

No Boundaries

Teaching Solutions Through Technology

A 21st Century Toolbox Technology Adds New Tools To The Trade

By Jeff Schomburg

Introducing technology into the classroom can be a daunting task. Why not stick with what works? When's the last time your chalkboard failed because of a "system crash" or because the "network was down." Yet, technology has offered us so many new ways to effectively teach.

St. Mary's University offers its faculty an array of new tools of the trade that can enhance teaching through technology. Academic Technology Services helps to make the technology transition as easy as 1-2-3. Here are three examples that can enhance your teaching style and improve student learning.

Wish you could put your course on the Web? Blackboard is the solution. With Blackboard you can quickly communicate with students, post announcements, create discussion forums, upload course documents and assignments, and develop quizzes and surveys that are automatically graded for you.

Still using overhead transparencies? Try PowerPoint. This presentational software from Microsoft lets you create and combine all your transparency slides into one document. You can display your presentation using a computer and a projector. St. Mary's has 21 technology rooms equipped with computers and projectors. You can also call 1054 to reserve a portable projector and laptop, which will be delivered to and set up in your classroom.

Tired of chalk dust on your hands? Use a SmartBoard. Smartboards connect your computer to a projector and display the image onto a whiteboard surface. The image displayed becomes touch sensitive. For instance, you can use your finger and double tap (double click) on any folder displayed on the SmartBoard and it will open up. You can use an electronic pen to draw right on the board or take notes using an electronic flip chart program. SmartBoard turns your projector screen into a giant touch sensitive monitor.

These are just three of the new technologies supported by Academic Technology Services. If you've used them before, spread the word to your colleagues. If you'd like to learn more, contact us at 1054 and we'll set up a demonstration for you.

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Call **1054** to learn more.



Lights, Camera, Biology

How Videos Can Improve Lab Techniques And Safety

By Jeff Schomburg

After teaching biology and medical microbiology labs at St. Mary's since 1991, Dr. Gary Ogden decided students needed a way to study and review essential lab techniques at any given time. His goal was to digitally videotape more than 16 lab procedures and produce them onto CD-ROMs. The amazing part is that it only took him one week to film, edit, and produce the entire project.



Throwing caution, not safety, to the wind, Dr. Ogden purchased a digital camcorder using a National Science Foundation grant and began filming himself conducting over 16 lab procedures each ranging between three to four minutes.

He was careful to zoom in on the action. The videos rarely show his face, instead focusing on the experiment he was conducting. Talking into a microphone, he also narrated the procedural videos.

Once the videos were complete, Dr. Ogden imported the footage into his Apple iMac computer via a Firewire cable connecting the camcorder to the computer. It was here that he narrowly escaped trouble. Approximately 10 minutes of raw digital video equals just less than one gigabyte of hard drive space. Dr. Ogden's computer only had 10 gigabytes to spare. He had enough space, but not by much.

Project Notes

Challenges

- Create video of microbiology lab procedures to increase student performance and safety

Solution

- Apple iMac computer
- iMovie video software
- Canon ZR25 digital camcorder

Benefits

- Higher grades
- Better technique
- Fewer problems

Using the iMovie video editing software that came with his iMac, Dr. Ogden cropped unwanted footage from the videos, added titles, spliced the breaks in filming with smooth transitions, inserted still photos, and even added voice over when the original audio was too quiet to hear.

Dr. Ogden saved the edited video in QuickTime format. He then created an index page listing all the procedures that when clicked would kick off its video. His final step was to burn them onto blank CD-ROMs.

After using the videos in his labs for three full semesters, Dr. Ogden definitely notices the improvement. His impression is that students' technique has improved, grades have gone up, and students have fewer problems. "I talk to fewer people about major problems with their technique," he says. He continues, "Students like to look at the videos after lab for reinforcement."

What's next? "I'd love to go to DVD," Ogden says. He also plans to have students create their own digital movies using material obtained with a video microscope. Whatever's next, one can be sure that the entire St. Mary's community will benefit from Dr. Ogden's experiments with digital video.

Blackboard Discussion Board

Improving Learning Through Online Discussion



By Bhavik Jhaveri

The most rewarding learning opportunities often occur through classroom discussion. This forum helps students develop critical thinking and vital communication skills. What can you do to encourage student participation in classroom discussion? Take the discussion online with Blackboard.

Blackboard allows the instructor to create an online discussion forum not limited by traditional classroom barriers. Because the discussion occurs outside of class, students can participate at their convenience. In addition, passive students who normally do not participate in class discussion may feel more comfortable in actively communicating their opinions. The instructor can even allow students to anonymously post their messages and responses on the discussion board.

