

TLTR UPDATE

News from the Teaching and Learning with Technology Roundtable
Saginaw Valley State University

March 2007

TLTR Award Winner Recognized

by Brian Mudd

One of the TLTR's most visible events each year is the reception held to honor the SVSU faculty member selected for regularly integrating technology into their teaching.

Assistant Professor of Nursing Elizabeth Roe is this year's Teaching with Technology Award winner. Roe was recognized Dec. 7th in the Emeriti Room, where she demonstrated many of the same technologies she uses with her students. In addition to supplementing her PowerPoint presentations with web links, video, audio clips, and instructional games, Blackboard is extensively integrated into each of Roe's courses. Roe also allowed those at the reception to experience use of the CPS Audience Response System, which allows her to quiz students instantaneously on their understanding of subject matter. The remotes interface with computer software to compile quiz and survey results.

The highlight of Roe's presentation was her demonstration of "SIM MAN," a high fidelity, computer-driven Mannequin which allows Nursing students to conduct thorough physical assessments and collect realistic data. Abnormal heartbeats, cardiac arrests, and various respiratory illnesses such as pneumonia can be simulated to evaluate how well a Nursing student administers proper care. The human simulator can even respond verbally to various medical procedures and carry on a conversation with a Nursing student as if they were a real patient. Virtually every medical procedure performed can be replicated on "SIM MAN."

Roe emphasizes that all of the technologies available to faculty are merely tools to use for

enhancement of the educational process for students.

"A guiding principle I use when deciding whether or not to integrate a new technology is 'how does it facilitate learning?' It should not be used simply because students expect it or that it is an easier way to teach material." Roe has taught at SVSU for over 17 years.



The TLTR also honored History Professor Brad Jarvis and Art Professor Matt Zivich, who received Honorable Mentions. The TLTR Faculty and Incentives Action Team reviewed over 47 nominations this academic year for faculty who regularly utilize technology in their teaching.

Transition to V-Space Underway

by Janice Wolff

The number of SVSU Course Sections utilizing V-Space in the 2007 Winter Semester has now exceeded the number using Blackboard. Overall, roughly 440 V-Space course sections exist this term, as more and more faculty are opting for the open source solution for their course management system.

Dan Tyger, On-line Teaching and Learning Coordinator, reminds faculty that On-line Learning Systems are too complex to be completely "intuitive." Faculty need to seek out assistance and advice when migrating to ease the stress and "experimental" time that one encounters trying to figure it out.

Making the transition from Blackboard to the new V-Space environment is doable, any issues resolvable. With help from the On-line Teaching and Learning team, the shift is

nearly seamless. When I had questions, they were easily resolved through an email exchange. Highlights of that Q and A follow:

Q: Why am I having problems with prompt length when I create them for small group discussions?

A: You might be mistaking "prompt" for "Forum description." In the Discussion and Private Messages tool, the forum description is limited and should be a general description of the topic(s) that will be discussed in that forum. Instead, use the "New Topic" option after creating the forum to present your thought-provoking prompt(s). Here, you'll have as much room as you desire, plus the ability to attach files or links, as you see fit.

Q: Why am I also finding that some of the files I try to incorporate in Modules or in Re-

sources are refused, having too many characters?

A: With any online teaching, whether hybrid or fully online, we recommend that all file names and file types be reviewed before attempting to upload them. We don't even recommend certain file types to be delivered online (WordPerfect files are an example). Faculty need to think carefully about the student goals when distributing files. When offering a PowerPoint lecture, it is best delivered in its raw format (.ppt), so that students can print as many slides per page as they want. Or, the teacher may opt to convert the PowerPoint to PDF for the students in a format that they believe will best facilitate student review and use of the content.

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Q: As a general rule, do I save files to .rtf before uploading to V-Space?

