THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF DISTANCE LEARNING

10 Ways to Use Laptops in Teaching and Learning

In the Classroom | Out of the Classroom

The following is a list of instructional activities appropriate for use with laptops and Tablet PCs. Although, listed as in-class and out-of-class activities, many of the strategies overlap and can be used in either environment. As with all instructional technologies, laptops and Tablets can enhance teaching by helping achieve specific learning outcomes within your course.

In the Classroom:

Student collaboration:
Various teaching and learning strategies can be used promote critical thinking and collaboration among students. Facilitate problem-based learning and team-based learning by having students integrate laptops as devices for research, communication, and development. Working together using computer-based resources, discussion boards, email, and synchronous chat rooms, students can identify issues, share ideas and propose solutions to authentic problems.

Student assessments:
Use laptops after lectures and discussions to assess students' comprehension of materials. Administer low-stakes quizzes and anonymous surveys through Blackboard's assessment tools. Quizzes are automatically graded and results posted in the course gradebook. Keep students on track by providing instant feedback and guidance, even in large classes.
Challenge students to identify and post key concepts from the lecture on the course discussion board. Classmates can review and comment.

Debates:
Divide students into teams. Introduce controversial course topics that can be debated using the discussion board. Various groups can be established and assigned specific tasks, such as researching ideas, organizing information, writing opening arguments, and providing summaries.

Peer reviews and editing:
Students exchange files and papers, and then use word processing software (or some other kind) to evaluate and critique their classmates' work. Using track changes, students have the opportunity to provide detailed feedback to peers. Papers and comments can be posted on the discussion board or emailed directly between students. Students learn to give and receive constructive criticism, and can update their work accordingly.

Development of computer-based projects:
Using software, including freeware and shareware appropriate to the discipline, students design and develop projects that can be delivered and evaluated on the computer. Allow learners to utilize existing skills and build valuable new ones, while interacting with course content on a deeper level.

Out of the classroom:

Online collaboration:
Students use a variety of web-based communication tools to interact with course content, technology and each other. Discussion boards, email, blogs, and instant messaging make it easy to share information and exchange ideas. Social software such as online bookmarking services, wikis, and whiteboards introduces another layer to online collaboration. These tools allow students to aggregate and organize knowledge, and allow instructors to track individual student contributions to processes and products.

Online research:
Take advantage of the FSU libraries' electronic journals and databases to augment students' abilities locate, evaluate and synthesize information.

Real-time interaction:
Groups of students use the online collaboration/chat tool in Blackboard to meet in real-time and discuss projects, work on assignments and study for upcoming tests.

Virtual field trips and web quests:
The Internet is full of comprehensive and well-designed web sites from a variety of non-profit, commercial and government organizations. These sites offer students access to rich and varied resources that may otherwise be inaccessible due to location. Enhance learner's experiences with virtual field trips to sites that present course topics and ideas in a variety of contexts.
A web quest is a popular online group activity in which students examine and evaluate a set of instructor-recommended resources and items. Group members take on specific roles and are challenged to work together to locate information, answer questions, and develop an understanding of a specific topic or idea.

Digital media:
Use multimedia, including images, audio recordings, podcasts and videos to demonstrate processes and improve explanation of concepts outside of class.

Note: If you do not have wireless Internet access in your classroom, ask students to download appropriate files, software, freeware, media players and plug-ins prior to coming to class. Students may need to bring additional hardware, such as headphones, for use with multimedia.

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