

Take Small Steps to Increase the Use of Technology in Your Classes

By Kelly Nolin

Walk around campus and you'll see how important technology is to today's students. You'll see them sitting with laptops on the quad, talking on cell phones while walking to class, or listening to digital music stored on MP3 players. Modern students love technology and want to see more of it in their classes, right? Not necessarily.

The *Chronicle of Higher Education* recently published an article about "student's mixed views of technology's impact on teaching." It noted that "there's a lot of mythology about the new student and how they love online and they live online." They may live their personal lives that way but don't expect much technology in their classes (Young, 2004). In fact, an EDUCAUSE survey of 4,374 students found that only 41.2 percent of respondents said they "preferred moderate use of IT" in their classes while 22.7 wanted classes with "limited IT." Less than a third of the students hoped for "extensive" use of IT. The survey also found that students favored technology that resulted in convenience—like being able to check grades or get assignments online. Additionally, students said it helped them learn "when technology is used for online quizzes and other interactive features."

This is good news for faculty who would like to integrate more technology into their classes but hold back due to lack of time, fear of embarrassment, or a variety of other reasons. Students will appreciate the small steps you take and making these attempts has never been easier. Here are several suggestions:

- Utilize Blackboard to post your syllabus, list assignments, conduct discussions, give quizzes, or make grades available.

- Use personal response pads to check understanding during lectures.
 - Produce visually interesting PowerPoint presentations.
 - Demonstrate how to build bibliographies using Endnote.
 - Require students to create online portfolios of their work.
- The Center for Teaching Excellence has a staff of trained professionals that can help you integrate more technology into your classes. Attend our software workshops, set up one-on-one tutorials, or drop by our offices to ask a question. We can assist you in finding the technology best suited to your needs.
- Your students may not want an entire class of IT, but they do want some. They will welcome your efforts.

Source Cited: Young, J. R. (2004). Students have mixed views of technology's impact on teaching, survey finds [Online]. Available: <http://chronicle.com/daily/2004/08/2004080403n.htm> [2004, August 4].



The Faculty Corner

\$250

RAFFLE

LIMIT ONE PER VISIT

THE FACULTY CORNER | HURST HALL 204-B | 202.885.2734

**** VISIT THE FACULTY CORNER TO COMPLETE A "FREE" RAFFLE TICKET TO WIN ONE OF THE MONTHLY DRAWINGS ****

** FACULTY GRANTS ARE DESIGNED TO SUPPORT TEACHING (BOOKS, FILMS, SNACKS, SOFTWARE, ETC) **

Areté



TEACHING WITH TECHNOLOGY EDITION | WWW.AMERICAN.EDU/CTE/FACULTY/ARETE.HTML | FALL 2004

FROM THE DIRECTOR

CHALLENGES FACING AU I.T. SYSTEMS AND SERVICES IN THE COMING YEAR

For a recent retreat organized by Vice President Don Myers, I prepared a think-piece entitled 'Reflections on the State of Information Technology at AU and future challenges.' The paper opened with ten questions that leaders of a reorganized IT structure at AU must address. A brief excerpt follows (the complete list, as well as the longer paper, are available on CTE's website): <http://www.american.edu/cte>.

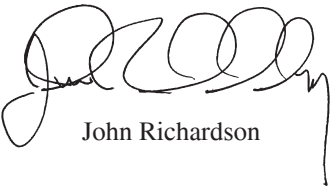
How can we appropriately balance the imperative to 'have the trains run on time' with the equally strong imperative to remain current with the information technology mainstream? Do we need separate organizations or units to do this?

How can AU's IT customer service be made more appropriate and responsive to the differing needs of different user groups? Should there be separate 'help desks' for staff, faculty and students?

How can we best anticipate the next generation of challenges that students and faculty will impose on our systems and be prepared to cope with them?

How should we reconfigure workstations and support services, now provided by CTE, the Library and 'in house' IT groups, to accommodate the increasing numbers of faculty and students for whom laptops will be their primary computer?

President Ladner, Provost Kerwin and Vice President Myers have taken seriously the challenge of providing more efficient, reliable, responsive information technology services to faculty, students and staff. In partnership with the Provost's Information Technology Task Force and AU's new Chief Information Officer, CTE staff members will actively participate in reshaping IT systems and services, to respond to concerns that have been raised. Ensuring that faculty needs are communicated, considered and taken seriously, as this process unfolds, will be a top CTE priority.


John Richardson

Areté is often equated, seamlessly, with the English terms 'virtue,' 'excellence,' 'goodness' and 'knowledge.' It embodies a belief that "the highest human potential is knowledge and all other human abilities are derived from this central capacity."

