



INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY @ PHILA U



**A Guide for Using Technology
in the Classroom**

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Blackboard Update—January, 2007



Blackboard at Philadelphia University

Below, you will find our current usage of Blackboard at Philadelphia University. The numbers for this semester are on par with the numbers from last semester.

Congratulations to SBA, SLA and SSH for being the top three users of our content management system. However, we can all do better!!

If you are interested in doing the following, then Blackboard may be your solution:

- Remind your students of important due dates and exams;

- Easily send e-mail to all of your students;
- Give easy access to the syllabus and documents that are important for your classes;
- Collaborate asynchronously through a Discussion Board to encourage higher order discussions in class;
- Online office hours;
- Give your students mini-exams to test their knowledge of your material;

If you are interested in learning more about using Blackboard for the first time, please let me know.

gallb@philau.edu; 215-951-6332

	# of Sections	# of Instructors
School of Architecture:	28	14
School of Business Administration:	64	28
School of Design & Media:	28	19
School of Engineering & Textiles:	47	24
School of Liberal Arts:	62	26
School of Science & Health:	74	51
Continuing & Professional Studies:	13	8
Other (Non-Credit Co-op, Co-op 2):	1	1
Use of Blackboard—33.83%	317	171

Blackboard Tips 101—Discussion Boards for Active Learning

Available immediately to all faculty using Blackboard are threaded discussion boards and chat functions. The discussion board has proven to actively engage students—whether the course is fully online or a traditional course supplemented with a Blackboard Web site.

Online discussion can function like a lively classroom discussion to stimulate an exchange of ideas.

However, the online discussion board holds a few distinct advantages: Blackboard is available

24/7, responses are available for all to see, multiple lines of discussion can occur at one time,

participants have the time to write out thoughtful responses, those too shy to speak or too slow to raise their hands to speak in class can actively participate online, and messages can be archived and easily accessed by class members to review whenever they go to Blackboard.

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Special points of interest:

- Did you know that Blackboard Discussion Boards are an excellent way to stimulate discussion among your students?
- Did you know that 3rd grade special needs students are creating podcasts to help them learn and master basic vocabulary skills?
- Do you know what a “one-minute muddiest point” paper is?
- Do you know that I am available to come to your class to help you integrate technology?

Tips for Using Technology in Your Classroom

Here are some cool new tips for using technology in the classroom:

- Teach students to use the **Track Changes** feature when editing work in Microsoft Word. Go to **Tools**, select **Track Changes** and **Highlight Changes**. Backspace over the last word in the sentence to be edited. The backspaced words will display crossed out. Then use the Track Changes feature to **review, accept, or reject changes**.
- If you use Microsoft Word, learn how to insert **comments** into Word documents. Highlight a word or phrase, go to **Insert**, select **Comments**, type your comment, and close the window. When a student moves the cursor over that word or phrase, the comment

will pop up. Comments are a great editing and motivating tool for kids. Use them to guide drafting and brainstorming and to help students peer edit and work collaboratively on group projects. You can even add 30-second voice comments.

- **Skype 3.0**—Skype is a VOIP (Voice-Over IP) tool that allows you to:

Call anyone else using Skype, anywhere in the world.

See who you are talking to with video calls.

Chat with one person or have a group chat with up to 100 people at the same time.

Conference calling with up to four

other people at the same time.

Send files and photos to each other easily.

“Classroom teachers can leverage the potential of disruptive technologies like Skype, weblogs, podcasts, or one to one technology immersion initiatives to increase student motivation to communicate with authentic audiences, spend more time on assigned tasks, and develop essential literacy skills needed for vocational and lifetime success in the twenty-first century.”

"Skype in the Classroom. Accessed: 26 Jan. 2007. <http://www.wtvi.com/TEKS/05_06_articles/skype-in-the-classroom.html>



iTunes University—UPDATE

iTunes University at PhilaU is now live at <http://itunes.philau.edu>. When you click on the link to launch, you will be asked for your PhilaU username and password. Once you enter this correctly, iTunes will open automatically and take you to our very own iTunes store. If you don't have iTunes, please contact the Help Desk at X4648 for installation instructions.

