adding, "It affords every student an equal opportunity. Our culture can put limitations on us that computers would remove."

Specifically, shyness in front of a group would be eliminated. Many instructors who have encouraged e-mail discussions have found that students who don't normally speak up in class have an easier time doing it in writing. Because a silence online is not as awkward as a silence in classroom speech,

students have more time to think of responses, Vogt said.

So far, colleges successful in distance learning have initially concentrated on a small number of classes, Vogt said, so that they won't be overwhelmed by new technology and responsibilities.

Once students and instructors see the benefits of online courses, there's a kind of snowball effect and more people start experimenting with the medium.

The Distance Learning Development Team, which meets every Wednesday at 12 p.m. in room CC126, has two main goals: to develop the proposed online courses by next fall, and to identify challenges and issues to work on along the way. Vogt is optimistic as long as the college administration and faculty continue to increase their trust and support in distance learning.

"Digital Deadlines," the online J216 course, can be found at <http://www.orweb.com/oatc/digital/deadline.html>

Greek Islands, Italy tour meeting set

The Greek Islands and Italy will be the destination next June for a women's tour of Europe, and an organizational meeting will be held Monday from 6:30-8 p.m.

The trip is sponsored by the AAWCC Connections Program (formerly Focus on Women) and will be led by instructors Carol Evans and Linda Vogt. Cost of the 15-day tour is approximately \$3,200, which includes airfare, cruise, hotels and two meals per day.

Highlights of the tour include the Athens; the Greek Islands cruise including Mykonos, Kudasi, Rhodes and Santorini; and Sorrento and Rome in Italy. Registration will be begun Monday night; a \$90 registration fee is required to hold a spot on the tour.

The tour meeting will be held in the Community Center, Room 127. For more information, contact Linda Vogt, coordinator, at ext. 2310.

New instructor merges history with passion

JARED BEZZANT
Staff Writer

One of Clackamas' favorite new staff additions this year would have to be Jackie Flowers, who laughed at that idea and asked, "Is that because of my accent?"

Her southern drawl may be part of her charm, but students are finding her teaching exciting and interesting. Her subject is U.S. history.

"I had a boring, dry history teacher and I hated it. I want to make it interesting," she said.

Flowers, from North Carolina, got her BA at Appalachian State University in biology and had little interest in history.

After school she worked on a Navy base in South Carolina for approximately 10 years. She enjoyed her work there, but predictions that the base would close prompted her to quit and go back to school at the University of Tennessee.

"I still didn't know what I wanted to do when I got there on registration day. I went through the books and the history classes looked the most interesting," she said.

After one year she received her BA in history and went on to graduate school in South Carolina. She specialized in 20th century cultural history and served as assistant teacher in her eight year tenure there. In 1996 she graduated with a Ph.D. in U.S. history.

She never thought that from there she would end up in Oregon. And how? Through a nationwide job search and much hard work, Flowers earned an interview and her present job, in what she calls a "very competitive field."

When Flowers found out she was going to Oregon she said, "The first thing I did was get a raincoat."

Flowers loves Oregon though. She said, "Your waves are a little bigger, and your mountains a little taller."

Flowers is excited and happy to be on campus at Clackamas.

"I sincerely love this job," she said.

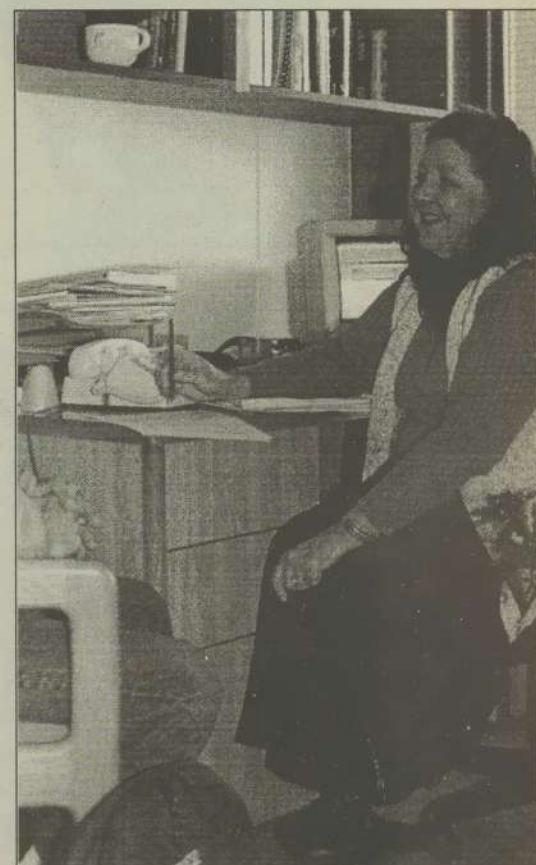
She is enthusiastic about getting students interested in history, and is having fun with it, but most importantly, learning. She plans to accomplish this through research programs on the Internet and using library resources. Flowers wants to make history not only a listening course, but also a course of action and work.

Flowers is teaching five U.S. history classes, and hopes to work one-on-one with students. "I want to know all their names, and I am trying to memorize them," she said.

"For a historian I have a horrible memory."

Besides teaching, Flowers enjoys a life with her husband, playing classical music on the piano, and photography. Her love for photography has moved her to an appreciation for the arts, especially from the 1930's and 60's.

No matter what Flowers loves, she is definitely loved here on the campus and is making an impression historically.



ALEX MAHAN / Clackamas Print

Though Jackie Flowers hails from North Carolina, she has found a home at Clackamas.