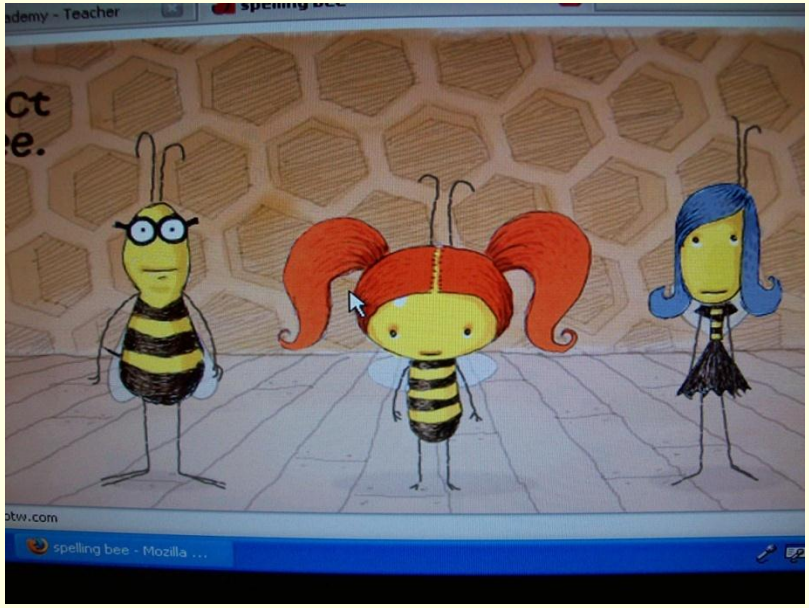
ODYSSEYWARE INFORMATION

Education at your fingertips

WHAT ODYSSEYWARE OFFERS

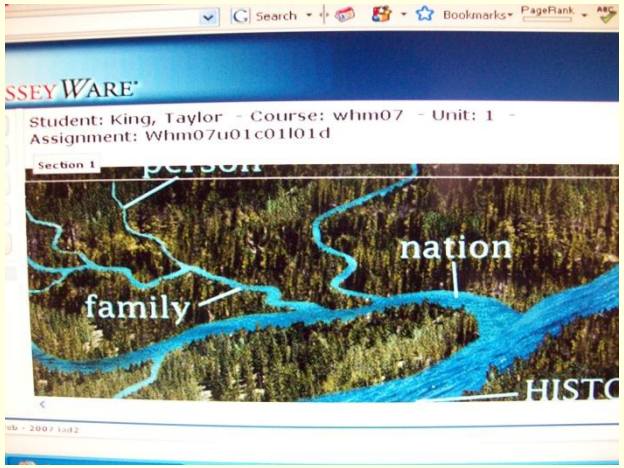
OdysseyWare is interactive, entertaining, challenging, and is designed to fit the state standards. The curriculum is supported by video clips, games, puzzles and other ways to enhance the students learning.

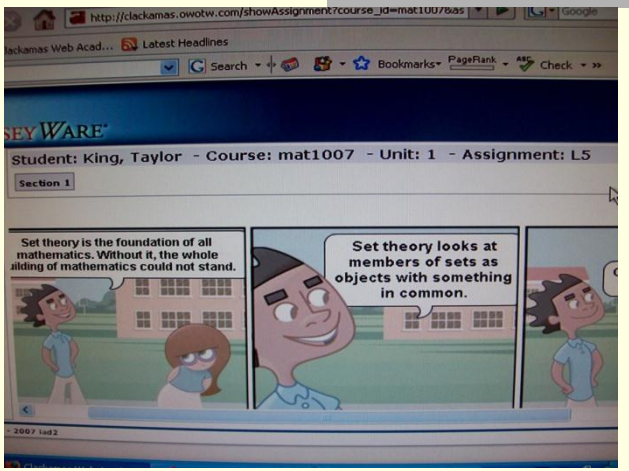


THE CURRICULUM

- Grades 3-12 Core courses: English, History, Math and Science
- Elective for Middle School: Health
- Electives for High School: Consumer Math, High School Health, Civil War, Essentials of Communication, Fitness Fundamentals, Vietnam Era, Trigonometry, Psychology, and more on the way!

MORE CURRICULUM





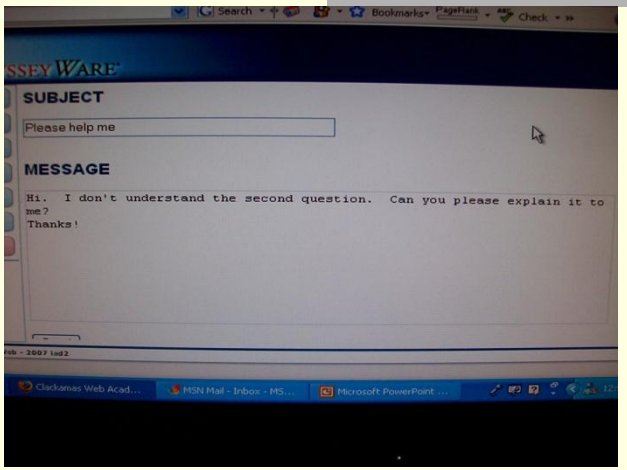
- Odyssey strives to display the curriculum in a variety of entertaining and engaging ways, from cartoon slides containing helpful hints to pictures that depict a vital concept

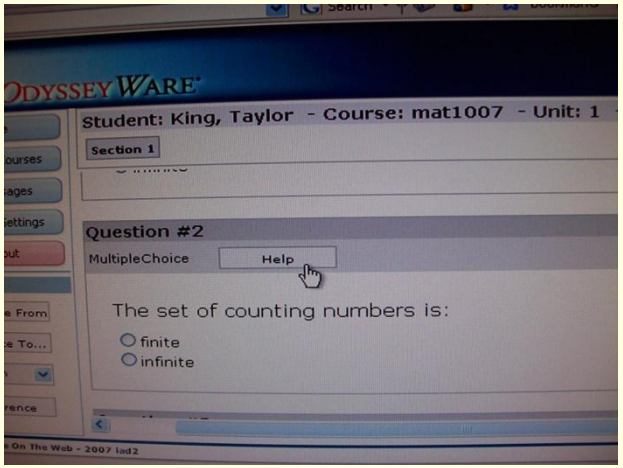
FUN ACTIVITIES

- Vocabulocity: Space game designed to support the learning of the new vocabulary words for each assignment
- Spelling Bee: Become a bee and practice spelling the vocabulary words and other important words used in the lessons
- Flashcards: traditional way to practice vocabulary and spelling
- Tiny tutors: Videos of actual people who enhance the learning by allowing the student to hear the material. It supplements and supports what the student is reading to ensure understanding of content
- Listen to actual speeches given by historical figures

