Syllabus for 1202 OMDE 608.9040

Faculty Contact Information

Dr. Jane E. Brindley jbrind@uwindsor.ca

You will find information about instructor and teaching assistant availability in the Course Management Conference under the topic "The People Here Function and Instructor Availability".

Course Introduction

- This is a 3-credit graduate course.
- The Semester is 12 weeks in length.
- The course is organized by Units: Unit 1 (3 weeks), Unit 2 (3 weeks), and Unit 3 (6 weeks).
- Collaborative work in small groups is required in Unit 3 and students are expected to sign on frequently.
- The course officially begins on Jan 23, 2012 and ends on April 15th, 2012.

- The last date for withdrawal without penalty is: March 16th, 2012.

Course Description

An introduction to the theories and concepts of support for learners in distance education and training. The various types of learner support??including tutoring and teaching; advising and counseling; and library, registrarial, and other administrative services??are examined. Discussion addresses management issues, such as planning, organizational models, staffing and staff development, designing services to meet learner needs, serving special groups, and evaluation and applied research. Assignments include designing a learner support model for a particular context (e.g., public or private educational institution or corporate or military training).

Course Goals/Objectives

At the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Explain the rationale for learner services in modern distance education and training.
2. Describe the various learner support functions.
3. Critically analyze issues in the provision of learner support.
4. Identify the contextual factors which determine a learner support model.
5. Apply particular contextual factors to planning for learner support.

6. Develop a plan for the introduction of learner services in a distance education or training system, including selection of components and delivery methods.
7. Develop a professional development plan for a particular learner support system.
8. Recommend a management strategy for learner support in a particular system.
9. Develop an evaluation plan for learner support activities in a particular system.
10. Critically evaluate and use applied research results in planning learner support services.

Course Materials

Click here to view the required and recommended materials to be purchased and to access ordering information.

Graduate School's Read Me First Document

Additional Readings/Materials

Required Textbooks

(These can be purchased via the University of Maryland - University College Virtual Bookstore)

American Psychological Association (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.).
      Washington, D.C.: APA

Bernath, U., & Rubin, E. (Eds.) (2003). *Reflections on teaching and learning in an online master program.*
      Oldenburg: Bibliotheks- und Informationssystem der Universität Oldenburg.

(This text book is also a required reading in MDE 601)

Brindley, J.E., Walti, C., & Zawacki-Richter, O. (Eds). (2004). *Learner support in open, distance and online learning*
      environments. Oldenburg: Bibliotheks- und Informationssystem der Universität Oldenburg.

Recommended Resource
Sweet, R. (1993). *Perspectives on distance education series: Student support services: Towards more responsive*
      systems - Report on a symposium on student support services in distance education. Delhi, Vancouver,Canada: Commonwealth of Learning

(This book is out of print. However, the files are available below in chunks as pdf files. Note that all copyright restrictions apply.)

Preface and Contents
Page 1-20
Page 21-42
Page 43-74
Page 75-100

The following books are available as free e-books (PDF files) from http://www.mde.uni-oldenburg.de/40574.html:

Brindley, J.E., Walti, C.& Zawacki-Richter, O. (Eds.). (2004). *Learner support in open, distance and online learning study* (Volume 9). Oldenburg: Bibliotheks- und Informationssystem der Universität Oldenburg.

Bernath, U., & Rubin, E. (Eds.). (2003). *Reflections on teaching and learning in an online master program: A case study* (Volume 6). Oldenburg: Bibliotheks- und Informationssystem der Universität Oldenburg.

To access the e-books, click on the above link, and then choose the textbook you would like to download. Once the correct textbook is displayed, then choose the PDF download button to download the textbook and save it to your computer. You may also order bound versions of the textbook (at a fee), using this form: http://www.c3l.uni-oldenburg.de/publikationen/oform.htm. Please keep in mind that shipping may take up to 3-4 weeks.