How difficult is it to create a discussion board? Anyone can create an online discussion in three steps using Blackboard. First, open the control panel of the course you are teaching. Click on the discussion board link in the Course Tools section. Second, click on the Add Forum button. Think of forums as the topic folder. Give a topic title to the forum and choose whether you'd like students to add, remove, edit, and post anonymous messages in this topic forum. Third, click on the Add Thread button. Threads are the discussion messages. We recommend that you start the forum discussion with a message that will elicit discussion from your students. That's all it takes.

The uses of online discussions using Blackboard are endless. You can use Blackboard to further discuss a topic brought up in class. You can also use the discussion board as a means to poll students understanding of class material. Dr. Elijah Akhahenda, an English/Communications Studies

professor at St. Mary's, uses Blackboard to post discussions about communication theories before class to better prepare students for in-class discussion. He often attaches a class reading or journal article to the discussion thread to help focus student discussion.



"I have found the discussion board to be extremely useful for a course that requires students to prepare a class presentation as a group or panel."

**— Dr. Elijah Akhahenda
English/Communication
Studies**

So no matter what your experience level, Blackboard's easy-to-use interface will take your class discussion online in minutes. And because your students can access Blackboard 24 hours a day, the discussion may never end.

Call **5074** and go online with Blackboard.

News And Events



We would, once again, like to thank all those who joined us in the FIT Lab during the Charles Francis open-house on December 6, 2002. We maintain an open-door policy, and welcome anybody who would like to come visit us in our new home.

We also would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all the door-prize winners from the open-house.

Open House Fun For All

Brown Bag Seminars Open To Faculty/Staff

ADOBE ACROBAT

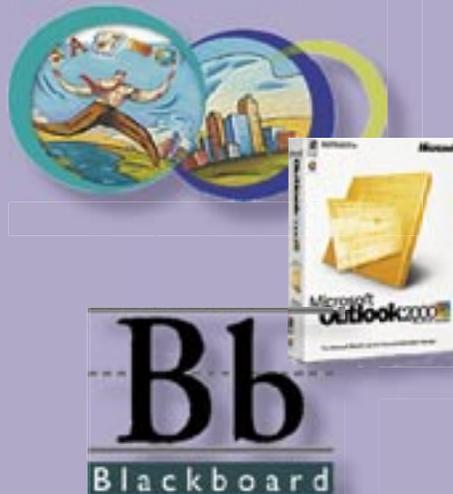
Thursday, 6 March 2003
12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

MICROSOFT OUTLOOK

Wednesday, 2 April 2003
12:20 p.m. - 1:20 p.m.

BLACKBOARD

Tuesday, 22 April 2003
12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.



Academic Technology Services is proud to present our brown bag lunch seminars.

We ask that you RSVP no later than one week before the seminars. **To RSVP please contact Bhavik Jhaveri (5074).**

We are also seeking topics and trainers for future seminars. To submit your name, call 5074.

SUMMER 2003	Workshop C	
	Rose Marie Cutting Pat Owen	Leona Pallansch Dan Long
Fall 2003	Workshop A (Mon./Wed.)	Workshop C (Tue./Thu.)
	Bro. David Fitzgerald Karl Kampschroeder Alice Kersnowski Mary Lynne Hill Antonia Castañeda	Dana Kerr James Ball Brian St. John Richard Menger
Spring 2004	Workshop B (Mon./Wed.)	Workshop C (Tue./Thu.)
	Richard Menger Conrad Kaczowski Mark Lokensgard Charles Miller (plus Fall 2003 A participants)	Eileen Wall Jeffery Johnson Eva Bueno Samuel Thompson Michael Shaub Peggy Curet Abe Yazdani

Workshop Schedule

There are some spaces still available for all remaining workshops. Academic year 2004 will be the last year we will offer semester-long workshops with university release time. contact your Dean to request placement into these workshops.

Call **5009** to learn more.

Contact Us

We Are Here To Help

Phone Support

FIT Lab	1054
Classroom Hotline	8088
Charles Garrison, ATS Director	3287
Michael Chen, IT Manager	5009
Jeff Schomburg, Instructional Designer.....	5073
Dan Walding, Instructional Designer.....	5010
Bhavik Jhaveri, Blackboard Administrator.....	5074

Web/E-Mail

ATS	http://ats.stmarytx.edu
Blackboard	http://bb.stmarytx.edu
Blackboard E-Mail.....	bb-support@stmarytx.edu
FIT Lab	http://ats.stmarytx.edu/fitlab/
Classroom Hotline	http://ats.stmarytx.edu/roomstatus.htm
Brown Bag Seminars	http://ats.stmarytx.edu/seminar.htm

Or come by and visit

Charles Francis Building
1st Floor, Room 102

Mon. – Thurs., 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Fri., 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