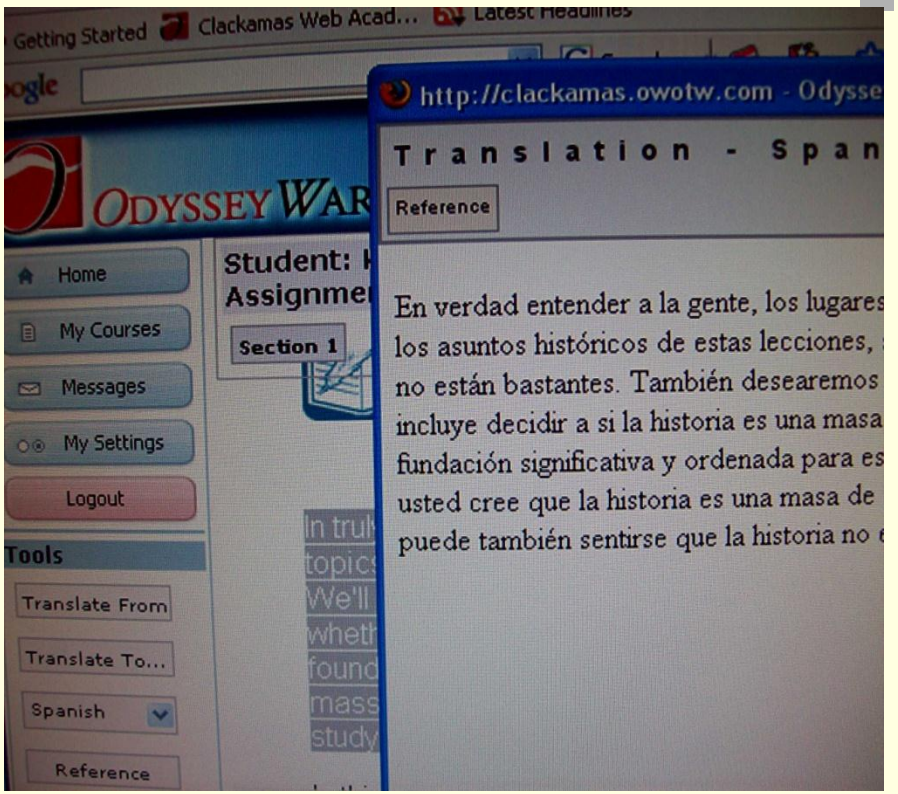
COMMUNICATION

- Students can message their assigned teacher through a messaging system on the home page
- Students can also click a “help” button on each individual question if they are in need of assistance. The teacher will see a “needs attention” on the screen and will be directed to that particular lesson





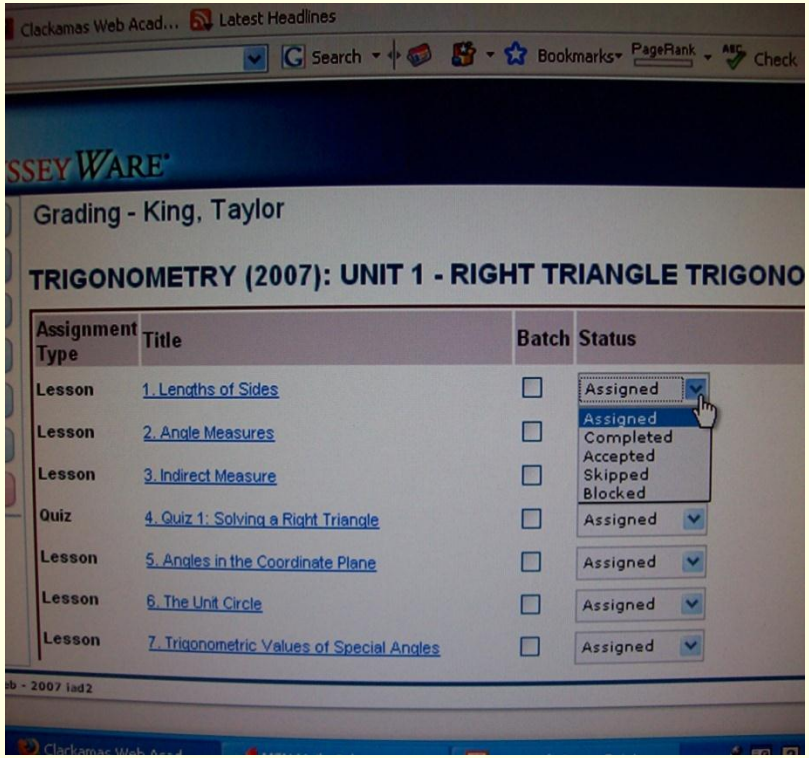
EXTRA FUNCTIONS



- Students can utilize the translation key to change the language of the program. They can currently choose from Spanish, French, German, Korean, Japanese, Russian and Chinese.

EXTRA FUNCTIONS

- The curriculum can be modified to fit the needs of individual students
- The curriculum can be utilized as a credit recovery program, only assigning the necessary amount of make-up work
- There are placement tests to help determine the best starting point for each student



EXTRA INFORMATION

- The computer program grades 80-85% of the completed work and teachers grade the remaining percent. However, the teachers always have the ability to modify the grades

- Parents can see at any time the amount of work the student accomplishes and the overall grades for assignments

ODYSSEYWARE

TEACHER TRAINING

BROWSER AND ADDRESS

- OdysseyWare works best with Firefox/Mozilla – it is a free download
- It will work with Internet Explorer and Safari, but some media components might not work properly

- The address is:

Nwallprep.owotw11.com

*do not need to put http or www in front!

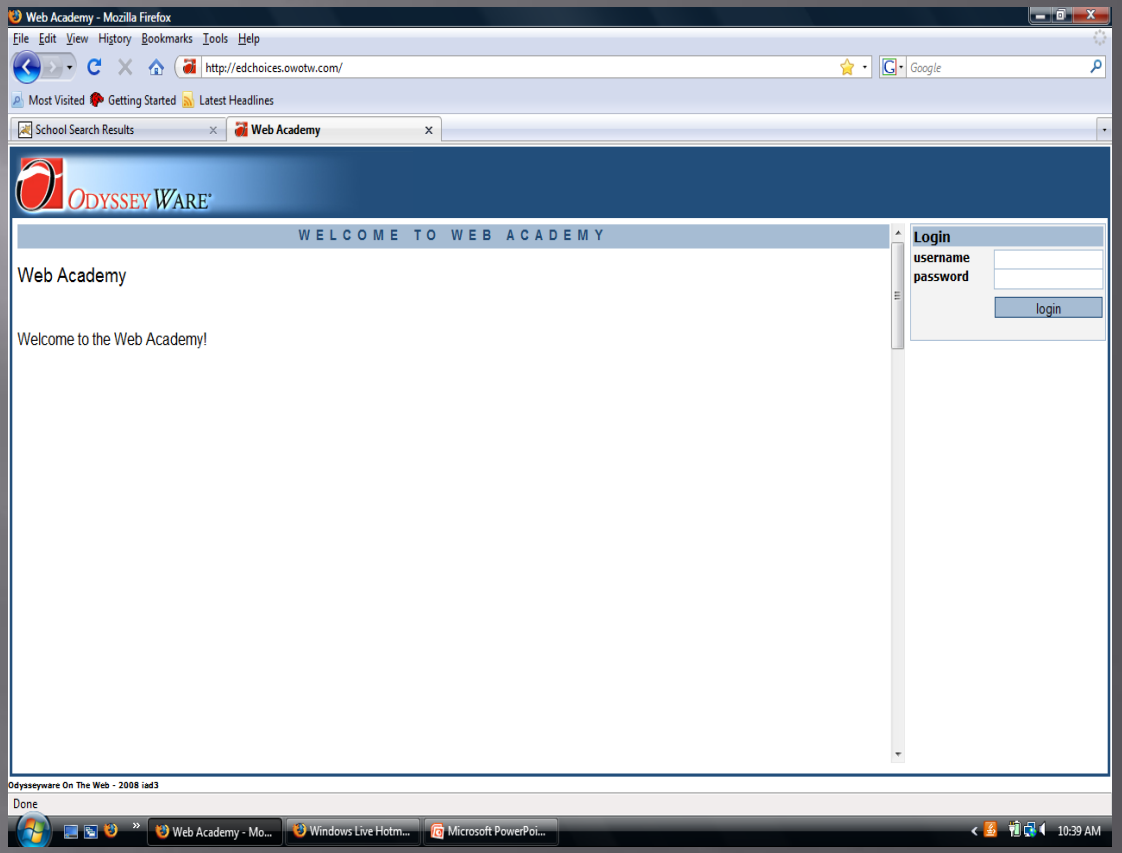
Go to nwallprep.owotw11.com

- 1) Get your **username** and **Password** that you will be using for this training.
- tone
- ttwo
- tthree
- etc