Grading Information and Criteria

COURSE SPECIFIC GRADING POLICIES
Unit 1 Assignment:
At the end of Unit one, students must submit Assignment #1, an Annotated Bibliography of 10 of the required readings from the unit. Each annotation consists of a short summary of the key aspects and an evaluative statement (e.g. the value of the article or chapter) of a reading. The summaries should average 5 to 8 lines for each reading, depending on the length of the original. The grade for this assignment will contribute 25% to the final grade.
Unit 2 Assignment:
At the end of Unit 2, students must submit Assignment #2, a position paper (4-6 pages, maximum 1500 words) on one of the required readings from the course (agreeing or disagreeing with the major premise presented) and provide supporting arguments and evidence from the literature. The grade for this paper will contribute 25% to the final grade.
Unit 3 Assignment:
Unit 3 will be spent working on case studies. Students will work in study groups during the first part of the unit to prepare a case study describing a distance education or training provider (2-5 pages; max. 1200 words). The case study will include details about the institution or organization, learners, subject matter, and other contextual factors. No grade will be assigned for the case studies but the case study is necessary in order to complete the final assignment.
Assignment #3 requires each student to provide an individual response to the case study that his/her group has prepared. The response will describe an appropriate and comprehensive learner support system for the educational or training context presented,

including a rationale for the choices made (6-8 pages; max. 2000 words). The grade for the response to the case study will contribute 40% to the final grade for the course. **Overall participation in the course and particularly in the study group contributes 10% to the final grade for the course.**

Please Note: It is expected that the work you submit for assessment purposes to this class is original. This means that you are the single author of your individual assignments and that you have not used this work in any other class, in this or any other academic program (*See note below). Plagiarism offences, including failure to cite your own work that was already used for another purpose, will result in a failing grade. Please carefully read the information below about the Policy on Academic Honesty and Plagiarism and the help available to you in learning how to properly cite sources in your assignments and papers.

(*Note that there may be instances where you can judiciously use previous work to support current work but you must cite it as you would any other source; this is a common practice in academia when building a body of knowledge in a particular area.)

POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM
Please familiarize yourself with the UMUC policy on academic dishonesty and plagiarism. You can find it at < http://www.umuc.edu/policy/academic/aa15025.shtml >
Correct citing of references is critical in academic writing, and is an expectation in graduate level work because it is important that you learn to read research and other kinds of information sources and use these to formulate your own ideas and opinions. This may present a challenge or be a cause for worry if you are not familiar with APA writing standards and how to use and cite work from other authors. If you think you might need some help with scholarly documentation practices, UMUC offers the Vail Tutor, a tutorial program covering how to properly cite your sources.

UMUC has a license agreement with Turnitin.com, a service that helps prevent plagiarism from internet resources. **Please note that students have access to this valuable service and are encouraged to submit their papers electronically to Turnitin.com prior to submission to the assignment folder for grading.** This provides an opportunity to check work for improper citing and plagiarism and make corrections prior to grading. Once your assignment is posted to your assignment folder, it will be submitted to Turnitin by your instructors as part of the grading process. Instances of plagiarism that are identified through the grading process are taken seriously and are dealt with as described in the policy noted above.

It is important to note that any work submitted to Turnitin.com is stored in their database throughout the term of the University's contract with Turnitin.com. This is so that other work can be automatically checked against it for plagiarism and not for any other purpose. Your work cannot be used by another individual without your permission. If you object to this temporary storage of your paper, you must let your instructor know no later than two weeks after the start of this class. If you object to the storage of your paper on Turnitin.com, your instructor may utilize other services to check your work for plagiarism.

Project Descriptions

The Study Group project in Unit 3 consists of preparing a case study of an educational or training setting in self elected groups. The case study is not graded but is essential because it provides the information needed for the final assignment. The 3rd assignment (completed individually) is intended to give you an opportunity to apply what you have learned in the course by designing an appropriate and comprehensive learner support system for the educational or training organization described in the case study developed by your group.This approach allows for grades to be based mainly on individual work (the assignment) while still providing an opportunity for a collaborative project (the case study) that makes use of the breadth of experience that a group of students can bring to such a task. Detailed instructions will be provided during units two and three.

