

Tips and Tricks for Teaching Dynamics GP as an Online Course Using Textbooks by Yacht, Crosson and Segovia

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Abstract: This paper is intended for those who are preparing to teach an online accounting software course for the first time. Whereas this paper uses Dynamics GP version 10 and is specific to its features and design, many of the concepts can be applied to any accounting software application. Included are prerequisites, sample course schedule with an optional Class (Group) Project, and tips and tricks to help make the experience go smoothly. The assignments could be considered the minimum and can be added to as needed.

TEACHING DYNAMICS GP AS AN ONLINE COURSE

Prerequisites

1. Skills/Education
 - a. Financial Accounting
 - b. Computer concepts – Knowledge of Windows operating systems, Use of e-mail, Microsoft Excel
 - c. Windows Explorer – creating folders, copying and renaming files
2. Hardware
 - a. Adequate hard disk space, CPU speed, RAM memory (as described in textbook)
 - b. USB flash drive – to allow access to data from different computers at home and school
 - c. Internet connection – for remote access help (highly recommended)

Sample Schedule – 16 week class

1. Either before the 1st class period or during the 1st week, students should upgrade their hardware and/or operating systems as required to meet the minimum requirements in the book. Free upgrades can be provided through Microsoft's Academic Alliance.
2. Begin with Computer Accounting Essentials and cover one chapter a week, scheduling tests every three chapters or so. This should take you to mid-semester.
3. Begin the second half of the semester with the Class Project, introduced with Assignment 9.
4. During the second half of the semester, include Chapters in Computer Accounting to expose the students to modules not covered in Computer Accounting Essentials, scheduling tests periodically to emphasize Chapter content.

Tips and Tricks

1. Release assignments each week as opposed to making the entire schedule available at the beginning. Indicate how many hours a week commitment they can expect. Since it is an online class they may think they can rush through the whole course and get it out of the way. Some students may complain about not having all assignments up front but it will maintain order for your work.
2. Quick response to student e-mails – Setup an e-mail archiving system to help keep track of assignments that have been graded and to help organize the volume of submissions.
3. Instruct students on how you would like to see e-mails sent to you, i.e. separated into paragraphs, using Netiquette, NO ALL UPPER CASE, etc.
4. Suggest that students forward their school e-mail addresses to their personal e-mail addresses. This results in the e-mail stream moving from the school address to personal addresses, so when you sort e-mails by student's name you are looking for two or more groupings. Advise students to check their incoming personal and school e-mail so they do not miss your reply. Encourage students to check their e-mail boxes and Spam or Junk mail boxes often, at least daily.
5. Advise the students what to do if they receive an error message. Suggest to students that they attach a screen shot of their problem to their e-mails.

6. When starting and exiting the program advise them to always say 'Yes' to the questions to Load and Unload your data. Never answer 'No'.
7. Explain to students that when they maintain their data on the local C: drive to always store it under the Student Data folder within the Dynamics program folder. They may store data in any folder on a USB drive.
8. If you have them e-mail the financial statements in the Chapters of CAE, be sure and point out the check figures they must match in order to get the statements correct.
9. Remind them that the trial balance column totals do not need to match those in the book and may be off due to error corrections. Only the amounts in the balances columns need to match.
10. Pay special attention to the wording on Page 148 of CAE under Year-End Close: 'Before you can perform the year-end routine, you need to setup the next fiscal year by going to the Fiscal Periods Setup window.' Make sure you have created every year necessary to fill any missing year between the first year listed in the 'Year' drop down window and any subsequent years. In other words, create a year, enter the beginning and ending dates and click Calculate for all missing years in between the ones already there.
11. Explain how to reconcile the GL if they enter the Start and End dates incorrectly and need to change them.
12. Be sure and point out to the students the correct method of uninstalling and reinstalling the software, if necessary, which is detailed in the book.
13. Explain to students that they may need to refer back to previous chapters in CAE where they first learned an entry screen for help with subsequent chapters.
14. It is helpful if you can remote-in to a student's computer to help with certain problems. There are several remote connection software services to help. Some cost, others do not. LogMeIn.com, GoToMeeting.com and GoToMyPC.com are a few some services to consider.
15. When they create a new set of data files for the Class Project, be sure and emphasis that they use only letters, no special characters in the file names when they rename the GP.mdf and GPlog.ldf files and for the database name in the Create Company window.

Assignments – Available for download on the MDAA SharePoint Site

REFERENCE

- Yacht, C, Crosson, S, & Segovia, J. (2009). *Computer Accounting with Microsoft Dynamics GP 10.0*, McGraw-Hill, 2nd ed.