

SIGNALS

THOMAS EDISON STATE COLLEGE
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Multimedia Pilot Program to Launch

New Course Component Provides Richer Content and Enhances Online Learning

The Office of Instructional Design & Development is launching a pilot program utilizing a multimedia course developed by McGraw-Hill that enriches course content through animated graphics and interactive elements.

Thomas Edison State College students enrolled in the Introduction to Business (BUS-101) course during the summer of 2008 will be the first to experience the enhanced online course design.

"The College has reviewed the interactive courses developed by McGraw-Hill's Higher



*Cynthia MacMillan,
Director of Instructional
Design & Development.*



Education Online Learning team and we believe they mesh favorably with our online course structure," said Director of Instructional Design & Development Cynthia MacMillan. "Based on the outcome on the BUS-101 course, we may be adapting the feature to a host of popular online courses. What's especially reinforcing for students is that multimedia features support the concepts discussed in the textbook. We will also be working with McGraw-Hill and our mentors to incorporate assessments into the new multimedia course."

The multimedia component will benefit students in a number of ways, providing

animation, graphics, streaming video and interactive activities which enrich course content, illustrate major points and expand on existing course material. The innovative features will be incorporated into the current online course structure.

"The look and navigation students currently experience in their online course space will not change," noted MacMillan. "Links to announcements, assignments, discussion boards and course information will remain the same along with proctored midterms, where applicable, and online final exams."

If you have any questions about the pilot program, contact the Office of Instructional Design & Development: dial@tesc.edu. ■

COURSE NEWS

Note: A complete listing of all undergraduate courses and their availability may be found on the College Web site. Go to www.tesc.edu/listall.php.

NEW ONLINE COURSES:

HLS-420	Preparedness: Prevention and Deterrence
HLS-429	Protecting the Homeland: Response and Recovery
LDR-345	Theories of Leadership
LDR-422	Leadership in the Global Environment
LDR-435	Leadership Practicum

She Did It!

And You Can Too...

With the Help of Thomas Edison State College's Open Discussion Board

Join the community of students already participating in the Thomas Edison State College Open Discussion Board. The student forum, accessible online via myEdison, is a chance to offer and view reactions and perspective on a variety of topics ranging from College courses and exams to mentors. Find a "study buddy," get the latest news, read fellow student advice and compare the various methods of course completion – all in a supportive, collegial atmosphere.

A recent visit to the Open Discussion Board found student Lisa Czepiel overjoyed at having finally taken her last exam. Speaking of her newly acquired BA degree in Criminal Justice, the Southampton, N.J., resident posted: "I did it! I took my final exam this morning. I started my college career at Burlington County College in 1990, and, after many stops and starts, finished today. It still hasn't really sunk in, but I have a huge grin on my face! I am very grateful that the College exists for the nontraditional student. People who work during the day or have other commitments can have a difficult time at traditional schools. I actually withdrew from [a brick-and-mortar college] because it was so unaccommodating to night and commuter students. I am grateful for schools like Thomas Edison State College!"

Czepiel is also grateful for the camaraderie she found in the Open Discussion Board.

"My thanks go out to all the students who readily chimed in, the advice and support was very useful. I hope my story – going to college for (gulp) 18 years and finally finishing – might help someone out there struggling. It is very difficult to attend school as an adult when you have family and work commitments, but YOU CAN DO IT! Just take one course, and one assignment, at a time," counseled Czepiel.

Director of Advisement Dr. Garry Keel and his staff occasionally join in the discussions. Their constructivist approach keeps students like Czepiel feeling informed, positive and on the right track. "Although the discussion board is a place for student-to-student interaction, periodically you'll find College staff members offering updated information and suggestions on a variety of academic related issues and encouraging students to complete their degree program," said Keel.

Join in an Open Discussion today! Log onto myEdison: www.myedison.tesc.edu Click on the "Community" tab at the top of your screen and enter via the "Institution Discussion Board" box on the right. ■



Ethan Czepiel lures mom, Lisa, away from studying to help him gather treats.



