

## Using MEonline –Information for Faculty

MEonline is an extremely flexible **course management system (CMS)** which will help you to teach and administer your courses. It is template-driven and accessible through any web-based browser and an Internet connection.

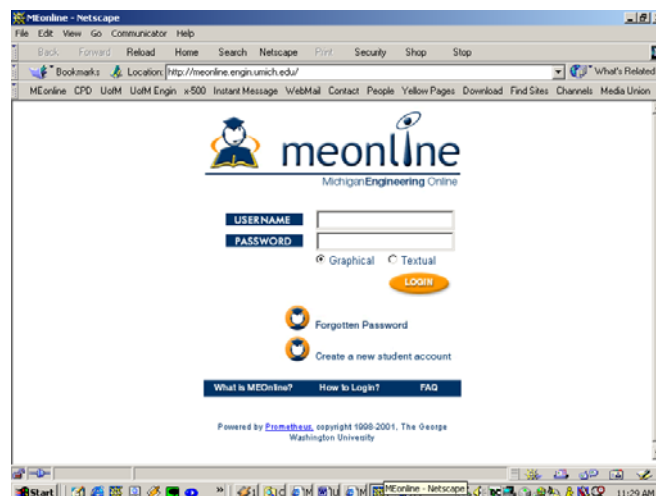
This guide is designed to supplement MEonline training, and includes information on:

- Basic Features of MEonline
- Icons and their uses
- What the Student Sees
- Additional Features Covered in MEonline Training
- Utilizing the Features of MEonline
  - Sending and receiving student e-mail
  - Creating Announcements
  - Using Files Effectively
  - Creating and Managing Discussions
  - Building Groups for project work
  - Building tests in MEonline
  - Utilizing the Grade Book

**To begin**, please navigate to the at <http://meonline.engin.umich.edu>. Enter your username and password.

*You may change your username and password after entering by choosing 'Preferences' and 'Edit User Interface'. **Be sure that your e-mail address is correct! This is the address which the system will use to send e-mail from within the course.***

Entering your username and password will bring you to a log-in page, which looks like this:



## Basic Features

The MEonline course management system associates ‘permissions’ which enable access to different functional areas. These permissions are encoded in your username and password, or **login** and are not readily apparent. The permissions set for faculty level will allow you to create courses and personal file (storage) areas, manage synchronous and asynchronous discussions and provide access to faculty-only areas.

Certain other permissions and functionality are set by you, as you decide is best for your class. These include the creation of group assignments, file viewing ability, level of online discussion control, test and project development and many other tasks and options.

The basic ‘navigational areas’ of MEonline are listed in the table below. They will be explained further during training.

<i>Area</i>	<i>Description</i>
<b>Syllabus</b>	All information about the course, study guide, learning outcomes, and specific policies that you wish to make available.
<b>Outline</b>	Lists the activities for each week, or <i>session</i> . Click on individual sessions to view activities, requirements, assignments and other resources and materials for that specific week.
<b>Assignments</b>	A repository for describing group Assignments. These can be linked to sessions, or shut off, as you see fit.
<b>Lectures</b>	A place to put lecture notes. Students can print lectures out separately for off-line viewing.
<b>Testing</b>	Online quizzes may be created and posted here.
<b>Grade Book</b>	If this feature is enabled, students will be able to see grades received.
<b>Files</b>	A place to store personal work and view work posted by others.
<b>Messages</b>	The e-mail address book, where all participants’ names and e-mails are located in one place.
<b>Discussions</b>	Your course bulletin board, where topics are posted to be discussed online.
<b>Courses</b>	Returns you to the Course page and your list of courses.
<b>More Info</b>	Links to FAQs, and a copy of the manual, a .pdf document. (Acrobat Reader must be installed on your computer to read the manual.)



*Hint: Contextual help is accessible at any time within the MEonline system by clicking on the help icon. This will open a screen with information for the page you are viewing.*

At **log-in** (after you enter your username and password), you will always be taken to the *Course Listings* page. From here, you can begin to create courses, edit personal information, manage your personal file collection or enter courses you have already created or been 'enrolled' in.