- 2) Log in as the teacher using your username and password
- PW: same as username

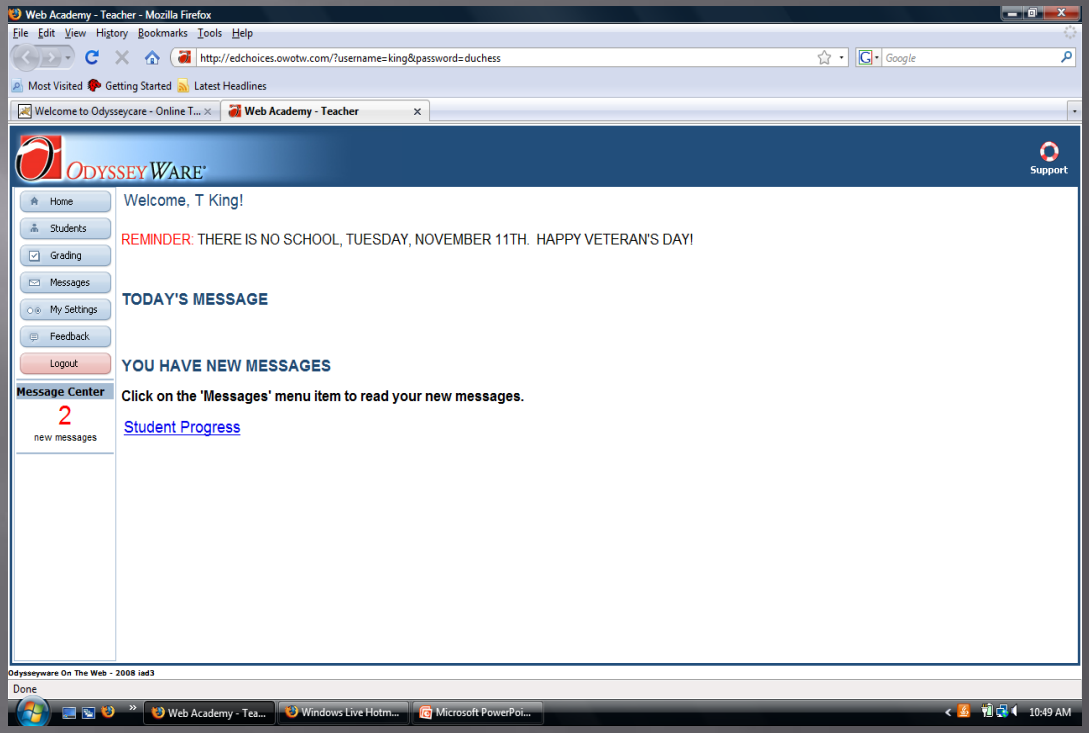
LOG IN PAGE

The Administrator should have provided you with your username and password. Both are case sensitive



HOME PAGE

The home page displays all options for your to utilize. It also tells you if you have messages from your students.



STUDENTS

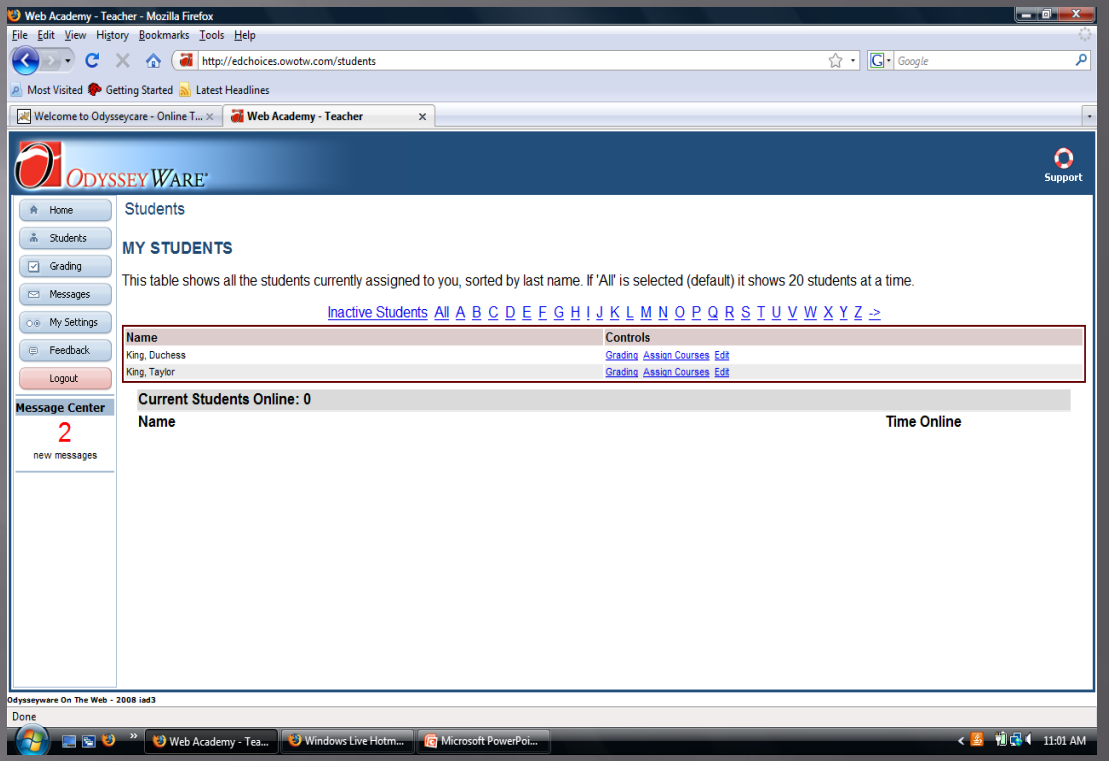
After clicking on "students" your list of students pops up, along with grading, assign courses and edit. This is where you begin to manipulate your student's curriculum.

You should have a student, for practice, that corresponds to your teacher log in.

