HOW TO GUIDE

TAP THE SCREEN, AND NAVIGATION BARS WILL APPEAR

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TEACHING ON THE EDGE

USING HIGH ALTITUDE BALLOONS TO PROVIDE INQUIRY-RICH LEARNING EXPERIENCES TO UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING MAJORS.

BY GEORGE BRETTUM

ILEARN GRADUATE ASSISTANT

Ball State University’s Integrated Learning Institute (Ilearn) recently completed an NSF COOP-TUES subaward, through Taylor University, to create an educational website and an Apple iBook project to support the wide spread dissemination of a high-altitude ballooning curriculum for STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education. Led by principal investigator Dr. Richard Edwards and project manager Steven Schuler, the NSF-funded effort involved synthesizing and organizing more than three years of high altitude ballooning data, lesson plans, and videos.

The sub award and its deliverables were focused on transforming undergraduate education in STEM by making a high altitude ballooning (HAB) curriculum available to pre-service teachers. The HAB curriculum provides educators and their students the ability to explore space science.
Welcome, readers, to the spring 2014 issue of iLearn Trends. Although this issue is capturing many evolving developments from the world of online and distance education at Ball State University, we want to stay focused on this theme: our students’ quest for success.

One of the ways we can support students in their quest is by outfitting professors—their companions on this journey—with the tools they need for creating exciting classrooms. In this issue of iLearn Trends you’ll read about a Ball State theatre professor who uses a Ball State-designed software system that mimics the dynamics of a classroom discussion. Known as OTTO, this tool allows students to annotate lectures as they are presented. So comments—and comments on those comments—appear in real time when students play the video lecture. Professors will remember times when students will say after a particularly lively class, “Oh,
what you said was great but I didn’t get it written down.” Unfortunately, you can never say it as succinctly—or as brilliantly—when students approach you, iPads and iPhones drawn. (Or even pen and paper.)

OTTO gives value to the original classroom engagement and beyond. Because students can revisit the annotations of instructors and classmates, they’ll interact with the material progressively throughout the semester. OTTO is a cool dude because it “endures.” Have a great classroom discussion—and take it with you, too. Skip to story now.

Another great story for iLearn is the fact that we have broken ground as one of the first users of FACET, a new emotion-recognition software, which was developed by Emotient, Inc. As everyone knows, facial recognition is critical for professors who will read student faces and pause lectures to address quizzical or disagreeable looks. Their nonverbal communication says it all. So what can we do for online instructors so they can read emotional affects through the web and see those inquiring faces and raised hands? FACET software enables instructors to analyze emotions of students as they encounter class material through online delivery. Skip to story now. There may be possibilities for using FACET with online advising or even in the on-campus classroom.

Meanwhile, a research team from Ball State’s Department of Educational Psychology has submitted a proposal to the National Science Foundation that would continue the team’s work on student academic anxiety. The goal of this work is to develop an assessment of academic anxiety, using Real-Time Emotion Sensing Technologies (R-TEST), as well as intervention strategies that treat such anxieties. Once we understand anxieties, we can create mechanisms to help students address anxieties, whether it be developing better test-taking skills or defeating the negative self-talk that affects performance. The amazing thing about this project is that we can develop an intervention plan that lets us quickly improve possibilities for individual student success. Skip to story now.
Ball State University practices equal opportunity in education and employment and is strongly and actively committed to diversity within its community. The information, correct at the time of publication, is subject to change.

We Welcome Your Input
Your feedback is important. iLearn Trends Magazine invites you to contact us at ilearn@bsu.edu. Follow us on Twitter and Facebook.

Interestingly, technology is allowing us, for the first time, to understand our students in a more robust and complete way. The stories in this issue of iLearn Trends remind us all how critical it is to treat students as individuals—with individual emotions, individual questions, individual study styles, even individual anxieties.

In higher education, unfortunately, we often teach to the average student. But technology allows us to meet our students wherever they are along their road to success.