Additional Information

Academic Policies

The Graduate School's Academic Policies (GS)

GRADING GUIDELINES

According to The Graduate School's grading policy, the following marks are used:

A (90-100) = Excellent
B (80-89) = Good
C (70-79) = Below standards
F (69 or below) = Failure
FN = Failure for nonattendance
G = Grade pending
P = Passing
S = Satisfactory
U = Unsatisfactory
I = Incomplete
AU = Audit
W = Withdrew

The grade of "B" represents the benchmark for The Graduate School. It indicates that the student has demonstrated competency in the subject matter of the course, e.g., has fulfilled all course requirements on time, has a clear grasp of the full range of course materials and concepts, and is able to present and apply these materials and concepts in clear, well-reasoned, well-organized, and grammatically correct responses, whether written or oral.

Only students who fully meet this standard and, in addition, demonstrate exceptional comprehension and application of the course subject matter earn a grade of "A."

Students who do not meet the benchmark standard of competency fall within the "C" range or lower. They, in effect, have not met graduate level standards. Where this failure is substantial, they can earn an "F." The "FN" grade means a failure in the course because the student has ceased to attend and participate in course assignments and activities but has not officially withdrawn.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Graduate students are expected to maintain a 3.0 or higher grade point average (GPA) at all times, with no grade of F. An assessment of academic standing is made of each student at the end of every semester. Each student's GPA is computed for all UMUC graduate-level graded coursework to make a determination of academic standing as described in the policy below.

UMUC policy on academic levels of progress

WITHDRAWAL

Students who officially withdraw from a course receive a mark of W (Withdrawal). The grade of W will appear on the official transcript but will not be used in calculating the grade point average (GPA). Students must follow the withdrawal procedures as outlined in the catalog, schedule of classes, or Web site. Graduate students must officially withdraw before 65 percent of the class has expired. Specific deadlines are provided online at http://www.umuc.edu/withdrawals. Students who do not officially withdraw by the deadline receive the grade earned for the course. Financial aid recipients should contact a financial aid advisor before withdrawing to determine if or how this will affect his or her financial aid.

WRITING STANDARDS

Effective managers, leaders, and teachers are also effective communicators. Written communication is an important element of the total communication process. The Graduate School recognizes and expects exemplary writing to be the norm for course work. To this end, all papers, individual and group, must demonstrate graduate level writing and comply with the format requirements of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Edition. Careful attention should be given to spelling, punctuation, source citations, references, and the presentation of tables and figures. It is expected that all course work will be presented on time and error free.

POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

UMUC policy on academic dishonesty and plagiarism

> **Tutorial:**
>
> UMUC offers the VAIL Tutor, a tutorial covering academic integrity and strategies to help students avoid academic dishonesty and plagiarism.

Turnitin.com:

The University has a license agreement with [Turnitin](#), an educational tool that helps prevent or identify plagiarism from Internet resources. Your instructor may use the service in this class by requiring you to submit assignments electronically to Turnitin, by submitting assignments on your behalf, or by providing the option for you to check your own work for originality. The Turnitin Originality Report will indicate the amount of original text in your work and whether material that you quoted, paraphrased, summarized, or used from another source is appropriately referenced.

If you or your instructor submits all or part of your assignment to the Turnitin service, Turnitin will ordinarily store that assignment in its database. The assignment will be checked to see if there is any match between your work and other material stored in Turnitin's database. If you object to long-term storage of your work in the Turnitin database, you must let your instructor know no later than two weeks after the start of this class. You have three options regarding your assignment being stored in the Turnitin database. One, if you do nothing then your assignment will be stored in the Turnitin database for the duration of UMUC's contract with Turnitin. Two, you can ask your instructor to have Turnitin store your assignment only for the duration of the semester or term, then have your assignment deleted from the Turnitin database once the class is over. Three, you can ask your instructor to change the Turnitin settings so that your assignment is not stored in the Turnitin database at any time.