I.e. tone has

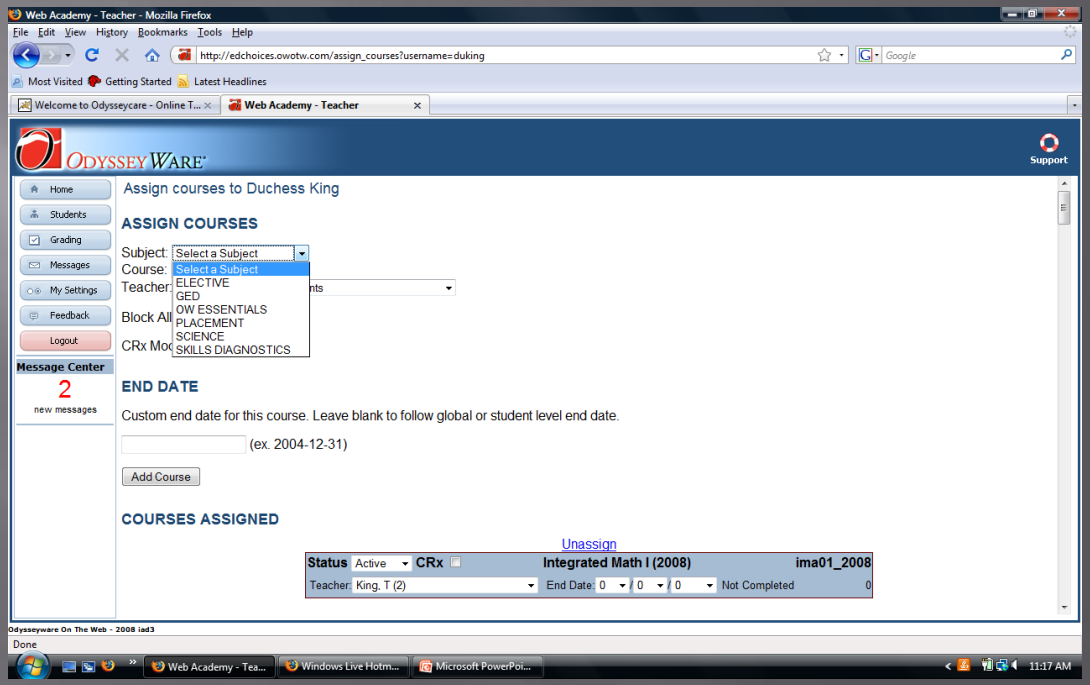
student sone

(student one)



ASSIGN COURSES

TO ASSIGN A COURSE, CHOOSE THE SUBJECT, CHOOSE THE COURSE AND THEN YOU SHOULD AUTOMATICALLY BE THE CHOSEN TEACHER. THE COURSES WITH 300-800 REPRESENT THE GRADE LEVEL. SO, 300 IS CONSIDERED 3RD GRADE LEVEL. MAKE SURE YOU CLICK "ADD COURSE" AS SOON AS IT IS ASSIGNED, THE STUDENT CAN BEGIN WORKING!

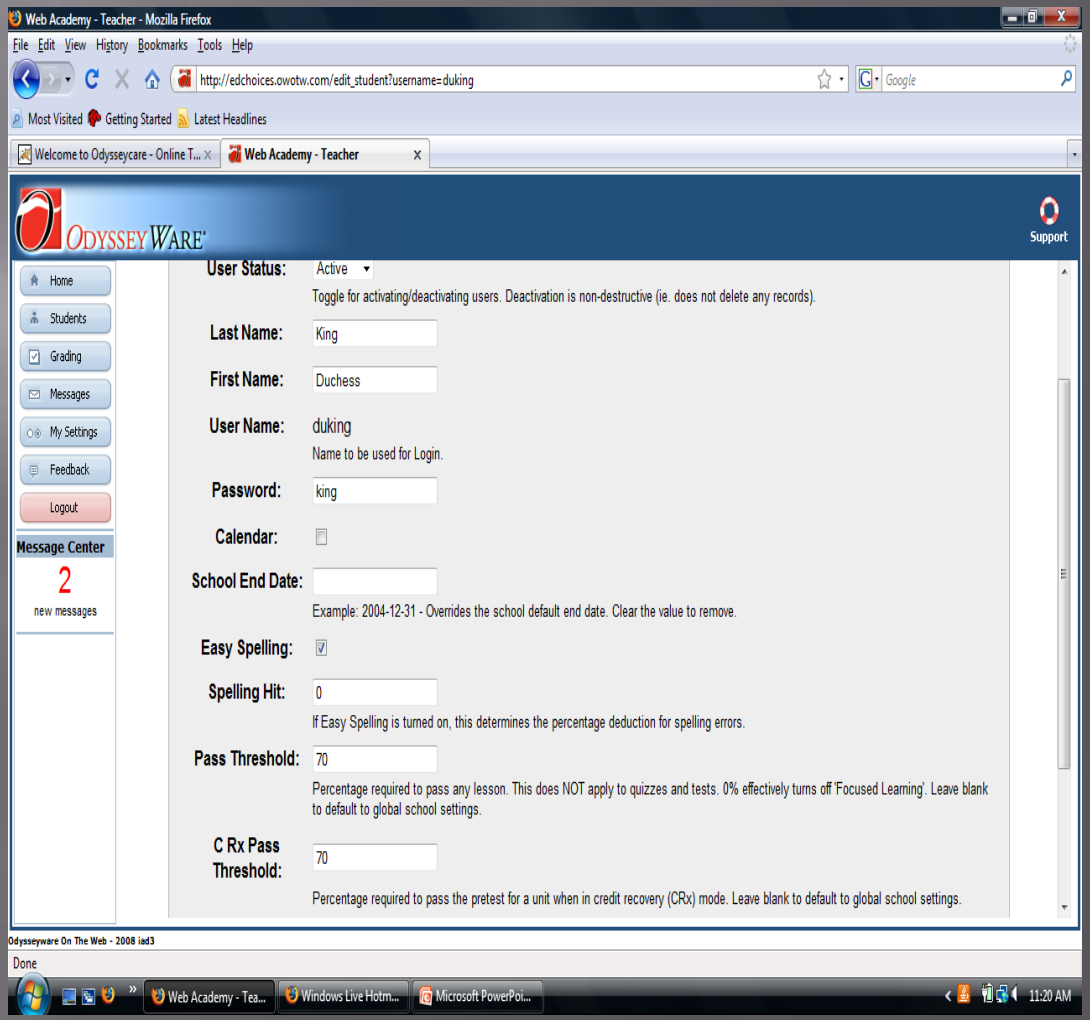


EDIT

THE EDIT FUNCTION SHOWS THE STUDENT'S USERNAME AND PASSWORD. THE USERNAME CANNOT BE CHANGED, BUT THE PASSWORD CAN ALWAYS BE CHANGED. YOU CAN CHANGE THE PASSING THRESHOLD, WHICH IS CURRENTLY SET AT 70%.

YOU CAN REMOVE THE OPTION OF ALLOWING THE STUDENTS TO VIEW THE ANSWER KEY AFTER PASSING THE THRESHOLD, AS WELL AS REMOVING THE OPTION OF THE STUDENT BEING ABLE TO CHANGE THEIR OWN PASSWORD.

YOU NEED TO "SUBMIT" ANY CHANGES TO THE EDIT AREA IN ORDER FOR IT TO SAVE.