New Jersey State Librarian named “Librarian of the Year”

Norma Blake recognized for her innovative leadership

The *Library Journal*, published by Reed Business Information, recently selected NJSL Librarian Norma Blake as “Librarian of the Year.”

The award, now in its 20th year, honors a professional librarian for achievement reflecting the highest service goals of the library profession. All professional librarians in the U.S., Canada and Mexico were eligible.

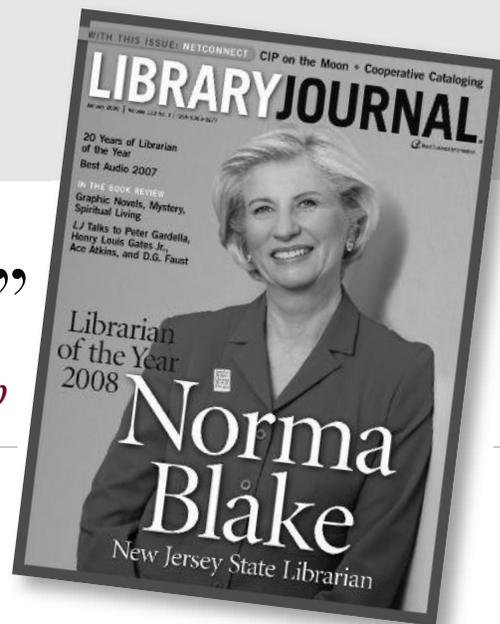
Citing the leadership and creativity Blake brings to her position, *LJ* editors noted, “She has sparked proactive, collaborative initiatives that have taken libraries of all types into working partnerships and relationships with educational and corporate institutions as well as the state’s economic development and commercial players – from small businesses to the huge biotech industry.” Blake accepted the award in January, during the American Library Association’s Midwinter Conference in Philadelphia.

Among the accomplishments that brought Blake to the attention of *LJ* editors was her prowess in negotiating free

licenses for a number of high-end databases specializing in

science, technology, medicine and business. These databases will be available free of charge, to all staff and students of New Jersey state colleges, including Thomas Edison State College, community colleges, universities and more than 350 small businesses. “This is a prime example of a shared service saving taxpayers millions of dollars,” Blake noted.

All Thomas Edison State College students whether in- or out-of-state are eligible for a NJSL card. Simply visit the library’s Cyberdesk page online at <http://www.njstatelib.org/Cyberdesk> and select “Get a Library Card” from the items on the menu. On the resulting page, click on: “Thomas Edison State College student online borrower registration form,” and complete the required fields. ■



Put Yourself on the MAPP!

Heavin School of Arts and Sciences Unveils the MAPP (Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress) Assessment

The Thomas Edison State College Heavin School of Arts and Sciences is now offering the Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress (MAPP) assessment to students. As a student majoring in the area of Humanities, Natural Sciences/Mathematics, Social Sciences or Liberal Studies, you can assist the College in gauging the quality of our programs by participating in this assessment.

Your assessment results will serve as a valuable tool in helping the College measure progress in achieving established learning goals and evaluate the effectiveness of our programs.

The assessment is administered in an unproctored, online format which only takes

about 45 minutes to complete. Participating in the assessment is optional. Offered through Educational Testing Services (ETS), the MAPP assessment measures students' knowledge in the core areas of reading, mathematics, writing and critical thinking. Heavin School of Arts and Sciences students who have applied for graduation will be invited to participate. No individual score is recorded by the College nor will the score affect your final grade.

The School began conducting the MAPP assessment last fall. As an incentive, the school is awarding \$50 dollar Amazon.com



Caitlin Muir participated in the MAPPs assessment.

gift certificates to five participants whose names are drawn at the end of each assessment period.

Caitlin Muir, who recently earned her BA degree in journalism and participated in the assessment, noted, “The questions were straightforward and easy to understand. It only took me about 30 minutes to

complete. My motivation for taking the assessment was that the results will help future students by furnishing the School with valuable insight into the effectiveness of its programs.”

