

Using Smart Classroom Technology to Motivate Students and Enhance Learning

This is a brief “how to” guide with suggestions (and steps for implementation) on simple and easy ways to integrate the technology of the smart classroom into your lessons. These are adaptable for the typical instructor who is not tech-savvy. These items can spark up class presentations and enhance the learning environment, increase student interest, attention, and success. I am not an expert. If I can integrate these ideas others can too. This is what I have done and am doing. I want to share these exciting techniques with my colleagues.

Insert Music Files into PowerPoint® Slides

Purpose: Placing music into PowerPoint® slides can serve as an attention grabber. It can introduce the theme of your lesson. Music can illustrate themes in your lesson. Adding a musical element appeals to students with a diversity of learning styles.

How to:

- Rip music from your music CD to your computer. Download music files from a music site such as naptster.com. Music files are \$.99; Use free music on the web such as <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/strangefruit/abolition.html> where you can find a protest song for various time periods in U.S. History.
- Open up your PowerPoint® presentation.
- On the toolbar click insert, movies and sounds, sound from file.
- Select your mp3 file or wav file, click okay.
- Choose to play the sound automatically or on your click.

Use Your Digital Camera to Capture Material Placed on Your Whiteboard/Blackboard

Purpose: Efficient use of class time. You take a digital photo of content placed on the board; therefore you don't have to use class time to recreate what was on the board in the previous class. Use for instructor or student generated material.

How to:

- Use your digital camera to take photographs.

- Download the image to your computer.
- Insert the image into your PowerPoint® slide by either copying and pasting the file from the camera into the slide or by going to the Menu in PowerPoint®, Insert, insert picture, from file, okay.

Insert URLs into PowerPoint® Slides

Purpose: Gives you more efficient access to websites if using multiple websites in your lesson. You can display images, video, photographs from the web.

How to:

- Go to the website you wish to use.
- Copy the URL for the website.
- Open up your PowerPoint® slide.
- Make a textbox.
- Paste the URL that you copied into the textbox.

Insert Video Files into PowerPoint® Slides

Purpose: Gives efficient access to video files

How to:

- Open up a PowerPoint® slide
- Select Insert
- Select movies from file
- Browse for your file
- Select the file
- Select how you wish to start the movie in the slide show (on click or automatically)

For a video off the web-Option #1

- Go to the video and download it by right clicking on it
- Select save target as and save it to your desktop

- If the file is small (in bytes) you know it is a link; if it is larger you were able to download the video
- Paste the video into your PowerPoint slide®

For a video off the web-Option #2

- Go to the video on the web and right click on the link
- Go to properties and copy the URL
- Open up a PowerPoint® slide
- Insert a picture or graphic in the slide related to your topic
- Select the picture or graphic that you have inserted
- Right click and select edit hyperlink
- Insert the URL of the video you wish to play in the address box on the window, click okay
- Or go to the Menu, select Insert, then hyperlink, click okay

Use PowerPoint® Slides to Display Discussion Questions (Instead of the Whiteboard/Blackboard)

Purpose: This will save you class time as you don't have to take time to write the questions on the board. Typed questions are more legible than handwritten ones. This technique captures your lesson plans for future use.

How to:

- Type Discussion Questions into a PowerPoint® slide.
- Exhibit during a class discussion or group discussion.

Use PowerPoint® Slides to Show Maps During Your Lesson

Purpose: You can select the exact map (s) to fit your lessons. You have portability. The maps are always in your lesson file. You can easily update to achieve currency and the cost is minimal in comparison to the cost of buying maps for each classroom.

How to:

- Find maps on the Internet using a search engine. There are many websites where you can obtain copyright free maps such as <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/mapspub/213.shtml> which is a CIA website.
- Right click on the map image and select copy. Open up your blank PowerPoint® slide and click paste. This will paste the map into your PowerPoint® slide.
- Obtain digital files of maps from your publisher or publisher's website.
- Make paper copies of maps that are on transparencies and scan them. Insert the files into PowerPoint® slides as directed above.

Design Your PowerPoint® Slides with a Black Background in Order to Use the Board and the PowerPoint Presentation Simultaneously

Purpose: You can show the PowerPoint® presentations directly on the whiteboard without using a projection screen. In this way you can write notes or draw images on the board while displaying your PowerPoint® at the same time.

How to:

- Open PowerPoint®. From the toolbar select format, choose background, and then select black.
- Format your font by going to the Toolbar, select format, chose font, and select white, yellow or light blue.

Use Instant Messenger as a Way to Increase Instructor/Student Contact

Purpose: Research demonstrates that today's college student is well acquainted with Instant Messaging. By setting up an account and activating it, students can dialogue with you in real time. Students who hesitate to ask questions in class or visit you in your office might be more comfortable using Instant Messaging.

How to:

- Choose your Instant Messenger service. I chose to use Microsoft Instant Messenger; however there are other free options.
- Set up an account and put your Instant Messenger contact information in your syllabus.
- My IM contact information is habersusan@hotmail.com
- Create a handout if necessary explaining how to set up an account and download the IM chat software on their computer. Tell them once they set up the service on their computer they will be able to chat with you when you are online.

- To install the latest version of MSN Messenger:
For Windows XP, Windows 2000, Windows 98, or Windows Millennium Edition, follow these steps to download and install the latest version of MSN Messenger:
 1. Visit <http://messenger.msn.com/download/>.
 2. Under Registered MSN User, click Go. MSN Messenger begins to download automatically. The download progress bar displays the installation progress.
 3. Follow the instructions that appear in the MSN Messenger Setup Wizard.
 4. Click Finish.

Insert Screen Captures into PowerPoint® Slides

Purpose: Displays content from the web in your PowerPoint® slide

How to:

- Go to the web page you wish to capture
- Select Print Screen to copy the entire screen
- Select Alt Print Screen to copy the “active window”
- Use the Drawing toolbar to highlight items on your slide

Using Computer-Generated Timer and Group Selection Tools

Purpose: The computer generated timer adds efficiency, variety and interest in picking groups and roles within group. Using the timer keeps students on task as everyone in the room can view the timer and maintain awareness of time remaining for each task. The timer has computer generated sounds for end of task, switching roles or change of activities. Using the timer helps classroom efficiency and successful functioning of group or individual activity.

How to:

- Go to the website for Kagan’s **Timer Tools Software** and **Selector Tools Software:**
<http://www.kaganonline.com/Catalog/index.html>
- In the menu on the left side of page select Search, Products by Type, Software and you will see timer tools and selectors.
- Software products are \$29 each