COURSE EVALUATION FORM

UMUC values its students' feedback. You will be asked to complete a mandatory online evaluation toward the end of the semester. The primary purpose of this evaluation is to assess the effectiveness of classroom instruction. UMUC requires all students to complete this evaluation. Your individual responses are kept confidential.

The evaluation notice will appear on your class screen when three-quarters of the session has finished. You will have approximately one week to complete the evaluation. If, after one week,you do not open the file and either respond to the questions or click on "no response," you will be "locked out" of the class until you do complete the evaluation. This means that you will not be able to enter the classroom. Once you have completed the evaluation, you will regain access to the classroom. If you have any problem getting back in your classroom, you should immediately contact [UMUC 360 support](#) by phone toll-free, 888-360-UMUC (8682), or 301-985-6710 or via [chat](#).

The Graduate School takes students' evaluations seriously, and in order to provide the best learning experience possible, information provided is used to make continuous improvements to every class. Please take full advantage of this opportunity to provide constructive recommendations and comments about potential areas of improvement.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have disabilities and are enrolled in any program at UMUC. Students must request accommodations each term they register by contacting the Office of Disability Services at 800-888-UMUC, ext. 2287 (or 240-684-2277

TTY), or disabilityservices@umuc.edu. To allow for adequate planning, requests for accommodations should be made at least four to six weeks before the first day of class.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND WEBTYCHO SUPPORT

Understanding and navigating through WebTycho is critical to successfully completing this course. All students are encouraged to complete UMUC's Orientation to WebTycho Tour at http://tychousa.umuc.edu/wtdocs/tychotour/index.html.

UMUC 360 Support is accessible directly in the WebTycho classroom. Technical support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year via self-help, phone, and chat at http://support.umuc.edu or toll-free 888-360-UMUC (8682), or 301-985-6710.

LIBRARY SUPPORT

Extensive library resources and services are available online, 24 hours a day, seven days a week at http://www.umuc.edu/library. Information and Library Services provides research assistance in creating search strategies, selecting relevant databases, and evaluating and citing resources in a variety of formats via its Ask a Librarian service (http://www.umuc.edu/library/help/ask.shtml), which includes 24/7 chat and e-mail. The Search by Subject area of the library's Web site (http://www.umuc.edu/library/subjects.shtml) provides a listing of resource guides for each subject area, with each guide containing relevant databases, Web sites, books, and other resources along with technical and citation assistance. The Online Guide to Writing and Research is available at http://www.umuc.edu/writingcenter/onlineguide/Online-Writing-Guide-Chapter-6.cfm?

Course Schedule

**OMDE 608 Learner Support in Distance Education & Training
Spring 2012 Schedule (Dr. Jane Brindley)**

Unit	Dates	Assignment, Group Work
Pre-Week	Jan. 16 – Jan. 22	Post updated biographies, review syllabus, sign in, start readings.
Unit 1 Introduction and Overview Week 1	Jan. 23 - Jan. 29	Post updated biographies, sign in, readings for Unit 1, online discussion.
Unit 1 Elements of Learner Support Weeks 2 - 3	Jan. 30 - Feb. 12	Readings for Unit 1, online discussion. At the end of Unit 1, students must submit **Assignment 1**, an Annotated Bibliography for **10 of the required readings** for this part of the course. Deadline: ***February 12.***
Unit 2 Designing Services to Meet	Feb. 13 -	Readings for Unit 2, online discussion.