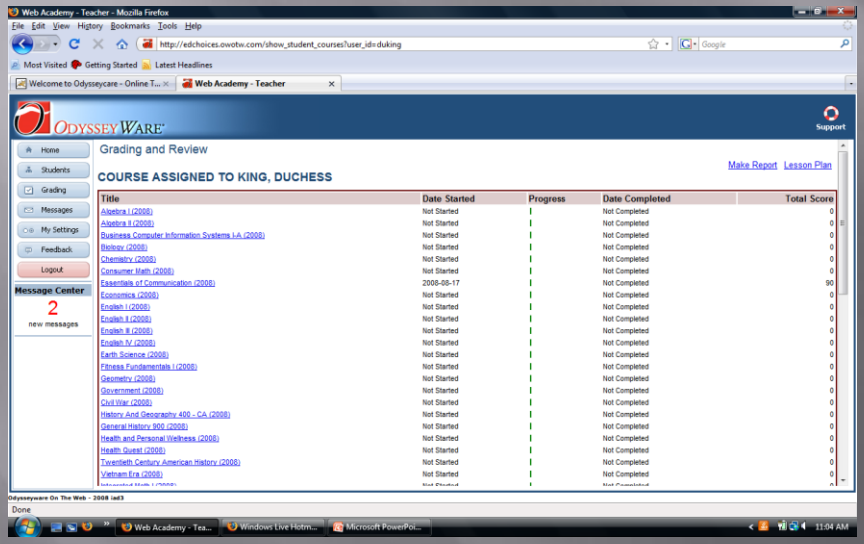
Global settings

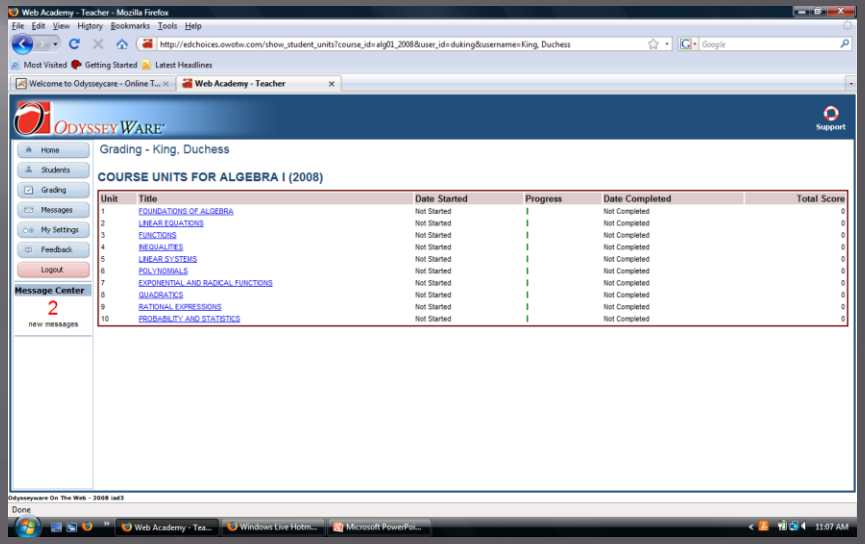
- Assignments 40% of grade in a Unit
- Quizzes 25% of a unit
- Tests are 20%
- Projects are worth 15% of the grade

GRADING

GRADING ALLOWS YOU TO SKIP, BLOCK, REASSIGN, AND MARK AND ASSIGNMENT COMPLETE. THIS IS WHERE YOU CAN LOOK INTO PAST ASSIGNMENTS AND SEE WHAT THE STUDENT HAS COMPLETED.

A YEAR LONG COURSE HAS 10 UNITS. TO SEE HOW MANY ASSIGNMENTS ARE IN A UNIT, CLICK ON THE UNIT AND THE ASSIGNMENTS WILL POP UP.

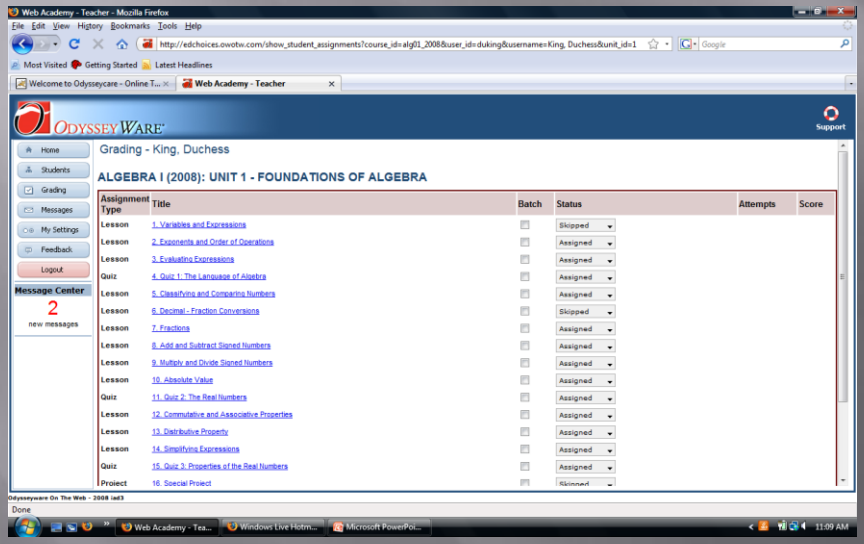


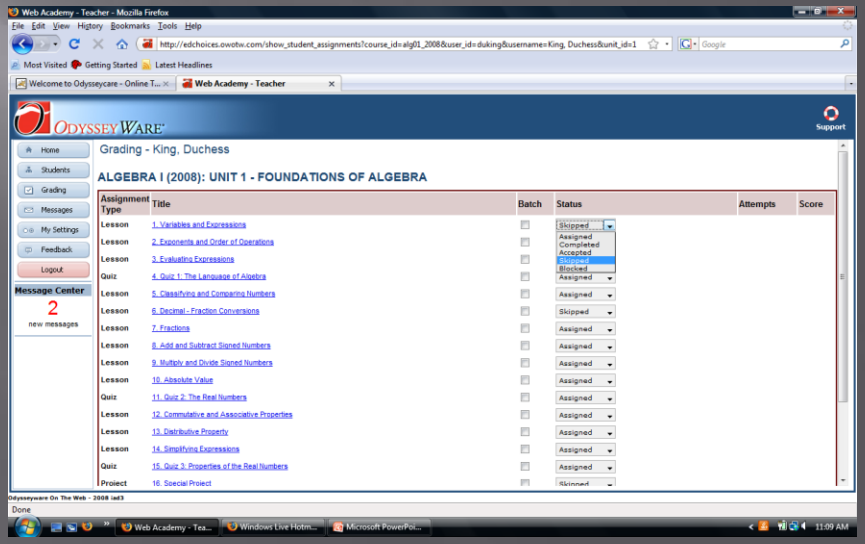


MORE GRADING

SIMPLY CLICK INTO THE LESSON TO SEE WHAT THE STUDENT IS LEARNING. IF THE STUDENT HAS COMPLETED THE ASSIGNMENT, YOU CAN SEE WHAT THEIR ANSWERS AND WHAT THE COMPUTER SCORED. YOU, THE TEACHER, CAN ALWAYS OVERRIDE THE COMPUTER SCORE. THE COMPUTER SCORES 90% OF THE QUESTIONS.