Once you logon to our store, you will see the courses, events and campus life podcasts that have already been placed in our system. The audio, enhanced and video podcasts range from our 30-second TV commercials, to mini-lectures from faculty, student-created discussions on artificial intelligence and robotics and videos that are imperative to an understanding of principles in disaster medicine.

Things to do with Podcasts:

- Listen to pre-created content in your discipline to see if it can be useful;
- Record 30 minutes of your lecture, upload after class and see how students respond to it;
- Turn your PowerPoint into a multimedia production that includes your notes and voice;
- Distribute video content.

Please consider utilizing this newest technology on campus to enhance class content, lectures, group projects. I will be conducting at least two training sessions this semester on creating and working with podcasts in the classroom. If you cannot attend these sessions, I will be happy to work with you on an individual basis.

A Guide for Using Technology in the Classroom

Philadelphia University—Paul J. Gutman Library
School House Lane and Henry Avenue

Tel: 215-951-6332

Fax: 215-951-2574

E-mail: gallb@philau.edu



We're on the web at
[http://
www.philau.edu/ITS](http://www.philau.edu/ITS)

Promoting Active Learning with Technology

Group work is often what instructors think of when asked to define the term “active learning.” However, active learning can also occur at the individual level. Specifically, there are activities students can do independently to achieve a deeper level of understanding about and learning of classroom material. The definition of active learning we have used in this series is “anything students do in a classroom other than passively listening to an instructor’s lecture” (Faust & Paulson, 1998). Given this definition, it’s quite easy to incorporate activities into the classroom to engage students individually. In fact, working alone allows students to focus and reflect on material and can enhance other types of learning activities in the classroom. These types of activities often encourage students to take personal responsibility for their learning. Here are a few examples of independent active learning strategies:

- **Minute paper**—After presenting a topic, pose a question and ask students to spend a few minutes writing and reflecting. An alternative to this approach is the “muddiest point” paper. Leave a few minutes at the end of the class and ask students to write what they thought was the “muddiest point” in the lecture. Both approaches are good ways to check progress and understanding of material. **Use Blackboard to store papers.**
- **Learning journal**—Have students keep a journal, to reflect on what they’ve learned in the class. Encourage (or require) them to write in the journal twice a week, focusing their thoughts on what they’re learning in your class. You might also want to give them topics on which to focus, such as ideas they’re unclear on or disagree with, or how they can apply what they’ve learned to other aspects of their lives. Be sure to collect and comment on the journals periodically to hold students accountable and to provide feedback. **Use Blackboard Discussion Boards or a Wiki (<http://www.pbwiki.com>) for this activity.**
- **Crossword puzzle**—Have students brainstorm key terms related to the course and construct a crossword puzzle using these terms. Students then create clues for each of the items using short definitions, categories, examples, etc. Have students trade and complete each other’s puzzles. This can be particularly helpful when reviewing for exams. **Use <http://www.puzzlemaker.com> for the creation of puzzles.**

References:

Faust, J. L. & Paulson, D. R. (1998). Active learning for the college classroom. *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching*, 9 (2), 3-24.

Silberman, M. (1996). *Active learning: 101 strategies to teach any subject*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.



Tech Bytes— Spring, 2007

“Tech Bytes” -
The new Faculty

Development Instructional Technology Workshop Series is in full swing this semester. These sessions are for full-time and adjunct professors as well as staff, students and the university community.

Come explore such topics as:

Blackboard, Podcasting, Multimedia in the Classroom, Low-Threshold Applications and more.

I am currently working on a schedule of five classes throughout the spring semester and will send out an announcement when the schedule of times and rooms are available.

If you do not see a topic here that you are interested in learning, please contact me and I will arrange a time to work with you.