Needs: Learner Characteristics and Special Groups Week 4	Feb. 19	Form Case Study groups and begin preliminary planning for Unit 3 Case Studies.
Unit 2 Management and Organization of Learner Support Services Weeks 5 -6	Feb. 20 - Mar. 4	Study groups must submit the name of their group, identify a group leader, and specify their choice of education/training sector for their case study by *March 1.* At the end of Unit 2, students must submit **Assignment 2**, a paper (4-6 pages, maximum 1500 words) that takes a position on one of the required readings from the course. Deadline: *March 4.*
Unit 3 Developing a Model of Learner Support: Case Studies Weeks 7 - 12	Mar. 5 - Apr. 15	Readings for Unit 3, group work, case studies. Case studies (group work) must be posted by *March 21.* Groups will receive feedback on their case studies from the instructor by *March 24* and will work together to make any revisions and post the final version of their case studies by *March 29.* **Assignment 3**, (individual responses to the case studies) must be posted by *April 7.* The remaining days of the course will be used to critique and discuss case studies individually and in groups.
January 12, 2012		

Welcome to the Café
Note # 1
by Jane Brindley
Hello everyone and welcome to the Café for OMDE 608. The Café is used for all sorts of informal discussion. In the past, we have used it for a variety of purposes including discussion of personal experiences of learner support, reports on anticipated absences, notices of travel and vacation, notices from the Dean and the MDE Program Director, and discussion of job and other life changes that occur during the course.

Another way to use the Café is to provide feedback about the course. For example, I recognize that the course may be somewhat heavy in reading, particularly in the first two units. Your response to workload, usefulness of the readings, assessment methods, or any other aspect of the course would be appreciated. Do not feel that you have to wait until the course evaluation near the end of term. If you have feedback, I encourage you to make suggestions at any time that these occur to you and to use the Café as a forum for this purpose. Thank you in advance for this contribution.
Please visit the Café as often as you like to initiate and respond to postings.

Regards, Jane

01/11/2012 03:29AM
The MDE Community
Note # 2, by Jane Brindley
Note edited by Jane Brindley on 01/15/2012 08:43PM

Are you in the MDE network?

When you become part of the MDE community, you will not only tap into a rich variety of useful resources and be in touch with helpful peers and colleagues, you will strengthen your social networking skills (very important for the current and future job market).

If you're not a part of the MDE Network, here are a host of links to try out:

The MDE Site
http://mdeprogram.weebly.com/
"The mission of the Master of Distance Education (MDE) is to qualify present and future managers of distance education. Given that distance education - and e-learning - have expanded so rapidly in the past few years in both public and private education, as well as in the training sectors, the program educates the multitude of new managers and future leaders necessary in this field. These managers increasingly need the legitimacy of formal qualification, since they will be required to be active advocates for distance education and training in their organizations and need to manage significant change processes that may affect the entire organization."

The MDE Blog
http://mdeblog.blogspot.com/
This is the best place for recent news and other information related to the UMUC Master of Distance Education program. The blog contains links to important information for current and prospective students, advising tips, awards, course availability, a faculty list, UMUC policies, MDE certificates, core courses, MDE internships, newsletters, and a project portfolio and capstone tutorial. It's one-stop-shopping. Don't miss it! Bookmark or subscribe to the MDE Blog and you'll be on top of the latest news in the MDE program.

The MDE Lounge
http://groups.google.com/group/mde-lounge
The MDE Student Lounge is a Google Group created to provide an environment for discussions networking among students, alumni, and staff. It's a place to share advising tips, journal articles, and information related to the MDE program and DE in general. Join this group after you've bookmarked or subscribed to the MDE Blog. This group is private, meaning your postings are seen

only by other group subscribers.

MDE Capstone Wiki
http://mdecapstone.pbworks.com/
"Here you will find information about both your activities during the capstone: the research project and the e-portfolio. Feel free to look around at the available pages (search the folders on the side bar). This wiki is intended to be used together with the on-going OMDE 670 class, and also as a reference for the MDE orientation workshop."

MDE Capstone Tutorial
http://www.c3l.uni-oldenburg.de/christinewalti/tutorial/index.htm
"This tutorial is designed to provide you with a number of texts, examples and tools that support your understanding and the development of the portfolio required in the capstone course. There is no portfolio development software provided (or prescribed) by UMUC. This 'tutorial is structured to be non-prescriptive and let you explore and make your own decisions on how you wish to organize your work and create your portfolio."

