

UNIVERSITY
AT ALBANY
State University of New York

Teaching *at* ALBANY

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Teaching Well with Technology Week

ITLAL, ITS and the University Library are dedicating a full week to helping faculty learn about some of the newest tools of technology.

Overview Workshop

“Putting Technology in its Place”

Tuesday, April 22
11:00am-12:00 AND 1:00-2:00pm
Campus Center 375

Open Houses

“Clickers for Promoting Interaction”

Tuesday, April 22, 3:00-5:00pm
Social Science 251

“Blackboard for Course Management”

Wednesday, April 23,
10:00am-1:00pm
Science Library G3

“Digitizing Media”

Thursday, April 24, 1:00-5:00pm
Social Science 251

“Facilitating Multi-Media Projects”

Thursday, April 24, 2:00-5:00pm
University Library IMC

“Basic Web Design for Teaching”

Friday, April 25, 9:00am-1:30pm
University Library IMC

“Wikis & Blogs for Collaboration”

Friday, April 25, 1:00-5:00pm
Social Science 251

“Course Materials on E-Res”

Friday, April 25, 9:00am-1:30pm
University Library IMC

If you are interested in attending either of the workshops or any of the Open Houses, please RSVP to teachingandlearning@albany.edu or 442-5521.

Ask Not What You Can Do for Technology... Ask What Technology Can Do for YOU

What if you could...

- Check students' understanding of reading as an online task due before they come to class?
- Ask all your students a question, immediately get their responses, and re-teach material if necessary during a single class period?
- Foster discussion and collaboration among students even in a large class?
- Engage every student in an ongoing discussion that continues online, outside of the classroom?
- Let your students create course content and publish it online for other students?
- Require your students to watch a movie or documentary without having to give up any class time?
- Test or quiz your students regularly online throughout the semester without having to use class time or grade stacks of quiz sheets?
- Let students see their grades any time they want, without having to bug you?
- Customize or supplement your textbook with outside readings delivered electronically?

No, this is not a fantasy. All of these things are possible with the use of current, common instructional technologies—such as Blackboard Learning System, wikis, blogs, clickers, digitized and streaming media and ERes—already available here at UAlbany. And you don't have to be a technical wizard to use them.

The Benefits of Frequent and Instant Feedback

Students need a chance to “check their thinking” regularly without the threat of a low grade. While traditional paper quizzes can be used this way, the feedback loop is very slow. Technology allows you to assess and address student misconceptions immediately and more often.

Instant Feedback: With **clickers**, you can poll your students in class, and if you discover that most of them are struggling with a concept, you have the opportunity to address their misunderstanding before they start building their knowledge on faulty assumptions—and before they fail the test. The real beauty of clickers is that the instructor can establish an ongoing conversation with and among students, so that student thinking is monitored via continuous data that the instructor can use to customize instruction.

Online Feedback: **Blackboard** offers options for pre-class assessments that allow you to know what students do and don't know before they show up. You can easily set up online quizzes in Blackboard so that students can see for themselves—before class or any time—where they are having difficulty. Based on their scores, you can now either spend time correcting misconceptions, or move on to new matters. For some graded quizzes (multiple choice, T/F) Blackboard can score and store them automatically. Now both you and your students can

stay apprised of their comprehension—without your having to devote additional time to grading.

Fostering Student Collaboration—In and Out of Class

Have you ever had to cut off a class discussion just when things were getting interesting because you ran out of time? Or wished that your students would enter class ready to jump into a discussion because they have already been engaging with important issues? Technology can facilitate this kind of active, collaborative environment.

The Blended Classroom: **Threaded discussions** in Blackboard allow students to make posts before and/or after class so that they engage with course material and ideas outside the four walls of the classroom as well as within them. You can also identify and encourage silent students to engage in the discussion. Because students have time to reflect, their statements in an online discussion are better indicators of their thinking than when they have to improvise quick oral responses in a live classroom.