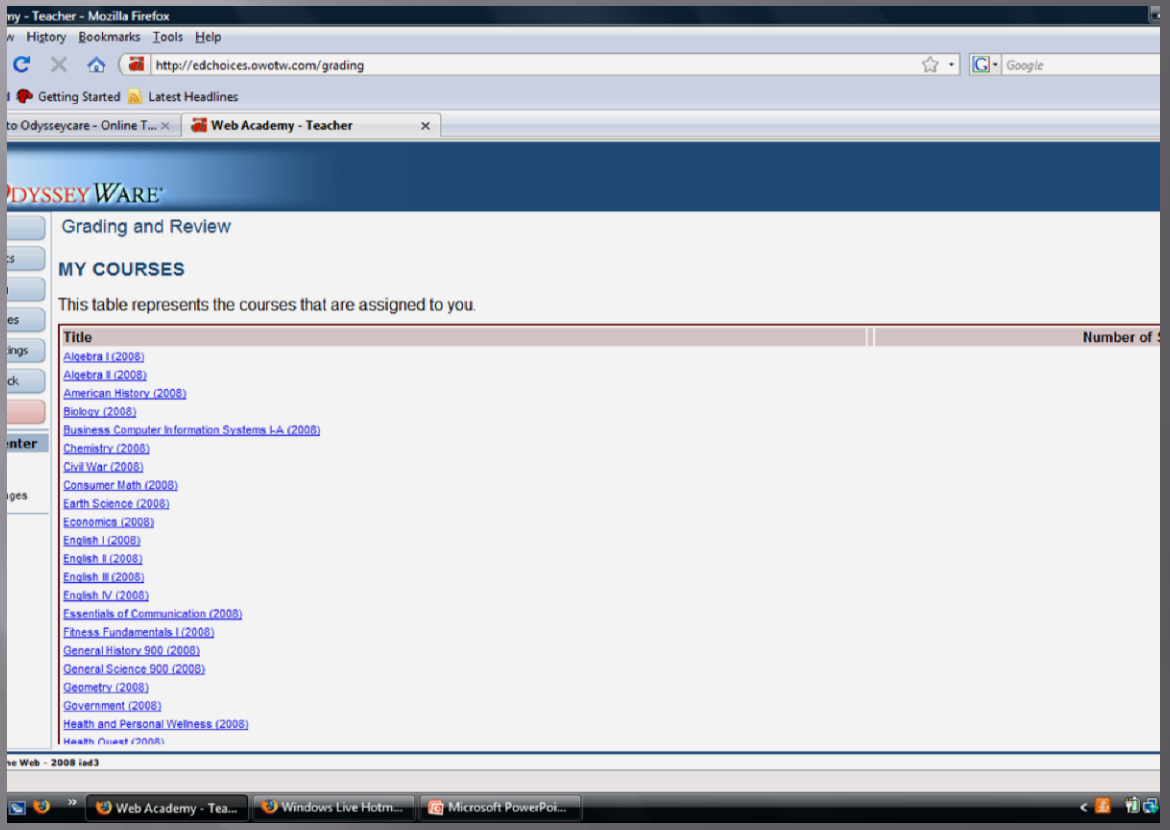
IF YOU WANT TO SKIP ASSIGNMENTS, PROJECTS OR TESTS, CLICK ON THE "ASSIGNED" TOGGLE AND SCROLL TO YOUR APPROPRIATE CHOICE. PLEASE DO NOT USE "ACCEPT"





THE "GRADING" FUNCTION

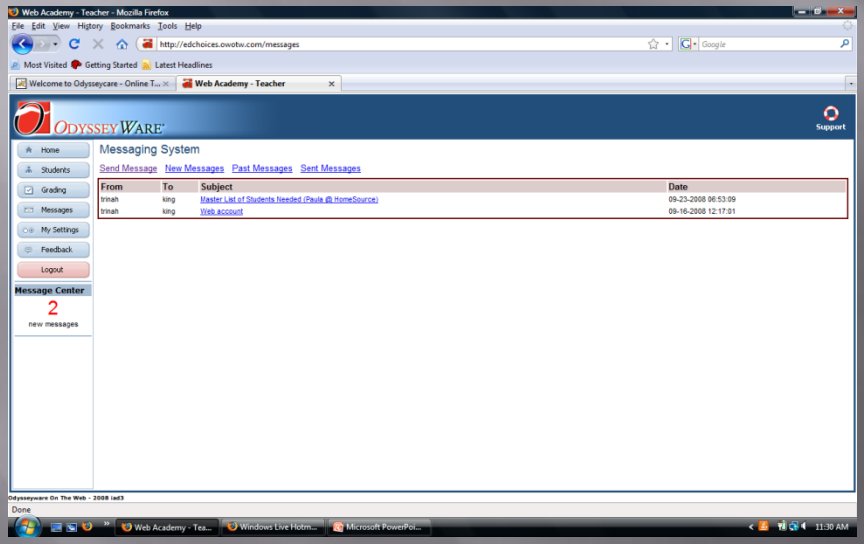
ON THE HOME PAGE, THE GRADING OPTION IS GENERALLY USED JUST TO SEE HOW MANY STUDENTS ARE ASSIGNED TO A SPECIFIC COURSE. IT IS NOT GENERALLY UTILIZED.

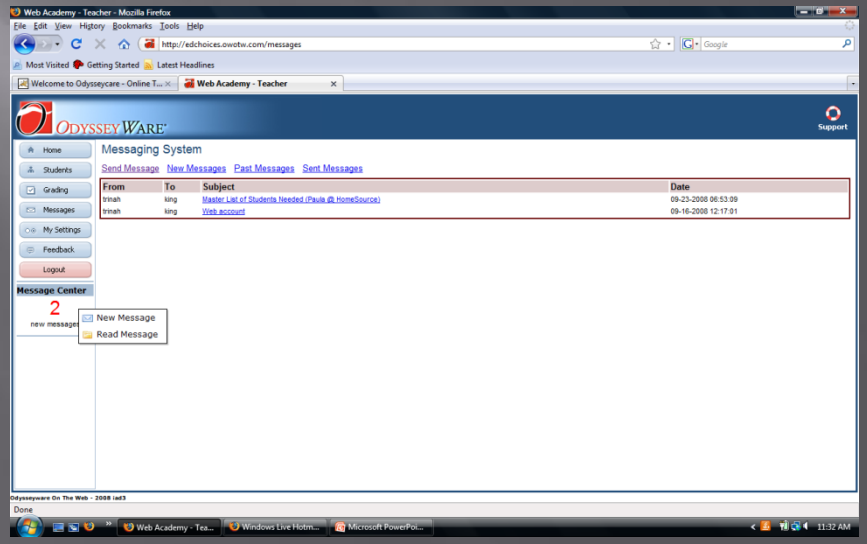


MESSAGING CENTER

ONE WAY TO ACCESS YOUR MESSAGES IS TO CLICK ON "MESSAGES" THIS WILL ALLOW YOU TO MASS MESSAGE ALL OF YOUR STUDENTS. IT ALSO SHOWS YOU ANY PAST MESSAGES RECEIVED AND SENT

ANOTHER WAY TO QUICKLY LOOK AT MESSAGES WHILE IN ANY SITE ON ODYSSEY, IS TO RIGHT CLICK THE MESSAGE CENTER AND READ ALL MESSAGES. THIS IS WHERE YOU CAN QUICKLY WRITE A MESSAGE TO ONE STUDENT AT A TIME WITHOUT LEAVING THE PAGE YOU ARE CURRENTLY WORKING.