MDE New Technologies Wiki
http://mdewiki.wetpaint.com/
"This is an MDE site to be used as a reference for New Technologies in DE. It contains supporting materials, as well as report on experiences of the use of such technologies within the program and in the alumni, student & faculty MDE community."

MDE Peer-Mentoring Program
http://mdepeermentoring.weebly.com/

"The main goals of the MDE Peer-Mentoring Program are providing students with an enhanced learning experience and improving student success in the MDE program by providing useful support when students need it most. Mentors have the opportunity to interact and share their experience with fellow students; in addition to gaining experience, which can be added as part of their e-portfolio. Mentees gain a great resource and the opportunity to interact with fellow students who have a wealth of experience to share. This site will serve as a resource for program participants. The Peer-Mentoring Program provides support to new MDE students via e-mail contact with a mentor who is a more experienced MDE student. Mentors will have completed at least four courses in the MDE program."

MDE on Facebook
http://www.facebook.com/
The MDE Facebook group (private) is for students in "A closed group of students taking part in the Master of Distance Education at UMUC."

MDE on LinkedIn
http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=1828680&trk=hb_side_g
"LinkedIn is an interconnected network of experienced professionals from around the world, representing 170 industries and 200 countries. You can find, be introduced to, and collaborate with qualified professionals that you need to work with to accomplish your goals. ... When you join, you create a profile that summarizes your professional expertise and accomplishments. You can then form enduring connections by inviting trusted contacts to join LinkedIn and connect to you. Your network consists of your connections, your connections' connections, and the people they know, linking you to a vast number of qualified professionals and experts."

MDE Itinerant Video Project
http://mdevideo.tumblr.com/
"This is the video-blog of the MDE Itinerant Video Camera, celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Master of Distance Education program. Our goal is to build a collection of videos that share the 'essence' of the MDE and the MDE community in celebration of its 10th anniversary. An itinerant

video camera travels around the world to capture MDE students, graduates and faculty sharing some of their daily professional lives, the impact of the MDE in their professional development and their experiences and views of the future as distance educators. It will also capture thoughts from many MDE friends and supporters, and everyone's best wishes for a 'Happy 10th anniversary!' This material will serve the purpose of portraying in video format a collection of vignettes under the umbrella name of "The MDE Community – 10 years enhancing distance education."

01/11/2012 03:29AM
MDE Orientation Opens January 30th - sign up soon!
Note # 3, by Jane Brindley
Note edited by Jane Brindley on 01/15/2012 10:31PM

MDE Orientation

Many of you have probably already experienced the one week MDE Orientation program. For those of you who have not or those of you who are getting close to the end of program and would like a review of how to polish your e-portfolio and get ready for your final research project before enrolling in the capstone course (670), the Orientation will be offered again this term. It is a great opportunity to get prepared for the final stage of the program. Many students enrol more than once in the Orientation to get help with their portfolios so if you think this would be of interest to you, please do not hesitate to sign up again. Perhaps you can offer some tips to others, get feedback on your work to date, and learn some new ways to improve your portfolio.

Details: OMDE 101 MDE Orientation **opens the second week of class on January 30 and runs for 10 days through February 8**. It is a good opportunity for students to reflect on their learning from past semesters, further develop their ePortfolios, and give serious thought about how to prepare for the major research project that is the focus of the capstone course at the end of the program.

If you have participated in the Orientation in the past, you are still enrolled and will have access to the Orientation classroom at all times. If you have **never** been enrolled in this class and wish to participate this semester, please send an e-mail message to Stella Porto and **provide your WebTycho username** so she can get you rostered. The same needs to be done if you wish to leave the class.

If you have any questions, please email Stella Porto at sporto@umuc.edu

More information:

MDE Blog: http://mdeblog.blogspot.com/

MDE Hub: http://mdeprogram.weebly.com/mde-orientation-resources.html

We hope to see you there!

