

# Online Learning Essentials for Osher Students

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at William & Mary  
Fall 2020

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## Today's agenda

- Session #3 = Why enroll in an online course?
- How is being an online student different than being in a classroom?
- What should I expect inside a Blackboard course?  
(...a guided tour)
- Should I give it a try?
  
- Any questions or comments from last week?

## Why enroll in an online course?

- (As with Zoom) no hassles with parking, walking to class, weather concerns, or health concerns
- Online courses open up more possibilities for **time-bound adults** who cannot commit to a specific day/time for coursework because of job and/or family responsibilities
- More flexibility in scheduling your time *during* the online course (you can also schedule multiple courses within the same general timeframe)
- Ability to go at your own pace, and also go back and review



## Why enroll in an online course?

- Both classroom and Zoom courses are characterized by mostly passive participation of students --- online courses encourage **active participation** and better social engagement with the instructor (and other students) through reliance on communication via discussion boards, email messages, text messages, etc.
- Online courses provide for a more **self-directed** learning experience for adults than a traditional lecture, typically by way of using a problem-solving methodology within the course design
- Discussion boards allow for much more of **sharing of life experiences** among instructors and students in the course than a traditional lecture --- adult learners appreciate the collaborative relationships that an online learning environment can provide

## Why enroll in an online course?

- Computer assistive technologies can help support adult learners with disabilities (mobility, hearing, limited sight, etc.)
- Multimedia learning tools for online content delivery help stimulate learner involvement
- Successfully learning a new online technology skill set will prepare students for, and allow, other lifelong learning experiences across the web
- It's different and it's fun!



## LMS/CMS/VLE? (...a quick review)

- Learning Management System (**LMS**)  
Course Management System (**CMS**)  
Virtual Learning Environment (**VLE**)
- Essentially all the same general thing – ways to provide learning opportunities using computer and Internet technologies
- Some slight differences in tools and capabilities among them
- “Blackboard” is the learning management system available at W&M, other LMS’s include “Canvas,” “Moodle,” etc.
- A virtual learning environment is the “classroom space” you go to (*on your computer*) to engage in online learning

## Online instructors have different roles/tasks

- Much more time spent in *designing* and *building* the course within the LMS
- Instead of just “lectures” in the classroom, focus is on various kinds of learning activities within a virtual environment
- Much more time spent monitoring and moderating student interactions with prepared courses materials, discussion boards, etc. --- usually in an asynchronous manner
- Instead of being a classroom instructor in the role of **“Sage on the stage”**
- the online instructor assumes the virtual role of **“Guide on the side”**

## Online students have different roles/tasks

- Students are responsible for **engaging** with the learning activities, rather than passive absorption of lectures
- Students are responsible for managing their own time and degree of participation in the course
- Students are responsible for using various communication tools to engage the instructor and other students
- Students are responsible for creating a sense of online community by actively participating in course activities and events as designed by the instructor
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fIU7chIYKFc>

## Time management and course schedule



- A critical success skill for online learners is **time management** (similarly, the lack of time management skill is the greatest factor in many online failures)
- The online instructor sets the **course schedule** and duration
- Typically, the instructor will publish a "**course calendar**" with due dates for various activities --- the instructor may also use the "**announcements**" feature in Blackboard to guide the student's pace and remind students of assignment due dates

## Time management and course schedule



- Some online courses may be "*go at your own pace*" within a specified start and end date
- Some online courses may specify *weekly assignments* that must be completed within that timeframe (or students are "locked out")
- Online instructors can "see" how often and how long a student participates in required online activities (i.e., active instructor monitoring)

## What should I expect inside a course?

- VLE/LMS might not be (*or look like*) others you may have worked with in the past
- Degree of instructor involvement varies
- Sometimes, “facilitators” serve as course managers
- Time commitment (typical Osher course = 2 – 3 hours per week?)
- Independence, but self-discipline required
- (For MOOC’s) A variety, and potentially larger number, of fellow students, i.e., age, nationality, gender, educational background, home location, etc. (*because online students can be from anywhere*)
- Must ask for support and help

## VLE/CMS/LMS Platform – dual purpose

- For the student AND for the instructor
- You only see the “student view”
- Instructor uses the VLE/LMS platform to construct the course, post course materials, learning activities, etc.
- VLE/LMS provides instructor with many online “templates” for content and learning activities
- Many tools, and tool functions, within a typical VLE/LMS
- General goal is to provide as much (or more) instructor/student interactivity as in a regular classroom

## Hybrid options (some examples)

- Classroom sessions supplemented by online Blackboard resources (videos, web links, discussion boards, etc.)
- Zoom sessions supplemented by online Blackboard resources (videos, web links, discussion boards, etc.)
- Online Blackboard course supplemented by some classroom sessions
- Online Blackboard course supplemented by some synchronous Zoom sessions
- A combination of a Blackboard, Classroom, and Zoom course
- Mix and proportion of each kind learning modality may vary
- Time and duration of hybrid courses may vary
- Occasionally, hybrid options become learner choices

## Zoom – W&M’s web conferencing tool

- (Typically) *synchronous* interaction between the instructor and student(s)
- Video of instructor, plus PowerPoint slides, chat board, etc.
- Can also be recorded and played back for individual students at a later time (i.e., asynchronous)
- Because of larger class sizes, student/instructor interactions may be limited
- Similar to classroom “lectures” but students and instructors are not “in the same place”

