All courses taught at Oregon State University have specified learning objectives, whether a particular class is taught face-to-face or via the web the learning objectives for that class are the same. As faculty we assess whether students meet these objectives in a variety of ways. Some of these ways are the same regardless of the method of instruction that is whether it’s face-to-face or via the web. At other times we need to modify the assessment form. Let me give you an example. I teach a class called Sociology of the Family; the course is part of our bachelorette core at OSU. As such, students are expected to develop strong critical thinking skills; these skills include the ability to raise vital questions, to think open mindedly about these questions, and to communicate effectively with others in figuring out solutions to complex problems. In a traditional classroom we might do this by starting with a video followed up by group or class discussion. In a web class we can also start with a video which is watched individually and the group discussions take place online over the period of several days. While I do not know if one method is more effective in eliciting critical thinking I do know that both ways are effective. What I particularly like about the distance version is that students participate in the online discussion via what we call a bulletin board at their own time and pace. Responses don’t have to be immediate, rather students can take the time to think about the issue at hand and post an idea that may be more thought out. Having a discussion over a period of several days also can allow for more developed thinking than doing all discussion in a 15 minute time slot. In addition, we know that some students are not comfortable talking in group discussions. Being able to post an idea to a bulletin board without being watched may encourage our more shy or resistant students to participate more actively. The point is that distance or online classes have the same goals as those we teach on-campus. While we meet our goals in slightly different ways both are effective.