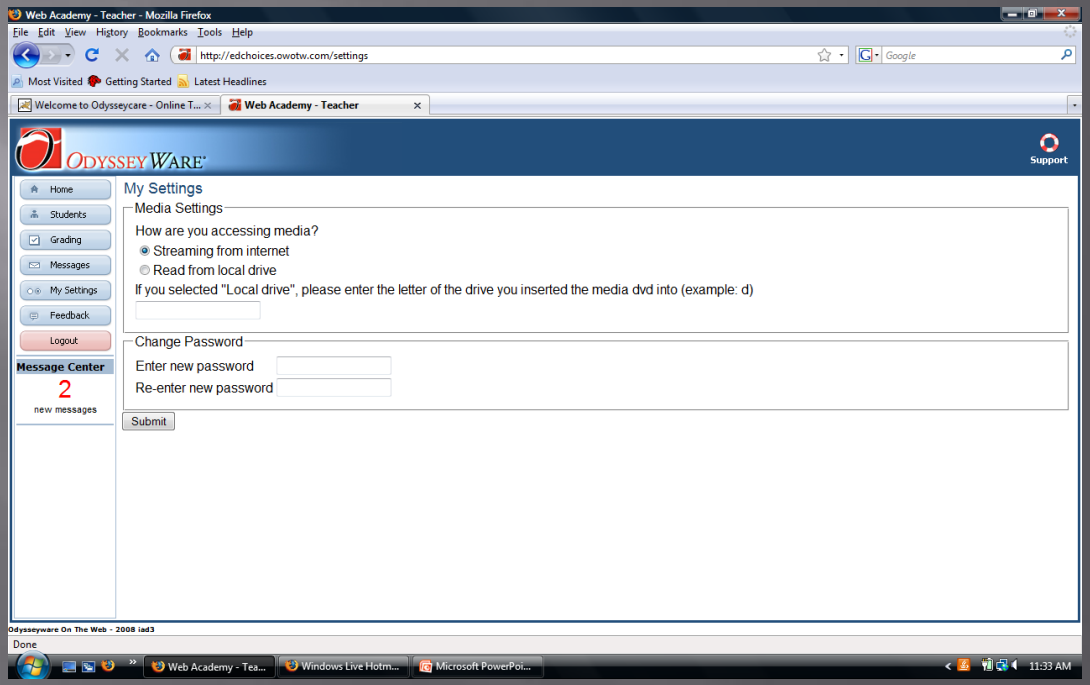




MY SETTINGS

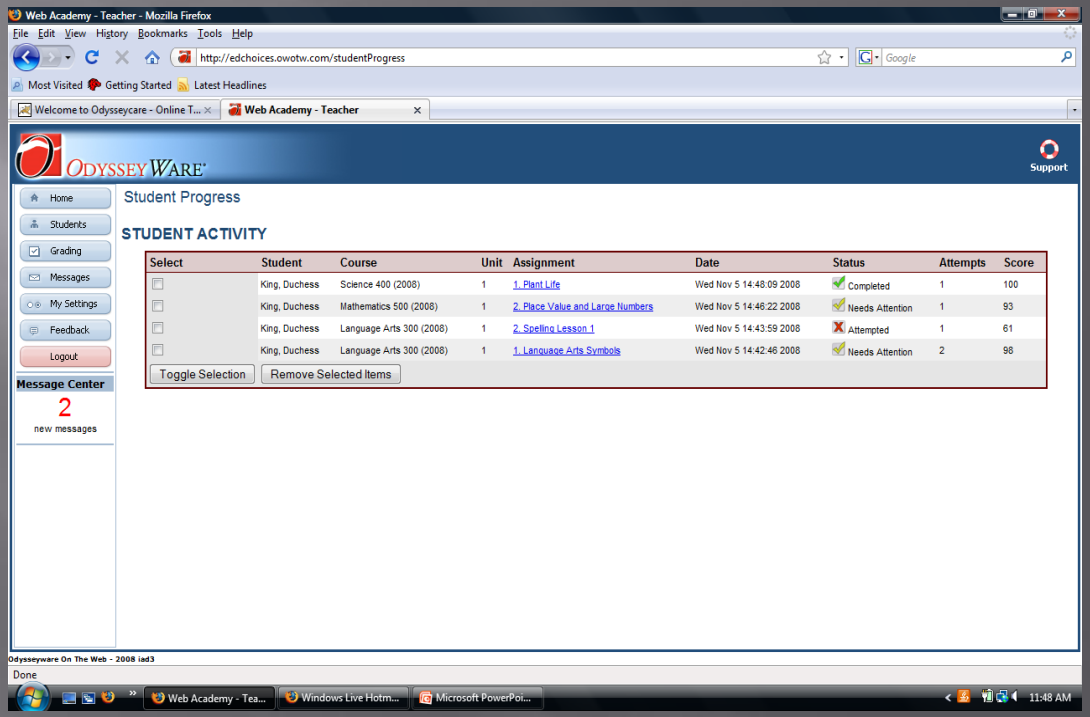
THIS IS THE AREA WHERE YOU CAN CHANGE YOUR PERSONAL PASSWORD FOR ODYSSEYWARE. THIS IS WHERE THE STUDENTS CAN ALSO CHANGE THEIR PASSWORD, ONCE LOGGED IN, UNLESS YOU HAVE DISABLED THAT OPTION IN THE EDIT AREA.

MAKE SURE YOU CLICK "SUBMIT"



STUDENT PROGRESS

STUDENT PROGRESS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THE HOME PAGE. IT SHOWS WHAT EVERY STUDENT HAS WORKED ON IN ODYSSEYWARE. IT SHOWS YOU IF AN ASSIGNMENT "NEEDS ATTENTION" BY THE TEACHER, OR IF AN ASSIGNMENT WAS "ATTEMPTED," WHICH MEANS THE STUDENT DIDN'T PASS THE THRESHOLD THE FIRST TIME. IT ALSO SHOWS YOU THE SCORES AND "COMPLETED" ON ASSIGNMENTS AND QUIZZES AND TESTS. BY CLICKING ON ANY ASSIGNMENT, IT TAKES YOU RIGHT IN THE LESSON FOR YOU TO GRADE, OR REASSIGN



This is where the teacher gets to be the teacher.
Grading comments have been shown to be very important

QUESTIONS?

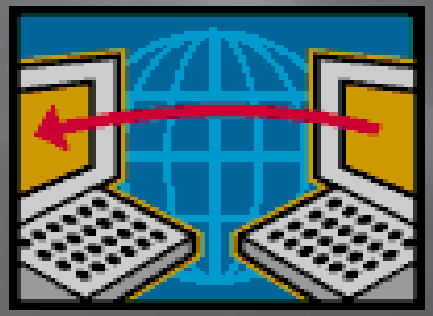
PLEASE DON'T HESITATE TO CALL OR EMAIL IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS.

Practice time

- Log in as the teacher and assign at least one course
- Logout
- Login as the corresponding student and do a lesson (best if you do poorly)
- Now log in as the teacher again and grade the assignment and/or leave a message

- Good luck –it will get to be very easy over time

ODYSSEYWARE Q&A PART II



HOW DO WE KNOW HOW MUCH TIME MY STUDENT SPENDS ON ODYSSEY?

- If you want to know how much time is spent on Odyssey, request a student summary. (demo)
- include a start date for the report
- You can have an overall summary which sums up the amount of time for the day, or you can request a detailed report that shows the amount of time per subject per day.

WHY DOESN'T THE "DATE COMPLETED" MATCH THE ACTUAL DATE THE STUDENT COMPLETED THE WORK?

- Any time a teacher manipulates the student's work and reassigns work, the date completed will be changed.
- If a student goes back and completes a project after completing the rest of the unit, the "date completed" will change to reflect the completed work

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE ASTERISK?

- It was originally designed to indicate an assignment needing attention from the teacher
- JUST OPENING UP THE ASSIGNMENT IN STUDENT PROGRESS WILL NOT REMOVE THE ASTERISK!!
- Teacher must resolve the issues: grading, answering the “help” from student, etc.
- IF EVERYTHING IS COMPLETE AND THE ASTERISK REMAINS, CALL ODYSSEY TECH
- 1-800-821-4443 – OdysseyWare technical support

IS THERE A TIME LIMIT ON HOW LONG ASSIGNMENTS STAY POSTED ON THE STUDENT PROGRESS SCREEN?

- No, the assignments are supposed to stay on the screen until the teacher removes them
- Having a full student progress screen slows down your program. You must keep your student progress cleaned up

MORE ABOUT MESSAGING

- GROUPING
- Send a message, generate a report, assign a course, eventually hold an interactive group chat.