For questions regarding the MAPP assessment or any of the programs at the Heavin School of Arts and Sciences, e-mail heavin@tesc.edu.

Life Inside of a Master's Cohort

A graduate cohort can be many things. Outwardly, it is both peer group and academic unit with members often collaborating on completing course work toward their degree.

It may be in its unofficial capacity, however, that a master's cohort truly shines.

For Thomas Edison State College 2007 degree recipients Stephen Theisen, Antonio Doria, Esther Velázquez, William Strain and Eric Percival, their cohort also served as a crucial sounding board, support group and safe haven during one of the most transformative and rigorous passages of their academic careers.

According to Velázquez, a 2007 Master of Science in Management degree recipient, "During the months of hard work, reading, research papers and nonexistent social lives, we provided each other with moral support. No matter what happened during our strenuous studies, we wouldn't allow each other to give up."

For students fortunate enough to find themselves surrounded by such support, the rewards are obvious.

"As a team of five, we were each others' academic and emotional support system," elaborated Velázquez, who works as a technical writer for a financial firm. "We provided encouragement and a ready ear if one of our members was floundering. At one point, I was going through a rough patch and seriously considered dropping my courses. I shared my frustration with fellow cohort member Eric Percival. His words of understanding, encouragement and advice were enough to make me hang in there. He just wouldn't give up on me."

Much of the work undertaken by Velázquez and her cohort consisted of reading required chapters, articles and case studies, then subsequently researching, analyzing and interpreting the material. More often than not, they brought their respective professional experiences to the online discussions and integrated theories with practice.

"During a typical assignment," reported Stephen A. Theisen, who earned a 2007 Master of Science in Management degree, "we would read numerous articles or text and respond to questions posted by our graduate mentor on the Discussion Board. We would also respond to questions or comments from other students. The assignments honed our leadership skills and encouraged us to collaborate with each other on a professional level."

Velázquez and fellow members cited the program's affordability and quality as the most compelling reasons for pursuing their degrees at Thomas Edison State College.

Access to quality mentors kept them in the game.

"We had a very positive relationship with all of our mentors," noted Velázquez. "I was pleasantly surprised at how eager they were to hear from us and how generous they were with their time. We always felt the mentors were there for us,

even via telephone. I would encourage all students – graduate and undergraduate – to establish communication with their mentors early and often in their course work."

Collegiality such as this often endures beyond commencement, with members staying in close contact and often building on their earlier accomplishments.

"We plan to stay in touch with each other," added Theisen, who is now pursuing his own Certificate in Online Teaching and Learning. "My belief is that we have become a 'family' over the 18 months we've been together and will continue to share significant events with each other. Antonio [Doria] is now planning to pursue his doctorate degree and I know Esther is doing the same. I feel privileged to have met and become friends with these folks. If it had not been for Thomas Edison State College, I would have never met them and gained such excellent friendships." ■



Pictured left to right: 2007 Master of Science in Management degree recipients Stephen A. Theisen, Antonio Doria, Esther Velázquez and William Strain. Not pictured: Eric E. Percival, Master of Science in Management, Graduate Certificate in Online Learning and Teaching. "The picture speaks of our cohesiveness as a team and even though we will be going our separate ways to tackle new adventures, the five of us will always be connected by our experiences at Thomas Edison State College," noted Esther Velázquez.

Mentor Profile: Dr. Richard A. Ridge

GED...BSN...MBA...PhD...

For Richard Ridge, those successive degrees occurred amid a naval career, parenthood and his position as a nurse-manager.

When Richard Ridge left his Boston high school the summer after 10th grade to join the U.S. Navy, he may have done so in order to place some distance between himself and the education system.