## Icons and Their Uses

### *The Course Listings Page*

The *Course Listings* page is your personal welcome page. It will look something like this:

COURSE LISTINGS		PALM PILOT USERS	
COURSE NUMBER	COURSE TITLE	STUDENTS	HITS
CPD 101.1	Faculty Exchange	34	957
ERC Seminar	ERC Seminar	1	4561
IOE 425.001	Manufacturing Strategies	0	189
ITS 2.1	Essential Competencies for the Transportation Professional of the Future: A Practicum	31	19671
ME 499.881	Automatic Transmission Systems	33	19968
MFG 599D.881	Decision and Risk Analysis for Automotive and Manufacturing	29	16647

In the upper right section of the *Course Listings* page, you will see three icons. They are:



**Help**: Click the Help icon at any time for **context-specific** help, which will give information about the area you are currently viewing. This context-specific help is available on **all** pages within the MEonline course management software.



**Suggestion Box**: Using this will send a message to the MEonline help staff on your campus. If you need technical assistance and cannot access the Suggestion Box, contact your support department.



**Exit icon**: This will log you out of MEonline, returning you to the log-in screen.

Other features of the *Course Listings* page are:

**Announcements:** You will automatically see the titles of any announcements you or an administrator has posted here. Open an announcement by clicking on the title. Once you have read the announcement, you may delete it by clicking on the ‘delete’ button. Posting announcements will be reviewed later in this guide.

**Palm Pilot Users icon:** If you use a Palm device, you may be able to integrate certain information from your courses into your Palm. Clicking on this icon directs you through the process of downloading and installing the conduit to enable data transmission.

**Preferences:** Choose this area to change your personal information (Edit User Information), or change the way you view your courses in MEonline (Edit User Interface). Here, you can also access your personal Files Collection, where you can place prepared items for use in any of the courses you create and administer in MEonline.


**Course Controls:** Here you will find the form-driven areas to create and delete courses, as well as areas in which you can change dates for courses you have already developed and create the frameworks for modular content which can be used in multiple courses. These areas will be covered in depth during training.

**Archive Library:** This area allows you to take entire courses ‘off-line’, so that no one can access them but you. This is a helpful area to use if you wish to preserve a master copy of a course, or save courses that have been completed (and all discussions, etc.) securely. Courses that have been archived can be edited while in archive.


### ***Icons within each course***


*One of the most useful – and user-friendly – features of MEonline is its’ consistency.* In other words, the same features exist on every page throughout the course. This makes it easy to navigate and obtain help within MEonline, too.

Once you have created or logged in to a course, every page includes several icons to assist you. On the upper right side, you can:

**get help** for the page you are in by clicking on the question mark ;

**search** the entire course by clicking on the ‘eye’ icon .

**make a note** for yourself by clicking on the notepad icon.  Only you will see these notes. (Students have this option as well, allowing them to make private notes right within the courseware!)

**log out** when you are ready by choosing the exit icon.  If you are using a shared or public computer, it is especially important that you log out.

Below this group of icons, you will see links to the *Dictionary*. Highlight any word and click 'Dictionary' to see a definition.

*Other information to help you use MEonline effectively:*

*All of the information stored in MEonline is stored in a secure database.* The MEonline software provides a simple way to view and manipulate that information through any web browser. Because material is housed in a database, downloads generally take less time than similar-sized web pages.

*Navigation works best when done internally.* This means that ***you should use the left navigation bar tools and other internal links instead of using your browser's 'back' button whenever possible.*** Using the 'back' button can cause your session to be interrupted.

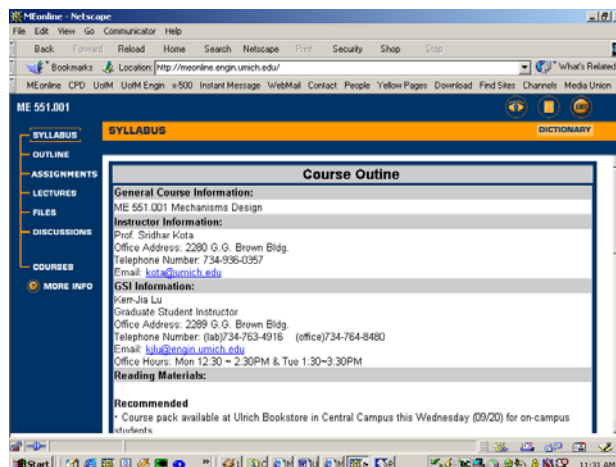
## What the Student Sees

This section provides an overview of what the student may see when entering the MEonline course 'space'. It will help you understand what you will be creating to help them to effectively learn in your course.