TIDBITS OF INFORMATION

HOW OFTEN DO YOU NEED TO CLEAR THE CACHE?

- Firefox: should only have to do it once. However, if the computer has been worked on, always good to check.
- I.E.: should be once, but sometime changes. Check somewhat frequently

PLEASE EXPLAIN THE CRx MODE!

REGULAR CRX

- Primarily used for credit recovery.

CRX DIAGNOSTIC

- Primarily used for students entering High School, but are not sure they are ready for High School level work.

PROJECTS/ESSAYS

- The upload/download function is supposed to eliminate the loss of work for students
- Make sure students have the ability to create work and save it on computer –
- If you are having trouble grading or inputting a grade in the essay or project box, contact me or see me.

Tips for Training Online Instructors

Greg Kearsley

This article discusses some strategies and techniques for preparing instructors to teach online. For more background about online learning/teaching, see http://home.sprynet.com/~gkearsley/cyber.htm

Introduction

In a traditional classroom, the class begins at a specific time with the teacher at the front of the room, who talks and writes on the board (and might show some slides). Students take notes and occasionally might ask a question ("Is this going to be on the exam?"). When the time is up, everyone hustles away quickly. The instructor has little idea of what the students might have learned – nor do the students themselves.

In an online classroom, the course begins and ends on a certain date. Apart from any real-time events (i.e., chats or conferences), students participate in the class when (and where) they wish. The read email and discussion forum postings and reply to them. They may upload assignments as files. The instructor reads and responds to all student work and questions – usually on a daily basis. Both instructors and students have a good idea of what they are learning.

As this comparison suggests, the nature of teaching/learning in the two settings is quite different. In the classroom setting, the instructor primarily presents information and students try to remember it. In the online course, students do assignments and instructors try to provide students with helpful feedback on them. The latter involves a lot more participation and interactivity for both students and instructors.

Given that the two settings are different, instructors need retraining in order to teach online.

Online teaching is not for everyone

However, its not just a matter of retraining – there are certain personality characteristics required. Online instructors must be willing to spend at least 1-2 hours every day at the computer reading and responding to students. Anyone who cannot do this is not very well suited to online teaching.

Extensive travel is not conducive to online teaching because of the hassles of getting online from various locations, although in this age of ubiquitous WIFI and broadband, it really shouldn't be a problem.

You must like interacting with students on a one-to-one basis. You must also like troubleshooting/problem-solving – since you will do a lot of that. And you need to have a lot of patience to deal with technology on a daily basis.

Since most of your interaction will be written in nature, you have to like to write. It also helps to be able to type relatively fast.

You need to have first-hand experience

Anyone who teaches online needs to have some first-hand experience as an online learner to understand what it means to learn this way. The importance of clear directions, well-organized materials, timely feedback, deadlines, and good technical support becomes apparent as an online learner. I don't think you can learn how to teach online by attending a classroom workshop – even if it involves hands-on activities. Its not the same experience and doesn't prepare you properly.

You must also have a high comfort level with the particular online tools/system used to deliver the course, so you can anticipate likely student problems and provide help when they have trouble. Students are going to model your use of the tools/system, so you want to show how they can be used effectively.

Use both synchronous & asynchronous modes of interaction

People differ on their preference for synchronous (chats, conferencing) or asynchronous interaction (email, forums). Some like the excitement and spontaneity of real-time events. Others prefer the reflective nature and flexibility of asynchronous interaction. Synchronous activities are good for question and answer or review sessions while asynchronous activities work well for discussions, problem-solving and information sharing. However, synchronous events require scheduling which is especially problematic when participants are distributed over many time zones and have different preferences for daytime or evening sessions.

For training instructors, it is best to ensure that they have experience with both modes of interaction so they can decide what they like, and also be prepared to use either if the appropriate learning situation arises.

Strive to make the class as interactive as possible

Teachers need to understand that interactivity is the key to a successful online course. The more interaction students have with the content, the instructor and each other (especially the latter), the better. This is partly a function of providing ample feedback to students on their assignments, but is also a function of the design of the course. Assignments must require students to interact with each and the instructor in terms of sharing ideas, providing critical analysis, comparing results, suggesting improvements, and so on.

Chat sessions and discussion forums are the best places for interaction to take place since they allow for participation by the whole class. On the other hand, instructors are likely to use email or annotated files for providing feedback to students on their assignments or answering questions.

Providing timely and meaningful feedback

If there is one fundamental rule for online instructors it is that timely feedback should be provided to students on their assignments, questions or forum postings. Ideally such feedback should be provided in less than 24 hours. Even if a full response can't be provided, at least an acknowledgement should be sent.

Meaningful feedback means more than just a sentence saying the student is doing well. Students want substantive comments on their work. This means the feedback needs to identify the strengths/weaknesses of a response, questions about assumptions made, or suggestions for further thought/investigation.

The lack of timely and meaningful feedback from instructors is the number one complaint from online learners. The main cause of the problem is that instructors are not online frequently or long enough to provide such feedback.

Make use of offline media

While someday all the content needed for a course will be available online, this is not currently true. Plus, most students don't have suitable computers with high quality displays to make a lot of online reading feasible. So, recommending a textbook for background reading is a good idea. Online study notes in the course can comment on the content in the text and provide supplemental information.

It is also a good idea to design your course so that online materials can be printed out easily. This means providing course materials in a single document rather than (or in addition to) many separate screens.

Encourage learners to learn from each other

The real power of an online course is what students learn from each other. A primary task of the instructor is to facilitate as much student interaction as possible. This can be done by having students do their assignments in pairs or small groups. Asking students to evaluate each other's work and to make class presentations are also good ideas. Students should be encouraged to address their questions to the class, rather than just the instructor.

Introduce an exploratory spirit

Because online teaching/learning involves so many new things, it is important to establish an exploratory spirit among all participants that emphasizes experimentation and problem-solving. Information and ideas can be obtained quickly from searching the web. Students should encouraged to think about alternative options and multiple perspectives in their assignments. The online world is a multicultural, multidimensional society and participants should get used to it.

Since hardware, software and network problems are a continuing aspect of the online experience, everyone must develop basic troubleshooting skills. Indeed, online instructors will spend a considerable amount of time troubleshooting problems with the delivery system or authoring tools.

Create assignments first

Course assignments define the nature of interaction in an online course. Questions to be answered by email or discussion posting create one kind of interaction; group projects with presentations create another kind. Because they dictate the nature of participation, it is a good idea to create the assignments first, then add the other course components (i.e., readings, study notes, overviews). Creating the assignments also defines the instructional objectives of the course since they specify what the student will be doing and learning.

Let people find their own teaching style

There are many different ways of teaching online and each instructor needs to find their own style. Some teachers are comfortable playing a background role whereas others feel they must be very visible to students. Some instructors are happy to rely completely on a text or readings for content whereas others feel they must provide it. Some like email and chat sessions; others like discussion forums and file uploading.

To allow instructors to discover what kind of online teaching works best for them, they need to be exposed to as many different types of online courses as possible. And a lot of trial and error is required. In other words, the process of becoming an online instructor requires a lot of online learning.

Conclusions

Because online teaching is so different, even experienced teachers will require considerable practice before becoming good online instructors. So it is going to be a while before most teachers are good at this. Organizations and institutions offering online courses should be mindful of the time period required to properly prepare their teachers to teach in cyberspace.