01/11/2012 03:29AM
Writing Skills Assessment: A Free Service from UMUC
Note # 4, by Jane Brindley
Note edited by Jane Brindley on 01/15/2012 09:28PM

Hello Everyone:

There is a free service offered by UMUC of which you may not be aware. You can have an **assessment of your writing and English skills online**. This is a link to the page on the UMUC website where you will find information and the login page for the assessment: http://www.umuc.edu/grad_assessment/

As you know by now, writing skills are essential when learning online because most all communication and assessment involves reading and writing. At the graduate level, your grades are determined to a great extent by how well you can demonstrate skills such as critical analysis and application of knowledge by expressing your ideas and opinions with clear concise well organized writing.

I **have had a look at the site and have taken the assessment myself. You can complete it in about 30 minutes. It does not actually require you to write anything but rather is a series of questions that ask about grammar and writing conventions. You will also be asked to read some passages** and then answer questions about the content to test your reading comprehension. The results are not in the form of detailed feedback but rather more of a general overall assessment. Your results are only forwarded to you (not your instructors). They are intended to help you decide whether you want to take advantage of services such as those offered by the UMUC Effective Writing Centre http://www.umuc.edu/ewc/ or whether you might want to enrol in Communications 600, the writing skills course offered by UMUC specifically for graduate students (See announcement in the next post or visit http://www.umuc.edu/mobile/course-comm.html.)

Please note that if you take the assessment, and you think you need some assistance with your writing, you can get personalized help in this class from Brenda Ledford, the Writing Coach for MDE 608. You will see her conference "Writing Coach Q & A" in the lefthand menu.

As you have no doubt discovered, academic writing is quite different than the writing we might do every day (memos, lists, notes). It requires time and practice. In over ten years of teaching in the MDE program, I find the greatest challenge for many students in excelling at **graduate school** is meeting the expectations for writing. UMUC has obviously recognized that students need support in meeting that challenge and have invested resources not only in this free assessment service but in providing a variety of types of assistance for you to improve your writing skills. I hope you will take advantage of these opportunities. Writing well will serve you well wherever you go, academically, in your workplace, and in participating in your community.

Kind regards,

Jane

p.s. This being a class about learner support, I would be most interested in your feedback about the assessment service and whether you find it helpful.

This is the introductory information from the UMUC Faculty Q & A page about the writing skills assessment tool:

The Assessment in Writing and English (AWE) is a free tool developed by the Graduate School of Management and Technology (GSMT) to help students evaluate their current skill in grammar, language conventions, written expression, and reading comprehension. We have found that students with a solid foundation in English and writing tend to do better in their graduate courses than students without strong skills in these areas.

The AWE is specifically designed to

- *Help students identify their English and writing deficiencies*
- *Recommend available resources to help students overcome their skills gap*
- *Encourage students to take the necessary steps to prepare for success at UMUC*

Student participation is voluntary and AWE results will not impact students' grades in any of their degree or certificate classes.

01/11/2012 03:29AM
Message from the Dean's Office: A Writing Skills Course
Note # 5, by Jane Brindley

Hello Everyone:
If you have decided that you would like to invest some time in strengthening your writing skills (for example, after taking the UMUC free writing assessment), the following information from the Dean's Office will be of interest to you:
Writing Course - A Great Opportunity to Strengthen Your Writing Skills!

GSMT wants to make sure all students know about **COMM 600, Academic Writing for Graduate Students**, a 3-credit graduate-level course specially **designed to reinforce and strengthen the writing skills necessary for success in UMUC's graduate degree and certificate programs**. Do not wait until you are faced with writing a major research paper of 40 to 60 pages in OMDE 670. If you have received feedback on assignments that your writing needs to be improved or if you want to write with more confidence, it is highly recommended that you consider this course.
For more information, visit http://www.umuc.edu/mobile/course-comm.html
Kind regards,
Jane