MEonline training will cover in-depth the processes for creating your own courses. The course creation process results in a series of web-based **interfaces** (pages that can be viewed and manipulated through the Web). You will experience it as a course framework that is created by the system based on selections you make, like beginning dates, end dates, etc.

### *The Syllabus Page*

Every time you or your students enter your course space by clicking on the course number in the *Course Listings* page, you will go automatically to the *Syllabus* page for your course. It may look something something like this:



Each course's *Syllabus* page will be different, of course. All will include information about the course, such as:

- Course title and number
- Course description
- Prerequisites
- Learning Objectives
- Instructor and contact information
- Texts and supporting materials
- Grading criteria
- Web-based resources
- Any other information you wish students to know about

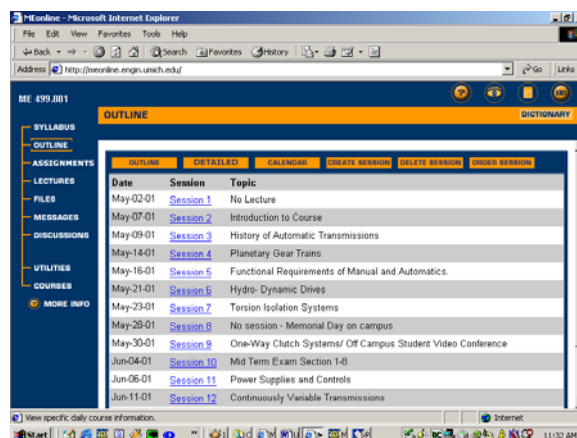
Each area in MEonline can be customized according to your needs and the academic requirements of the class. Easily-edited text boxes, title bars and other features allow you to build your course to suit **you**.

Pre-set system permissions encoded in usernames and passwords prevent students from editing critical material. However, you may choose to allow teaching assistants or aides limited access to certain parts of the course (for example, the discussion board or grade book) to assist you in managing the course. This will be covered in the MEonline training.

### *The Outline Page*

Clicking on the *Outline* page brings the viewer to a list of activities which correspond to class meetings. These activities are organized by the week in which they are to be completed. For example, the *Session 1* page will list all of the readings, activities, lectures, online tests, assignments, discussion questions and resources needed in the course for that week.

Here is an example of an *Outline* page:



Students may ‘enter’ weekly areas at any time by clicking on the link for a numbered *week*. This will allow students to preview and prepare for what is to come.

MEonline also enables you to set certain areas that are off-limits until a pre-set date, as well as providing the ability to link different parts of your MEonline-based course. For example, you may want to create a link to the *Assignments* area in the *Syllabus* or *Outline* directing students to review the list of class Assignments you have designed and assign themselves to a corresponding task group you have created. The possibilities are nearly endless!

### Additional Features Covered in MEonline Training

In addition to training in course design and building, MEonline training will also cover the uses of features not included in this guide, which you may or may not wish to use in your classes. These include:

- **Lectures** - This area allows you to post online lecture notes. These notes reside in a separate section which is easily printed by students to study before or after class.
- **Assignments** – Here, you can create group Assignments that span several weeks or several groups. Like the Lectures area, this is viewable separately. In this way, you and your students can follow online the development of multiple Assignments.
- **Utilities** – This crucial area contains the equipment for managing course participants, assigning access permissions, and many other tools for keeping your course ‘under control.’

Contact your Technical Support Dept. for further information.

### Utilizing the Features of MEonline

MEonline is a web-based database interface. In other words, MEonline allows your Internet browser to display information that has been entered and is stored in a secure database. In order for information to be **posted** (sent) to the database, it must be **submitted**. It is important, therefore, that when you enter any information into the MEonline interface, you **click the button at the bottom of the screen**. This action will cause the necessary steps to store your information and create a unique **tag** (identifier) so that the system can find it again.

MEonline can be used in many ways to manage your course and your students’ work related to it. Be sure to navigate through the online Orientation to acquaint yourself with the features and functionality of MEonline from the student’s point of view.

As you review the commonly-used features below, reflect on ways that MEonline can help you enhance your own teaching and the learning that results from it. The MEonline training will include many proven strategies for increasing instructional effectiveness with technology.

