

# Sabbatical Proposal:

## Technical Retooling, On Course Online, & Accessibility Training Modules

This sabbatical proposal encompasses three areas that reflect college needs as well as needs in my primary teaching area (Web Development) and secondary teaching area (teaching online). Addressing all three will benefit the college and help revitalize my teaching by **reinforcing subject area knowledge** and **establishing industry contacts** to improve curriculum, **enhancing teaching strategies** to better support **online student success**, and **sharing expertise** to help the district meet its **Section 508 compliance goals**. While ambitious, there is enough overlap among the three areas to make this feasible as long as I begin prior to the sabbatical semester.

Following are the three areas of focus for the proposed sabbatical activities:

- **Technical Retooling**. Update Web development skills, particularly Flash and Flash scripting, but also including new technologies that will be incorporated into the Web Development curriculum. This will include focused study to master specific skills and broad research (including industry interviews) to gain perspective on bleeding edge technologies and how they might influence future directions in the department.
- **On Course Online**. Complete additional *On Course* training (including a graduate level course) and apply *On Course* strategies to improve student success, particularly in online courses. Results will be modeled and shared with other teachers in ED 214 (*Developing an Online Course*), staff development, and at an *On Course* conference.
- **Accessibility training modules**. Develop teacher-friendly training modules for teachers to help them develop accessible Web sites and documents. These modules would be shared with other teachers in ED 214 and in staff development.

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## Description of Proposed Sabbatical Activities

### Technical Retooling

Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there.  
- Will Rogers

Staying current in a vocational area is a challenge, and in a technical field it is a moving target. My recent stint as department coordinator has left me flailing to keep up, even as my scope of expertise narrows. The main focus of this sabbatical is to refresh technical expertise in the following areas:

- **Flash**. Though I have taught Flash, it has gone through two significant version changes since I taught it. ActionScript, the language that makes Flash animations interactive, is now based on an object oriented model that requires a completely

different approach and set of skills. As well, Flash now supports video and database integration and has made progress in accessibility. I would like to teach Flash once my duties as department coordinator end, but I need to learn it from the ground up to be effective.

- CSS. I use and teach Cascading Style Sheets (CSS), but I need to research and experiment with an aspect of CSS called layers. I need to discover how reliable layers are in multiple browsers, how well they work with dynamic data, and how to use layers in universal (accessible) design. I also need to better understand how to code CSS.
- E-commerce. Many of my students are interested in creating e-commerce web sites. I would like to better understand shopping carts and financial transactions so that I can incorporate it into the current Web Development courses.
- Web site marketing: Search engines have changed since I first studied them. I would like to be able to teach better strategies for optimizing Web sites for search engines.
- Universal Design. Web design is expanding to PDA's, cell phones, and more. I need to better understand how to design for these devices, refine my understanding of accessibility issues, and make sure this is coherently addressed in our curriculum.
- New technologies. Innovations continue to flood the Web world. I need to explore some of the newer web technologies such as RSS, AJAX (Asynchronous JavaScript + XML) and new Microsoft solutions. My intention here would be to help put these technologies into perspective and identify future directions for our Web Development curriculum.

I anticipate this would take 8-10 weeks of focused instruction and study to learn this material. It would take at least 4 weeks of development time to redesign the Flash course and develop an advanced Flash course. An additional 2-4 weeks would be needed to develop and/or revise instructional materials and learning activities to reflect the other areas of focus.

### **Resources**

Because Web Development is a rapidly changing field and because I need to fill gaps in subject area knowledge, there is no one course that addresses these areas. I anticipate using a variety of books, seminars, and Web sites to learn this material. I also plan to interview web developers in industry to help establish perspective. Following is a preliminary list of relevant resources:

- **Lynda.com** – video training in Web technologies & design, especially useful for Flash. The Multimedia and Entertainment Initiative offers free accounts to this useful resource.
- **safari.peachpit.com** – a library of technical books that can be read online. Dozens of prestigious publishers post their books on Safari, and there are multiple books available for all the subject areas listed above.
- **Multimedia and Entertainment Initiative** – This initiative, sponsored by the state, can help me identify industry partners to interview.

- **Microsoft Developer’s Network** - offers seminars on new Microsoft solutions.
- **Other faculty in the district** – David Raney does an excellent job of keeping up with Microsoft technology and Clifton Quinn at Grossmont recently completed a sabbatical project aimed at reviewing industry trends.