Similarly, **blogs** create an informal opportunity for students to engage with the concepts of your course by interacting with each other as well as with you. Blogs can be run by the instructor or by students, depending on their purpose. Like a threaded discussion, blogs allow students to post ideas and read other students' responses to them.

Wikis, on the other hand, are more openly interactive and less linear. A wiki assignment lets students participate in the synthesis and/or creation of knowledge while collaborating with each other. As in the threaded discussion and the blog, the instructor can track individual student participation throughout a project, which provides a way of assessing student learning.

Electronic Tools for Delivering Content

Do you feel as though you have too much to cover in too little time? Technology can help.

Digitized Media Options: Instead of using class time to view films, have your source videos **digitized** and **streamed**, then put links to them on a website or in your Blackboard course so that students can view the content outside of class. You might even want to have students post their observations in a threaded discussion, or take a short online quiz to verify their viewing of the films. For in-class use, maybe you just want to isolate a couple of short scenes that you can show back-to-back in class and have students analyze them together. To do this, you can drop digitized, pre-edited video clips into a PowerPoint or on a USB key, for easy access once you are in the classroom.

Digitized Text Options: What if you want to introduce students to research in your discipline that sheds light on an important topic but hasn't yet made its way into textbooks? (And you can't afford to make 150 copies of it.) With ERes, articles or short book chapters can be scanned and made available for your students electronically; that way they have access to the material anywhere that they have an internet connection.

Classroom and Course Management

The current generation of technology streamlines the administrative processes that take up a large amount of faculty time.

Storing and Distributing Course Materials: Blackboard has administrative tools that help you keep your course updated and organized electronically, while giving students 24/7 access. Students can easily download handouts and readings as well as view their grades. Best of all, this semester's course can be archived, so the materials are ready for you to revise and re-release the next time you teach it.

Attendance and Tracking: Both Blackboard and Clickers can help you monitor student performance. With clickers you can give a quick thought-provoking question at the beginning of class to get students talking, and then you can use the data collected as a way of taking attendance.

Blackboard can also be used to improve attendance, in this case by increasing motivation. Try giving an online "puzzle" quiz (the students have to make an educated guess, and the answer cannot be simply looked up), to be due one hour before class. Research shows that when students respond to a challenge just before class, they are more likely to attend class in order to see if they are right. It also gives the instructor a great lead-off discussion topic: "How did you answer, and why?"

Intrigued? If you'd like to learn more about any of the technologies discussed here, check out the **Teaching Well with Technology Week** schedule and consider joining us for the introductory workshop, or come by one of the Open Houses to get some one-on-one help.

Glossary of Terms

Blackboard Learning System (BLS)—An online course management software package that allows you to augment face-to-face activities with online content, or to facilitate entirely online courses. BLS requires minimal technical expertise on the part of the course developer, and on the part of the student.

Blog, short for "Web log"—A specialized website that allows individuals and groups to share a running log of personal insights with online audiences. It is basically a journal on the web, which may be public or private, individual or collaborative.

Clickers—A personal response system which allows students to "click in" answers using a remote control-like device. Instructors receive answers immediately and can use them to assess student understanding and create opportunities for interaction.

ERes (Electronic Reserve)—A service provided by the library that allows instructors to scan and post copyrighted materials to a password-protected course page.

Media Digitization—Taking media from one format (VHS, DVD, Cassette...) and converting it to a format that can be used in on-line applications (Real Media, MP3, MOV...). Digitized media may also be used in non-internet applications like PowerPoint and in media players.

Streamed Media—Media that has been digitized and is on a special server that allows multiple people to access it on-line. All media streamed by ITLAL is in Real Media format and will only play on Real Player.

Wiki—A website that includes the collaboration of work from many different authors. A wiki site allows anyone to edit, delete, or modify the content on the web. Wikipedia is an example of a Wiki.



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