## **Sending and receiving student e-mail**

You can send e-mail to students from several places within MEonline. Because MEonline does not currently receive e-mail into the system, personal e-mail addresses are used. These are automatically inserted at the time that individuals are added to the course, so they only have to be entered once.

### *The Messages Page*

The *Messages* area is your e-mail address book, the one spot where the personal e-mail addresses for all participants in the course are located. From here, you can send e-mails to individuals or groups. You can also choose to create a log of e-mails sent. This will document that they *were* sent, and when.

Navigate to your course and click on *Messages* in the left navigational bar. The Messages window opens, with selection buttons across the top.

**INDIVIDUAL E-MAIL** allows you to send a message to an individual by clicking on his or her name. Follow the form directions to send your e-mail. In order to send the e-mail, you must click on the ‘Submit Message’ button at the bottom of the form.

**BROADCAST E-MAIL** allows you to send a single message to all course participants’ personal e-mail accounts.

**GROUP E-MAIL** allows you to send multiple copies of an e-mail to people that you select, for example, a project group. When you choose this option, you will see that each participant’s address includes a check-box. Check the ones you wish to e-mail and proceed as above.

**ANNOUNCEMENT** The Announcement icon places an announcement into the *Courses* page for all class members. Instead of sending an e-mail to personal e-mail accounts, announcements appear as soon as each student logs in and before they ‘enter’ their courses.

### *Receiving e-mail*

As noted above, MEonline utilizes personal e-mail accounts for e-mail delivery. For this reason, it is important that your e-mail address be correct!



*To check or change your own e-mail address:*

- Choose Preferences/Edit User Information on the *Course Listings* page. A form will appear that lists your personal information, including e-mail address. (Don't worry about CD drive location.) The e-mail signature box allows you to append additional information automatically to each e-mail you send.
- Edit as necessary.
- Remember to click 'Update' at the bottom of the page to send changes to the database.

## Creating and Managing Discussions

*The Discussions Page*

The core of collaborative exchange, the *Discussions* function gives you great flexibility in moderating, facilitating and supplementing discussion in an organized way.

Choosing the *Discussions* link from the left navigation bar brings you to the main Discussion page. On it, you will see three icons. They are:

**OPTIONS** Here, you can set the framework for your discussions, including creation of new categories and topics. 'Categories' creates discussion areas, like project groups; 'topics' creates individual subjects of discussion. You can use 'Create Categories' to create group project 'meeting areas'; and then assign individuals to those areas (Utilities/Groups – see 'Building Groups' below).

*Options* also allows you to set the level of control students have in message creation, thread levels and other functionality. *Tip: Most moderators set the thread level to '4' or '5' to keep messages from wandering too far from the topic. This does not limit the number of messages, but the number of subtopics.*

**CREATE TOPIC** allows you to create a discussion topic for general discussion, or for assignment to one of the groups or other 'categories' you have already created.

**TOPIC LISTING** is the default page for this area. Clicking on it reveals a complete list of the topics on the discussion board. To view messages under each topic, select the topic of interest. If not all topics appear to be listed, be sure to check whether you have selected "All" from the 'View Messages' area. Click on the highlighted word to change.

**When you choose a topic or message to view by clicking on it, messages related to that topic appear.**

**To post a reply to a message**, choose **MESSAGE REPLY**. This will open a dialog box which will allow you to post a message for everyone in the class to see. Note that you can check a box at the bottom of the message to be sent an e-mail when anyone has replied to this message.

E-mails sent and received from the *Discussions* board will show the sender's personal e-mail address, so replies will be sent there, and not to the entire discussion board. Similarly, if you receive an e-mail response in this manner, any replies you make will go only to the sender, and not the entire discussion board.

**To send an e-mail only to the author of the posting** from the discussion message area, choose **E-MAIL AUTHOR**. This is particularly good for those times when you want to provide guidance 'privately'. Choosing this button will open a dialog box in the *Messages* area, with the author's e-mail address automatically entered.

### **Building Groups for project work**

MEonline allows you to create project groups from the list of students registered in your course. You may:

- assign individual students personally
- have the system assign students randomly
- post group categories and ask students to self-select

Whatever you choose, options are entirely flexible, since you can re-assign or delete group members at any time.

To assign individuals to project groups, go to the *Utilities* page on the left navigation menu and choose 'Groups'. To be displayed, you must give each group a 'name'. *Tip: Choose group names that are easy to remember.*


"Create New Group" allows individual assignment; "Create Random Groups" asks you to simply select the number of student groups desired; the system does the rest. (You can always re-assign students later, if you wish.)

