

Faculty Needs Assessment Focus Groups

Duke University's Center for Instructional Technology (CIT) conducted three focus groups with faculty in December 2007 and January 2008, held at three different locations on East and West Campus. The following questions were used to focus these discussions:

- What are your greatest instructional challenges?
- Duke has supported experiments with a variety of handheld, portable and multimedia technologies such as iPods, tablet PCs, video cameras and others. What's next on your horizon?
- Do you create digital materials for use in your teaching? What kinds of tools and services do you need to support you in these efforts?
- What's one thing you would change about instructional technology support at Duke? What is something you hope doesn't change?
- To what extent is the technology available to you in and out of the classroom meeting your needs and expectations?
- What types and formats of information about faculty services and IT support are most useful to you? How can we best communicate with you?

These discussions were open to all current Duke teaching faculty and full-time instructors and advertised on the CIT web site and CIT Newsletter. In addition to this publicity, individual invitations were emailed to faculty who have received CIT or DDI support in the past. Twenty-four faculty from a wide range of departments and programs attended (attendee list, pg. 4). The primary goal of these sessions was to gather information about faculty needs and experiences in order to support decision-making about instructional technology support priorities.

Overall themes

- Interest in using digital materials for teaching continues to increase for both campus-based and distance courses
- Increasing reliance on the university's infrastructure to support students technology use outside of the classroom for multimedia assignments, service learning, research and other field work including the availability of multimedia equipment such as iPods and video cameras as well as training and facilities to support multimedia editing
- Need for better/easier to use tools for exchanging many types of digital files and electronic submissions with and between students
- Desire for access to a wide range of digital presentation technologies such as Tablet PCs, SmartBoards
- Growing interest in tools to enable providing feedback electronically to students (annotations, online grading, audio feedback)
- Broad interest in screen-recording software (e.g. Camtasia) for a wide range of purposes including creating software demos, capturing presentations and creating materials for distant or asynchronous learners

- Cross-disciplinary interest in the notion of repositories of learning objects or other means of storing and sharing faculty-created digital teaching materials and several reports of independent investigation of tools in this area
- Growing interest in more complex assessment tools such as ePortfolios and rubrics

Faculty “wish list”

** comment was voiced or agreed upon by multiple participants*

1. More clarity about who to call for what
 - A simple chart outlining who to contact for help with technology issues or questions – confused about the roles of and services offered by different campus groups (CIT, OIT, A&SIST, other departmental staff)*** [unanimous consensus]
 - Sheet listing quick things to try / common errors in using classroom technologies (e.g. a printed sheet attached to each piece of equipment) *
 - More posted answers to classroom / teaching FAQs *
 - One phone number to call for any IT question, or something equally simple
2. Resources for faculty in a variety of formats to meet different needs
 - Brief pedagogical and technology ‘tip sheets’ or tutorials for common faculty needs*
 - A repository for best practices so as not to reinvent the wheel with technology*
 - Tips for implementing successful student collaborative/group assignments*
 - Tutorials for faculty on common topics (e.g. how to record on an iPod, how to put images and clips from DVD’s into PowerPoint)*
 - Recordings of CIT events for faculty who are interested but too busy to attend
 - Electronic and paper versions of newsletters
4. Personal services and consultations
 - Someone to observe my class and suggest helpful technologies*
 - Help me develop customized assessment tools (e.g. a rubric about how to rate each group member’s effectiveness)*
 - Consulting help with how to create multimedia teaching resources (e.g. creating Camtasia recordings)*
5. Flexible access to equipment for students
 - Ability to check out microphones only for iPod*
 - iPods for students not currently eligible (Nursing, Grad students)*
6. A range of service models to meet different faculty needs and levels of resources
 - Drop-in and drop-off digitizing services*
 - Ability to buy services rather than relying on ‘free service’ (e.g. video editing, web development, digitization)
 - Equipment for faculty to borrow until they can get departmental funding
7. More multimedia resources for my teaching
 - Library of online tutorials for software used in my class*
 - Video clips from the web I can use in class
 - Free digital teaching materials that are also portable/can be downloaded

Greatest instructional challenges

- Training students to use specialized software tools for coursework (AutoCAD, Dreamweaver, SAS, MatLab)*
- Managing student group projects, both with and without technology *
- Assigning multimedia student projects without losing the emphasis on the importance of the content and spending too much time on technology skills *
- Exchanging multimedia files with students and among students*
- Keeping my digital teaching resources in a place where they are easy to get at, still portable, easy to share with colleagues*
- Sharing copies of lecture notes in advance without adversely impacting classroom attendance *