"Beginning in the late 1960s, Boston, Massachusetts's school system became mired in civil and political unrest as the city struggled toward trying to peacefully desegregate public schools," reflected Ridge "It was tumultuous for students of all races, and a time filled with many distractions. I had heard about the U.S. Navy program in which high school students who had not yet graduated could take the GED exam. It was an appealing alternative for me."

Ridge found his naval career both transformative and character-building.

"Beginning with my service as a submarine sailor in the early 1970s, I gained confidence in my abilities and potential. I learned how to take responsibility for my actions and fit in as a member of a sophisticated and dedicated team. We were completely devoted to the mission. When I transferred to Hospital Corps in 1973, I was introduced to healthcare and all of its disciplines, specialties and opportunities."

Toward the conclusion of his service, he became a senior corpsman in the emergency room at the New London Submarine Hospital in New London, Conn., supervising 15 personnel and working directly with supervising nurses and physicians. Before leaving the Navy, Ridge took advantage of the Navy's after work program designed to prepare sailors for academic pursuits after discharge. The program, which included SAT preparation, helped those enrolled to cultivate better study, literacy and math skills.

Ridge immediately began attending the University of Massachusetts at Boston while supporting his wife and baby daughter by working in a state psychiatric hospital at night. "After a variety of positions, another child and several years of undergraduate education, I received my bachelor of science degree in nursing and began my job as a registered nurse in Boston."

Now an established clinician, Ridge acknowledged that in order to



Dr. Richard A. Ridge

have the full-on nursing career he wanted, furthering his education would be necessary.

"I pursued my MBA at night while working full time as a nurse manager. Interested in pursuing a chief nurse position, I looked for a PhD program willing to accept me without a master's degree in nursing. There were only three in the country. The decision involved relocating my family to Virginia, but in 2000, I completed my dissertation," said Ridge.

At Thomas Edison State College's School of Nursing, Ridge teaches health policy where he finds students, "dedicated to their pursuit of higher education and wholeheartedly contributing to their own learning as to others in their courses."

Teaching has also brought Ridge in contact with colleagues from his current position as corporate director of nursing education for

Meridian Health in Neptune, N.J., where his purview extends across the entire Meridian system to include three hospitals, nursing homes, home care and partner companies. "Some of my students are Meridian employees and it's fantastic to have the opportunity to connect faces with names and it definitely enriches my relationships with the staff," he added.

Ridge has been the principle investigator on several health system research studies and has published articles in the areas of systems analysis, patient safety, outcomes and community nursing center evaluations. He also serves on the editorial advisory board for *Men in Nursing Journal*, and supports the efforts to increase the participation of men in the profession.

Recently, Ridge was proud recipient of the Governor's Nursing Merit Award for his contribution to the nursing profession and the state's healthcare system. He has also been honored by the Institute of Nursing Foundation of the New Jersey State Nurses Association during their *2007 Divas and Dons* Gala.

Ridge and his wife, Marla, live in Tinton Falls, N.J., and have been married for 34 years. Their daughter Corrina and son Richard are both master's-prepared teachers. They have three grandsons. ■

Academic Calendar

	June 2008 Term (In Progress)	July 2008 Term	August 2008 Term
Registration Dates	April 19 - May 11, 2008	May 17 - June 8, 2008	June 14 - July 13, 2008
Late Registration	May 12 - 16, 2008	June 9 - 13, 2008	July 14 - 18, 2008
Course Transfer Period	April 19 - May 16, 2008	May 17 - June 30, 2008	June 14 - July 31, 2008
Term Start Date	June 1, 2008	*July 1, 2008	Aug. 1, 2008
**Midterm Exam Week	July 14 - 19, 2008	Aug. 10 - 16, 2008	Sept. 14 - 20, 2008
Final Exam Week	Aug. 18 - 23, 2008	Sept. 15 - 20, 2008	Oct. 20 - 25, 2008
Term End Date	Aug. 23, 2008	*Sept. 20, 2008	Oct. 25, 2008

* Dates apply to *both* Graduate and Undergraduate courses

** Select courses have a midterm examination. Refer to your course materials for details

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