Note that you can also select whether you can view the activities of the online groups or whether their activities will be visible only to group members (in the 'Faculty permissions' setting). If you choose the latter option, you may adjust the choice later in order to view completed Assignments.

### **Using "Files" and "Files Collection"**

As a faculty member, you have access to two distinctly different areas in which you can store files. These are 'Files Collection' and 'Files'. Briefly, the differences are these:

**Files Collection:** *Analogous to a personal library*

- Resides outside courses (under ‘Preferences’)
- Permits the instructor to create a personal library (“collection”) of files
- Is accessible only by individual faculty
- Is username specific
- Holds materials that can be used in many courses
- Is accessed *within* courses using the file folder icon 
- Must be removed to be changed (cannot be over-written)

**Files:** *Analogous to materials for an individual course*

- Course-based only (accessible only from within the course)
- May be viewed by others (if permission is given)
- May be downloaded by others (if permission is given)
- Cannot be changed or removed except by author
- Permits instructor to assign a ‘Category’
- Must be removed to be changed (cannot be over-written)

All files are copied from your PC (or Mac) into a secure database. The original remains on your hard drive. Files that have been uploaded cannot be overwritten. Therefore, if you wish to change a file after it is uploaded, it must be deleted and replaced with the newer version.

MEonline can contain nearly any type of ‘file’ that you wish to make available to students, and keep it within the confines of the courseware. Some of the most commonly-uploaded file types are .pdf, Word, Powerpoint, RealMedia, and many different graphic formats (i.e., jpeg, bitmap, etc.)

*Note: In order for students to view files, they must have the appropriate software or reader on their own computer. For example, in order to view .pdf files, students must download and install the free Acrobat Reader.*

#### **Differences between ‘Category’ and ‘Group’**

A Group is:

- A defined set of students
- Set in Utilities/Groups

Categories are:

- Topics, tasks or Assignments assigned to groups
  - Set in Files/Categories

The *Files* section allows you to ‘send’, or upload’ a file to any or all students, individual groups or sections of the outline. It is a good way to preserve special formatting, charts or tables that may not be transmitted easily through e-mail.

*Try it:* If you would like to try uploading a file, follow these steps:

1. Decide what you would like to put in your *Files* area. This needs to exist on you own hard drive.
2. Choose **Files/Post File**.
3. In the form that appears, enter a title for your file. This will be the name and link that appears when the file has been added to the database.
4. “Browse” to the spot in your hard drive where the file exists and insert it. This operation will copy the entire file into the database.
5. Make any notes about the file that you wish.
6. Choose from the drop-down menu under “Post this file to:”
7. Click “Submit”. This will transfer the file to the database and insert links to it into the files area(s) you have chosen.


*Note: “Post Multimedia” allows you to post RealMedia files (having .rm suffixes), including Powerpoint presentations enhanced through RealPresenter. These are stored in a special section of the server. Clicking on these stored files will begin a video/audio stream that remains contained within MEonline. Check with your technical support team for further information and assistance with multimedia files.*

Once you have sent a file to the database, you may want to tell others to go view it! To send an e-mail to participants in your course, you can go to the *Messages* area.

### **Building tests in MEonline**


MEonline provides many options for test construction, corresponding to your teaching style and the instructional methods used in your class. The *Testing* area, like all of the rest of MEonline, is web-form driven.

- You can design subjective tests that can be automatically graded and entered in the *Grade Book*.
- You can create surveys in which no ‘right’ answers are set.
- You can develop open-ended short and long-answer questions that challenge students’ understanding.
- You can insert equations, upload files of case studies, provide links to documents or other places in the course.
- You can *create new* tests and questions or *edit* existing ones.


When you click on , a form will appear to help you through the process. Each test must have a title. You will see that you can elect to password-protect your test, hide it until a defined date and select other options. You will see that you can


choose to create many test sections, or just one; you can create multiple-choice or true/false questions, long- or short-answer questions. You will see that you can choose the number of distractors in your multiple-choice tests and set the answers to be automatically graded.

You will also see that you can add links, files, and notes, and that you can **associate** (make a link to) a test with a specific course week. Because the test-creation possibilities are literally endless, they will not all be described here. Instead, why don't you try creating a test? (You can always delete it.)