What's working well / better now

- Using iPods (for faculty as presentation tools, for students doing field interviews)*
- Using tablet PCs in teaching for more dynamic / engaging presentations *
- Web-based audio recording with Wimba (language instruction, provide audio feedback on student writing)*
- Having access to loaner iPods and video cameras for undergraduates*
- Having access to consultants who understand my disciplinary perspective*
- Using technology as a means of getting non-technical students (e.g. humanities majors) interested in my subject area
- Being able to share large files by uploading to Blackboard, WebFiles

What's not working well

- No time to learn new skills (building web pages, using Camtasia)*
- Struggling with a faculty computer that is not multimedia-enabled / older machine (e.g. no installed microphone)*
- No budget/insufficient budget in my department for instructional technology needs (outsourced digitizing, use of patient simulator) *
- Never quite sure who to call about what when I have a question*
- Need fully staffed multimedia production facilities that are open for students at convenient times for them, especially end of semester peak times *
- Managing copies of digital files used for teaching / not being able to easily archive or move around*
- Don't know how to find out about new services and what's already available (e.g. WebFiles)*
- Finding out what's going to be available far enough in advance to help me plan my course
- Student equipment loans that are too short / can't span the semester break (e.g. iPods)
- Dealing with students who use vastly different versions of Word and are having a hard time sharing (e.g. for group assignments)
- No funding for release time to develop a new interdisciplinary course
- Classrooms where technology is good but design is poor (e.g. dim lighting, screen blocks the whiteboard so I can't switch between them easily)
- Need time from expert staff who can do things like help synch audio and video

What's not working well (cont.)

- Unreliable wireless network (LSRC)
- No recording studio available on campus for recording lectures

What's next on your horizon?

- Engaging more students in creating more authentic assignments (Audio and video documentaries, Multimedia Presentations, Business Plans, 3D simulations)*
- More video recording and video production*
- Building interactive 3D models (sciences, humanities)*
- Using / continuing to use tablet PCs and ultra-mobile PCs (UMPCs)*
- Doing more with e-Portfolios (or looking into this) *
- Using rubrics for assessing student work, especially multimedia assignments *
- Choosing technology for students in field work to document their experiences (e.g. should they use video? UMPCs?)*
- Trying a tablet PC or Sympodium*
- Developing simple 2D simulations and Java applets for lab concepts so students can learn online*
- Trying Wimba*
- Investigating tools for collaborative writing*
- Trying WebFiles for sharing files, publishing web pages created by students*
- Trying Second Life
- Finding ways to use social networking tools
- Exploring interactive quizzing with iTunes U

List of faculty attendees:

Christine Beale, University Writing Program
Margaret Bowers, Assistant Clinical Professor, School of Nursing
Caroline Bruzelius, Professor; Art, Art History, & Visual Studies
Susan Denman, Assistant Professor, School of Nursing
Linda Franzoni, School of Engineering
Steven Grambow, Assistant Professor, Biostatistics & Bioinformatics
Erik Harms, University Writing Program
Joseph Harris, University Writing Program
Roberson Hill, Instructor, Aerospace Studies
Lori Leachman, Professor of the Practice, Economics
Elizabeth Linnartz, Lecturer, Music
Richard Lucic, Associate Department Chair and Associate Professor of the Practice, Computer Science
Alisa Nagler, Dean, Medical Education Administration
Brenda Neece, Adjunct Assistant Professor and Curator of Music Instrument Collection, Music
Alyssa Perz-Edwards, Lecturing Fellow, Biology
Carla Gene Rapp, Assistant Professor, School of Nursing
Deborah Reisinger, Visiting Assistant Professor, Romance Studies
Julie Reynolds, Instructor, Biology
Kenneth Rogerson, Lecturer, Sanford Institute of Public Policy
Amaryllis Rodriguez, Visiting Assistant Professor, Romance Studies
Vicki Russell, Senior Lecturing Fellow, University Writing Program
Rochelle Schwartz-Bloom, Professor, Pharmacology & Cancer Biology
Marcy Uyenoyama, Professor, Biology
Premlata Vaishnav, Instructor Asian & African Languages & Literature