## Panopto at W&M

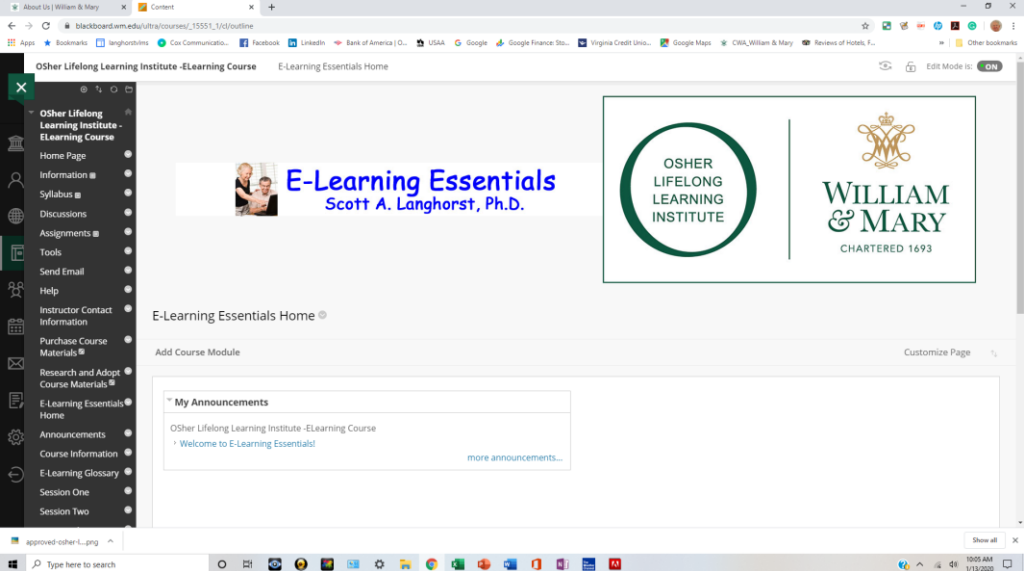
- A specialized software tool to record videos
- Tool is used by the **instructor** to create video recordings, and placed inside Blackboard for students to use as part of the online course
- (Asynchronous) video recording of instructor and instructional materials (which may be enhanced with PowerPoint or other presentation software)
- Direct transmission of information in an online environment (similar to classroom lectures), e.g., YouTube videos
- Different from Zoom (which is *synchronous* videoconferencing), although some Zoom sessions may be recorded and played back asynchronously by students at a later time

## Blackboard is W&M's LMS/VLE

- **Things to look for:**
- Navigation tools and methods
- Announcements area
- Discussion boards
- Blackboard "Help" for students
- Assignments
- Content areas ("sessions," "week 1," etc. )
- Email vs. messages
- Quiz area



## Exploring a LMS/VLE Let's take a tour of a Blackboard site:



The screenshot shows a Blackboard LMS interface. The browser address bar displays 'blackboard.wm.edu/ultra/courses/\_15551\_1/02/outline'. The page title is 'Osher Lifelong Learning Institute - E-Learning Course'. The main content area features a banner for 'E-Learning Essentials' by Scott A. Langhorst, Ph.D., alongside the logos for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute and William & Mary (Chartered 1693). A left-hand navigation menu includes options like Home Page, Information, Syllabus, Discussions, Assignments, Tools, Send Email, Help, Instructor Contact Information, Purchase Course Materials, Research and Adopt Course Materials, E-Learning Essentials Home, Announcements, Course Information, E-Learning Glossary, Session One, and Session Two. The main content area shows 'E-Learning Essentials Home' with a 'My Announcements' section containing a welcome message: 'Welcome to E-Learning Essentials!' and a link to 'more announcements...'. The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the time as 10:05 AM on 1/13/2020.

## Osher at W&M online options?

- **Osher online courses (in Blackboard) for Spring 2021:**
- “Legacy of Elizabeth I: Her life, leadership, and loves”  
Debbie Misiag
- “Understanding Today’s Economic Trends & Issues”  
Dan Gaske
- “Virginia Criminal Law” Nathan Green
- “An Engagement/Interaction of Life’s Experiences”  
Francis Bado
- “Storytelling: An Act of Memory, Imaginations, and Vision”  
Shari Wiltshire

## Osher options? (class discussion)

- Hybrid courses (mix of in-class and e-learning options)  
what kind of format? what kind of class schedules?
- Streaming video Osher **course library** with on-demand courses/classes (requires high-quality video production values)
- Partnerships with other Osher institutions for online courses?
- Cost/membership options for online, hybrid, zoom, etc.?
- Scheduling options?
- Other issues? Concerns?

## Should I give it a try?

- Now that you know more about online learning, I hope you have less fear and anxiety about giving it a try
- I also hope you now understand a little more about where to find online learning courses, what to expect inside an e-learning course, and how some online learning tools work
- Try to use some of the online learning tools as supplements to your other lifelong learning activities, e.g., YouTube,
- Check out Osher at W&M online courses --- sign up and have fun!
- Share this information with other Osher students!

## Course evaluation

- Don't forget to complete your course evaluation for Osher --- look for the email
- Thanks!

## Online learning for Osher students

- Thanks for attending the course!
- Hope you found it useful and fun!

## Contact information

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