Help, if you need it, is just a click away. Click on the contextual help icon () in the upper right corner of your screen to access specific instructions for the section you are in.

### *Test Grading*

Within the *Testing* area, you can choose  to grade individual ungraded items, like long- or short-answer question responses. You can also re-grade automatically graded items. In choosing the name of the test you wish to score, the system will ask whether you wish to grade by item or by student.

Also within the *Testing* area, you can choose  to view how students who have already taken the test have done.

### *When once is not enough...*

The system allows each student to take a test only **one** time by default. Sometimes, circumstances require that individual students re-take tests. To allow students to retake tests, they must be reset. To reset tests:

- Choose 'Testing/Grading' and choose the item to be reset.
- Choose the student you wish to reset the test for.
- Click 'reset'. The student can then go back and re-take the test.

If you want to erase **all** students' grades in a particular test to allow them all to re-take it, you can reset the entire test in the *Grade Book* area.

- Choose *Grade Book*/'Controls' and then choose the option you wish.
- If you choose *reset item* or *delete item* and *submit*, a list of the items you have placed in the *Grade Book* will appear.
- Make your choice and the system will do the rest.

Of course, not all graded items are tests. Other items that contribute to a student's overall course grade, like discussion participation, papers, and Assignments, can be added to and managed in the *Grade Book*.

## Utilizing the Grade Book

### Creating a Grade Book

Clicking on *Grade Book* in the left navigation bar will bring you to the *Grade Book* page. This displays the names of all students registered, and allows you to add the items which will constitute their grades in the course.

As noted above, not all *Grade Book* items are tests. Before you can record a grade for any course requirement, you must create a place to put that grade.

Choose **ADD ITEM** to create the ‘folder’ into which you can place grades. The form guides you through the process and places the item in the *Grade Book*.


Choose **OPTIONS** to set viewing permissions. This is where you can allow students to see their own grades, none at all, or all students’ grades. This last option permits students to view grades, but only their own name appears; moreover, each viewing rearranges the order displayed. Thus, this option allows students to see their relative standing, but does not define a pattern that can lead to guessing which grades belong to whom.

Choose **CONTROLS** to reset or delete grades for individual items or all *Grade Book* entries.

*If automatically-graded test items are included in your Grade Book, cumulative scores will be shown. As the page notes, changes to these must be made in the Testing area.*


### Managing the Grade Book

Once your *Grade Book* is set up, you can manage it by item or student. When you choose *Grade Book* from the left navigation bar, you will see the names of registered students and the gradable items. All ‘choosable’ links will be highlighted.

**To enter a grade**, click on the highlighted grade (or N/A if the item is not yet graded). The box that opens will also link to a comments icon (  ) that you can use to give the student feedback on the assignment. If you have chosen to allow students to see their grades, they will also see this comment icon when comments have been added, indicating to them that they must click on the icon to open the comment.

**To view or change a gradable item**, click on the name of the highlighted item. Here, you can edit the name, weighted score and grade.

**To e-mail message the student directly from within *Grade Book***, click on the highlighted student name.

You may have noticed that the *Grade Book* page includes a button to effect a download of your grades to an Excel spreadsheet. When you choose the  icon, the grades you have entered will automatically fill a spreadsheet. You can then manipulate grading statistics further, should you wish to.

### ***The More Info link***

Select this link to learn more about MEonline, view Frequently-Asked questions or access the online user manual, a .pdf document. You must have Acrobat Reader installed to view the manual.

- Click on the ‘More Info’ button at the bottom of the left navigation bar.
- A link to the Manual is located at the bottom of the window that opens.
- Open the link. The manual is searchable using standard ‘find’ methods. (Edit/Find or ‘Control + F’)

*More Info* also includes a directory of common HTML terms and directions, if you wish to use HTML programming in creating your courses.

### **Next Steps**

Many have become proficient in the use of MEonline without ever attending a training session, it is that easy to use! Feel free to ‘play around’ with the MEonline application to become familiar with it. You should know, though, that new features are being added and changed regularly. So, in order to keep current and learn how others have utilized this adaptable software in ways that best suit your own teaching style and your students’ needs, be sure to attend the scheduled MEonline training session on your campus.

<http://meonline.engin.umich.edu>

Please direct questions, comments and suggestions to [meonline@umich.edu](mailto:meonline@umich.edu)