Here is a partial list of lynda.com video training modules that I plan to complete:

TITLE	HOURS
ActionScript 3.0 Essential Training	13
Flash User Experience Best Practices	5
Flash Professional 8 Essential Training	12
Flash Professional 8 Beyond the Basics	10
Flash Professional 8 Building Data-Driven Applications	7
Flash Professional 8 Video Integration	8
Photoshop CS2 and Flash 8 Integration	3
CSS for Designers	8
CSS Site Design	7
Learning CSS 2	4
Search Engine Optimization	9
XML Essential Training	6

## On Course Online

The role of the teacher is to create the conditions for invention rather than provide ready-made knowledge.

- Seymour Papert

In September 2006, I attended a wonderful *On Course* seminar sponsored by a grant at our college. The tagline on the workshop workbook says it all: “Innovative strategies for empowering your students to become active, responsible learners.” The style of teaching modeled by the facilitator inspired me to consider collateral learning and got me thinking about ways to improve student success in an online environment. I left with many ideas, but not enough time to implement the ideas in an organized way. Teaching online requires more preparation than teaching face-to-face, and though I have tried a few strategies, I need focused time to fully develop them. Here are some of the ideas I would like to pursue:

- Develop a **case study** to illustrate issues of responsibility in an online course
- Develop **orientation activities** to help students develop personal responsibility and time management skills
- Develop **intervention activities** for students who fall behind. I envision conferencing with the student (using CCCConfer.org) and directing them to an activity or resource based on their situation. Currently, students lose points when they are late, so they might be motivated by extra credit points. Once they conference, the motivation would be to succeed in the class.

- Develop **discussion activities** that encourage interaction. These need to be effective even when students have differing schedules.

My goal is to model these activities in ED 214, use them in all my online classes, and to share them in staff development workshops.

I am also interested in attending *On Course II*, attending the annual *On Course* conference in March, and taking the *On Course* graduate course in Fall 2007 (ED 582, offered online by Goucher College in Maryland). The sabbatical would allow me time to pursue these and apply what I learn in an organized way.

### **Resources**

- **oncourseworkshop.com** – packed with ideas and information about additional workshops, the conference, and graduate level courses

### **Accessibility Training Modules**

Example is not the main thing in influencing others, it is the only thing.  
- *Albert Schweitzer*

Our campus is required to become Section 508 compliant, which will require that teachers learn some new skills, review the materials they deliver online, and make necessary adjustments. The first step is to identify the simplest ways to make Word, PowerPoint, and Web documents accessible and then to share this information with teachers in a format they can refer to as they become ready. Although I have done some preliminary work on this for ED 214, it needs more attention. For example, I need to explain how to make Word and PowerPoint documents accessible and to deliver the instruction in a format that can be easily accessed any time.

I would like to develop written instruction and video demonstrations to help teachers make their sites 501 compliant. I would use this in ED 214 and within the Web Development curriculum and would also share it with campus teachers through staff development.

Since many teachers are in the position of having to review their own web sites, I would like to pilot this process and continue to serve on the Online Teaching and Learning Committee as it continues working toward institutionalizing processes for faculty. As I review my own site for accessibility, I hope to identify tools to help automate the process. Even if we are able to hire a specialist in this area, change is assisted when there is a faculty advocate to support campus goals.

### **Resources**

- campus and district specialists
- <http://www.csufresno.edu/webaccess/>

- <http://www.washington.edu/doi/>
- <http://www.section508.gov>
- <http://www.unc.edu/webaccess/guidelines.html>
- <http://www.w3.org/WAI/>

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## Relevance to Philosophy and Purpose of the Sabbatical Program

We act as though comfort and luxury were the chief requirements of life when all we need to make us really happy is something to be enthusiastic about.

- *Anonymous*

### Instructor Revitalization

Enthusiasm is contagious, but it is difficult to maintain vitality in a field that changes rapidly, especially when one is responsible for coordinating 2 departments during a period of transition. Time is needed to study, reflect, and apply, especially when one wishes to make changes in curriculum and pedagogy. I anticipate the sabbatical break will help me recharge so that I can bring a renewed energy to my teaching.

### Value to the Department, College and District

#### ***Technical Retooling***

Our department relies on constant renewal of curriculum based on technology advances in industry. Focused learning and a survey of technology trends (including industry interviews) will help guide curriculum development and revitalize courses. Expertise in Flash will make staffing easier and will help form a foundation in future curriculum expansion in new media. This supports the College mission areas of **academic excellence, strong community relations, and innovation and creativity.**

#### ***On Course Online***

Learning more about *On Course*, modeling *On Course* strategies, and sharing strategies with other teachers helps build a student-centered, success oriented culture at our college. Success builds enrollment, and is especially important for online courses, which typically have a lower success rate than face-to-face courses. This supports the College mission areas of **academic excellence, student success, innovation and creativity, and resource development.**