A: Syllabi and other strictly formatted and paginated materials designed for printing are best presented as PDFs. Files that serve as "templates" (questions to be answered, fields to fill in) are best delivered in a friendly word-processing format such as .RTF or .DOC (MSWord format). This enables students to download, and then edit the files to meet assignment or project goals. Generally, file names should be scrutinized and edited by faculty before going online. File names should never have spaces, strange characters or symbols in them. They should be logical, descriptive, yet short and to-the-point. An example file name for a syllabus might be Phil212SyllW107.pdf or SyllabusFIN605.doc.



What V-Space offers SVSU faculty and students is expanded capabilities and services that cannot be acquired with Blackboard unless additional fees are incurred. Already, V-Space offers multiple course / project activities that Blackboard does not: Wiki, Blogger, Podcasts, Private

Messaging, Glossary, and more are on the way. Essentially, the lesson learned is that good pedagogy always informs choices and strategies in

online management environments such as V-Space. When faculty make those creative and sound decisions, they can be assured that expert and intelligent advice can be obtained from Online Teaching and Learning Support personnel.

Blackboard will be phased out entirely by June of 2008.

Online Training Workshops

by Brian Mudd

The Office of Academic Affairs is making a number of online workshops available to SVSU Faculty and Staff interested in improving their online teaching skills. Plenty of seats remain.

Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs Deb Huntley has purchased a "College Pass" to the SloanC online sessions. Courses range from a few days to three weeks in length and address the concerns of online educators at both the beginning and experienced levels. Sample courses are entitled, *Getting Started: Online Course Development Basics*, *Using the Quality Matters Rubric to Improve Your Online Course*, and *Copyright Compliance for Online Educators*.

Any SVSU faculty or staff member is eligible, whether or not they are teaching online. Those interested in enrolling in one of the courses should contact Associate VP Deb Huntley at x7013. There is no cost, but a special College Passcode is required. A complete listing of course offerings is available at <http://www.sloan-c.org/workshop/index.asp>.

Student Technology Center Visits Nearby Universities

by Beth Johns

Several SVSU faculty recently visited the student technology centers of two universities to explore how other universities address student technology needs and to develop future ideas for the SVSU Student Technology Center. Associate Professor of English Bill Williamson, Assistant Professor of Psychology Marie Cassar, Student Technology Center Coordinator Tammi Waugh, Student Technology Skills Specialist Trent Milligan, and STC employees Jeann Byers and Emilee Bruner visited Oakland University in Michigan and Bowling Green State University (BGSU) in Ohio.

STC's have a wide range of models, with location being key to their functions. Oakland's, located near the center of student activity (Student Union), has been open since 2005. In addition to assisting students with their technology application concerns, OU loans digital cameras and video equipment for students to create their own digital media. This is a service that Waugh plans to implement at SVSU as well. Details on Oakland's STC can be found at their website <http://www.oakland.edu/stc>.

Bowling Green has been a pioneer in the

student technology center concept, opening its doors in 2000. The service there is more faculty-driven and therefore integrated more with the curriculum. Aside from providing support and workshops, BGSU hosts an annual technology fair, loans laptops for up to a year to students, and also loans digital cameras and video gear. Details on all of their services can be found at <http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/cio/studenttech/>

SVSU's Student Technology Center has served students since 2002 and continues to adapt as new technologies develop. One possibility would be to adopt Bowling Green's model to recruit students to work with faculty on various new technical projects, such as how to place lectures into a podcast. Students would gain expertise that would be valuable in the job market and faculty would be able to expand their range of teaching strategies.

Another event in the idea stage, which brings a certain amount of fun and creativity to the university is an annual Film Festival. Such an

event occurs at Bowling Green, aimed at their freshmen. The STC could sponsor this with the help of other campus



organizations, such as the Student Council and the Academic Transitions programs. Students could create their own short films with equipment loaned by the STC. The culminating event could be an Oscar-type event, complete with red carpet, awards, paparazzi, and so on. This would require a lot of video equipment; there is the possibility of locating grant money to fund such an event. The STC is always open to new ideas for serving the SVSU community. If you have ideas to propose, please contact Tammi Waugh at x4036 or tjwaugh@svsu.edu.

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