One-click to a Blackboard Course

- Log into "my.american.edu"
- Click "Academics" link
- Click "My Class Section Rosters"
- Click "Enable Blackboard" button to activate
- Course will automatically populate within 24 hours

[Late registrants will be added automatically within a day of their enrollment]

CTE LOCATIONS

Blackboard
Hurst Hall Rm. 11 | ext. 2553
M-F.....9:00-5:00PM

Faculty Corner
Hurst Hall Rm. 204B | ext. 2734
M-Th.....9:30-8:00PM
Fri.....9:30-5:30PM

New Media Center
Hurst Hall Rm. 212 | ext. 2560
M-Th.....9:30-11:00PM
Fri.....9:30-5:30PM
Sun.....12:00-11:00PM


Social Science Research Lab (SSRL)
Hurst Hall Rm. 202 | ext. 3862
M-Th.....9:30-10:00PM
Fri.....9:30-7:00PM
Sat.....12:00-7:00PM
Sun.....10:00-7:00PM

School of Public Administration Lab (SPA)
Ward Bldg. Sub Terrace | ext. 3866
M-Th.....9:30-10:00PM
Fri.....9:30-7:00PM
Sat.....12:00-7:00PM

Teaching and Learning Resources
Hurst Hall Rm. 11 | ext. 3926
M-F.....9:00-5:00PM

IN THIS ISSUE

Trasitioning to Blackboard 6.1.....	2
State-of-the-art Research Tools and Data.....	2
Faculty Comfort Zone.....	2
Distance Learning at AU	3
Technology in Your Classes.....	4



Small Grants Reimbursement
Bryn Johnson
T: 202.885.2305
E: ctegeneral@american.edu

200405

DATE: _____


PAY TO THE ORDER OF: **FACULTY MEMBER**

\$99.99

NINETY - NINE DOLLARS & 99 / 100 DOLLARS

Center for Teaching Excellence
Hurst Hall 206-D
www.american.edu/cte

MEMO: SMALL GRANTS REIMBURSEMENT

SIGNATURE 

2001680731 200405 2028852305

THIS IS NOT A REAL CHECK

Transitioning to Blackboard 6.1

By Jim McCabe

A number of faculty members used Blackboard version 6.1 during the two summer sessions in order to learn more about the reliability of the upgrade and its new features.

Their feedback to date has been positive. “The transition is seamless,” said Professor Meredith Fox of the Psychology Department. “I had no problem uploading documents and the students had no issues using the new format. It’s the same as the old one. While there are some new advanced features, the standard features work as easily in the new version as they do in the old one,” she said. Fox added that she will continue with version 6.1 in the fall.

There is no adoption time or learning curve needed to begin using version 6.1, said Professor Olivier Marcq of the Chemistry Department. “The transition from 5 to 6 is straightforward,” he said. He especially liked the new formatting features available in the latest version. “When you post an announcement, you can now use the same formatting features available in Microsoft Word such as bolding a title, or adding symbols which is great for math formulae. Also, now with the discussion board, when you reply to a message, you can also use the new formatting features. You can put a square root directly into a message without having to write sq rt,” he said. Marcq noted that the gradebook feature in Blackboard 6.1 is now more user-friendly. “You can now add grades with fewer steps,” he said.

Professor Rae Roberts of the TESOL program also praised the new editing options such as bold/underline/spell check, etc. She plans to take advantage of the collaboration tool that has a newly designed virtual chat feature which includes a Whiteboard with drawing tools, and lightweight chat which is text only. Professor Roberts said that in the previous version she was not able to open the online manual, but with updates in the new version, it pops right open.

As the summer volunteer testers have mentioned, faculty will find the familiar content creation features of the current version of Blackboard in version 6.1 which will be in general use in spring 2005. New features of 6.1 include an improved Gradebook, new editing options for message boxes, an alternative to the Digital Drop Box called “Assignment” which provides space for faculty comments on students’ papers and several other changes. Documentation from the Blackboard 6.1 workshop on August 24 and links to short tutorials are available at <http://www.american.edu/cte/training/bb61.pdf>. A complete list of new features of version 6.1 and a Blackboard 6.1 manual are available at www.american.edu/cte/bb61.html.

State-of-the-art Research Tools and Data

By Assen Assenov

The CTE advanced statistical network – the Social Science Research Lab, School of Public Affairs Lab and the Mathematics and Statistics Lab – supports a full range of up-to-date Windows-based and Open Source quantitative and qualitative research software, for both faculty and students.

The latest version of the SPSS includes both simple statistical procedures and complex and powerful modeling procedures (i.e., logistic regression and cluster analysis). Other software makes forecasting and simulation easier than ever. The latest versions of Eview, STATA and SAS offer new diagnostic and analytical tools for cross-section, time-series, panel data, and pooled time-series data analysis. Newly added features include tools for analysis of limited dependent variables, structural vector autoregression models, and linear and non-linear equation estimation techniques. There are some exciting new Open Source tools available for researchers, including statistical software for quantitative research (gretl and R) and the text editing LaTeX software. Qualitative research software (Nudist and Qualrus) is also supported.