### **Accessibility Training Modules**

Our district is required by law to make electronically delivered documents accessible. This also supports diversity, part of the mission of the college, by allowing students with disabilities access to information. Researching accessibility and developing training will support ED 214 and all college faculty and will help the college reach its goal of section 508 compliance. This supports the College mission areas of **student access, student success, diversity and social harmony, and resource development.**

### **Outcomes/Deliverables**

If awarded this sabbatical, I commit to:

- Development of new instructional materials and learning activities in core Web development courses and Flash classes.
- Completion of On Course II workshop and graduate course.
- Development of instruction and learning activities in all courses that promote student success by applying On Course methods.
- Development of teacher-friendly accessibility training modules to be used in ED 214 and shared with college.
- Sharing findings with other teachers via web site, ED 214 course, staff development workshops, and an On Course conference.

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### **Projected Schedule**

The amount of time required to complete a programming project is precisely equal to the length of time already spent on it.

- *Chism's Law of Completion*

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|----------------|--|
| April –        | A. Identify 5 industry contacts to interview.                |
| August:        | B. Meet with David Raney and Clifton Quinn to discuss        |
| Pre-sabbatical | industry trends.   |
| preparation    | C. Clarify learning resources for technical areas and refine |
|                | learning schedule.   |
|                | D. Work with online Teaching and Learning Committee to       |
|                | identify parameters for Accessibility training modules and   |
|                | develop processes for institutionalizing accessibility       |
|                | standards.   |
|                | E. Enroll in ED 582.   |
|                | F. Develop reading list based on ED 582 course bibliography. |
|                | G. Refine schedule for learning technologies.                |
| September      | A. Begin ED 582 (10 hours per week)                          |
|                | B. Study Flash and Universal Design and revise curriculum as |

needed

- C. Attend Microsoft seminar on new technologies.
- D. Interview 2 industry contacts.

October

- A. Develop Accessibility training modules and share with Online Teaching and Learning Committee
- B. Study CSS and revise curriculum as needed
- C. Interview 3 industry contacts.

November

- A. Develop On Course online learning activities
- B. Post materials developed on Web site
- C. Refine Accessibility Training Modules based on feedback provided by Online Teaching and Learning Committee
- D. Study e-commerce and Web site marketing and revise curriculum as needed

December

- A. Finish ED 582
- B. Study e-commerce and Web site marketing and revise curriculum as needed
- C. Prepare staff development workshops for January 2008 flex week
- D. Write report to Governing board

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## How the Proposal goes Beyond the Scope of Normal Professional Development Activity

A hundred times every day I remind myself that my inner and outer life depend upon the labors of other men, living and dead, and that I must exert myself in order to give in the measure as I have received and am still receiving.

- *Albert Einstein*

It would be feasible to complete isolated fragments of the proposed sabbatical activities within the scope of normal staff development, but an organized and focused approach will yield more coherent results. In addition, it is unlikely that I could complete even a fraction of these activities without significant release time.

In particular, completing a graduate course and completing the Flash training would be impossible while teaching a full load.

Education is learning what you didn't even know you didn't know.

- *Daniel Joseph Boorstin*

The first requisite for success is the ability to apply your physical and mental energies to one problem incessantly without growing weary.

- *Thomas A. Edison*

The corollary of constant change is ignorance. This is not often talked about: we computer experts barely know what we're doing.

- *Ellen Ullman*

In a time of drastic change it is the learners who inherit the future. The learned usually find themselves equipped to live in a world that no longer exists.

- *Eric Hoffer*

You cannot teach a man anything; you can only help him find it within himself.

- *Galileo Galilei*

The great aim of education is not knowledge, but action.

- *Herbert Spencer*

Generosity begins with our recognition of our debt to others.

- *Master Hsing Yun, Describing the Indescribable*

I am always doing that which I can not do, in order that I may learn how to do it.

- *Pablo Picasso*

Our educational system doesn't have exclusive rights on the guilt and anxiety associated with learning. Learning inherently involves some trauma; it requires a certain amount of exertion and implies giving up one way of thinking for another.

- *Richard Saul Wurman*

When one teaches, two learn.

- *Robert Half*

Great opportunities to help others seldom come, but small ones surround us every day.

- *Sally Koch*

Any intelligent fool can make things bigger, more complex, and more violent. It takes a touch of genius -- and a lot of courage -- to move in the opposite direction.

- *E. F. Schumacher*

You are not here merely to make a living. You are here to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, and with a finer spirit of hope and achievement. You are here to enrich the world. You impoverish yourself if you forget this errand.

- *Woodrow Wilson (1856 - 1924)*

# Summary of Sabbatical Proposal: Technical Retooling, On Course Online, & Accessibility Training Modules

Jodi Reed



Computer and Information Science



Cuyamaca College

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