The CTE labs also provide help in downloading survey data from the IPCSR and economic data from IMF datasets. The labs offer regularly scheduled training sessions, tailored class and individually-oriented drop-in tutorials.

Faculty Comfort Zone

By Justin Schauble

The Faculty Corner, now in its second year at American University, has been described by AU faculty as “a great place to relax and prepare before classes.” The Faculty Corner provides a cozy environment for faculty to enjoy a cup of coffee and ready access to all of the services provided by The Center for Teaching Excellence. This one stop resource continues to provide faculty with technology resources for the classroom as well as an inviting space for open discussions among colleagues.

The Corner provides well-trained staff to assist faculty with short-term laptop loans, Blackboard support, and many software packages ranging from web design to statistical applications. Training and one-on-one assistance can be scheduled in advance or on a walk-in basis.

The Faculty Corner is located in Hurst Hall room 204-B. The hours of operation are Monday through Thursday 9:30am to 8:00pm and Fridays 9:30am to 5:30pm. Please feel free to stop by for a cup of coffee or to meet with one of our consultants. Contact us at 202.885.2734 or FacultyCorner@american.edu.

Distance Learning at AU: The Summer Niche

By Jim Lee & Vi Ettle

AU has taken a cautious approach to distance learning. In part, this is due to the unique nature of AU, in part due to a strategic decision to see exactly where this trend was going. The good news is that the dot-com crash and the loss of huge investments by many colleges and universities validated this caution from a financial viewpoint. The bad news is that, we have somewhat fallen behind in making needed investments in teaching and program building related to distance learning. AU’s strength is in face-to-face instruction and intensive, in-person faculty to student contacts. There are, however, distance learning niches we can and should exploit.

One niche area is summer courses. A practical reality is that enrollments for summer courses have been on the decline. It is also true that the summer is when distance learning may be most appropriate for AU students and faculty. Students are taking on full time internships in town and traveling to home or to other academic experiences. Faculty are also traveling but also working from off campus on research.

Some initial experiments for developing this niche capability are underway. This effort had a simple beginning. In summer 2003, Professor Meg Weekes taught a distance learning course, “Justice in the Face of Terror” as a test. This was an asynchronous course, meaning that there was no set class meeting times. It was a great success, with teaching, learning and experiential benefits. There were 28 students in the one class and it received outstanding evaluations from students. The course used Blackboard as a platform for delivery.

In summer 2004, this program was expanded. Nine faculty, including Professor Weekes, taught distance learning

courses. Blackboard was again the platform for delivery. Faculty also branched out into other technological and teaching venues to enhance the content of the course. Faculty also took an online course to learn about teaching a distance learning course using Blackboard, taught by Don Bunis.

The final enrollment count for all 9 courses was 141 students which exceeded expectations. Here are the faculty who participated: Professors Lee, Mertus and Froslid-Jones of SIS; Professors Weekes, Cox-Cohan and Glenn of SPA; Professors Doolittle and Eisman of SOC and Professor Irvine of CAS.

Results of a survey of students are still being summarized but preliminary responses indicate that more than half of students enrolled because they could not have taken a course on campus otherwise, either because they were away from campus, traveling, or had schedule conflicts with on-campus classes.

Many faculty have expressed a desire to participate in future initiatives. More evaluation of the summer effort needs analysis, but in summer 2005, AU may expand the distance learning niche and deepen it. First, there may be expansion of the program to include more faculty. Second, a support system for empowering faculty participation is under consideration. Third, a collaborative effort may be undertaken to offer courses with Sookmyung University in Korea, a leading education institution. These distance learning courses would be open to students of both universities. These are all preliminary ideas open to discussion.

Feel free to come to scheduled events on distance learning at AU or contact us directly. For program questions, contact Vi Ettle (885-2720, vi@american.edu). For help with technology, contact Jim Lee (885-1691, jlee@american.edu).

CTE @ A GLANCE

• Need research assistance?

Call Jim Lee at ext. 2285 [jlee@american.edu]

• Need specialized training workshops?

Call Kelly Nolin at ext. 6077 [nolin@american.edu]

• Need Blackboard help?

Call Jim McCabe at ext. 2553 [jmccabe@american.edu]

• Laptop, projector or camera loans?

Call The Faculty Corner at ext. 2734

• Need to discuss professional development issues?

Call John Richardson at ext. 2346

• Assistance with social science research, help selecting the right software?

Call Assen Assenov at ext. 3861 [assenov@american.edu]

• New to teaching? Want a different approach in the classroom?

Call Lyn Stallings at ext. 3166 [vstalli@american.edu]

• How can I get \$99.99 free?

To facilitate classroom learning and enthusiasm, Cal CTE Main at ext. 2117 [ctegeneral@american.edu]