And as I’ve said before, iLearn Trends is designed to be a forum, a public conversation open to college faculty, college students, policy makers, and other partners and supporters of higher education.
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As the educational experience becomes increasingly mediated, it can be a struggle to provide the personal interaction and conversational approach that is inherent to good teaching. Blended or hybrid courses are an increasingly popular route, with content delivery shifted to a digital product, typically a video lecture.

In this scenario, of course, we risk losing that moment of eye contact with students that tells us if they’re getting it. We consider giving up the clarifying Q and A that informs any good lecture. How to move forward technologically without losing what makes education personal? Through the process of
working with OTTO, iLearn’s video annotation system, I have come to see that digital and personal don’t have to be mutually exclusive.

I chose to blend Theatre 317, Pre-Modern Theatre History. The course is a requirement for all theatre majors, and covers the major eras and works in theatre from Ancient Greece to 1800. The course is a mix of lecture and discussion, and given its historical nature, it relies heavily on effective and thorough content delivery.

I was one of the first faculty members on campus to make use of OTTO, a Ball State-developed software system into which video lectures are loaded and presented to students. As a student watches the lecture, they can pause at any time and make an annotation or comment on what they’ve just seen and heard. The system allows a faculty member to create pre-set categories by which a student must label their comment. After pausing the video, the student selects a category (“Example from the play,” “Question about fact / concept,” “Ah-hah moment,” etc.) types in their comment, and then clicks “Add annotation.”

The text of the annotation then appears below the video, along with the student’s name. OTTO is configured so that as the video plays, prior annotations appear at the point in the video at which they were made. Students can also reply to each other’s comments, and the instructor can weigh in as well. The result is a visually compelling display of comments and questions, appearing and disappearing in real time as the video plays. The lecture expands beyond a one-way delivery of information to become a true conversation. Further, a thoughtful instructor can embed question points throughout the lecture, summarizing major ideas and asking for an annotation from all students.

Rather than boxing up a lecture and sending it into the ether with an unknown final result, OTTO gives a clear sense of how students are reacting, and provides additional opportunities to guide and clarify the conversation. After nearly two full semesters using OTTO in Theatre 317, I am pleased with the way in which the system has allowed me to blend my course without losing the personal, interactive touch.
Over the past 15 years, our research team along with an international group of colleagues, has been progressively developing a better understanding of how to effectively identify and treat specific components of academic anxieties (e.g., test anxiety, math anxiety).

Basically, we have been working to articulate a model for academic anxiety that will help students, educators, and instructional designers to minimize the occurrence of the disruptive influences of anxiety. The standard method of doing this has been to rely on self-report surveys completed at times that may or may not represent the true anxiety experience. In the recent “R-TEST” proposal submitted to the National Science Foundation, we will take the next step in providing more reliable measures of academic anxiety to
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Basically, we have been working to articulate a model for academic anxiety that will help students, educators, and instructional designers to minimize the occurrence of the disruptive influences of anxiety. The standard method of doing this has been to rely on self-report surveys completed at times that may or may not represent the true anxiety experience. In the recent “R-TEST” proposal submitted to the National Science Foundation, we will take the next step in providing more reliable measures of academic anxiety to students.

The scientific advances we seek in this NSF proposal are to develop an unobtrusive assessment of academic anxiety in a real-world learning task, using Real-Time Emotion Sensing Technologies (R-TEST). We are at the cutting edge of research on this line, using a new technology that uses standard computer webcams and advanced facial recognition software to analyze specific “action units” (AUs) that identify facial muscle movements in real time.

These action units have been linked to specific emotional responses (e.g., anxiety, surprise, disgust) – and we will use the massive amount of data that is captured through this technological assessment process to identify indicators of students’ anxious responses to academic situations.

In the current proposed NSF study, we will collect these data as students complete a standard math placement test to identify those students who have specific indications of anxious response. The precision of the analytics we can employ will allow us to identify specific domains of math that spark the greatest anxiety, whether students have math anxiety, test anxiety, generalized academic anxiety, or no anxiety.

Taking their performance on the math test, the anxiety profile we generate from the R-TEST protocol, and additional information on their prior math performance and typical study habits and skills, we will then generate an intervention plan that is designed to help them produce optimal goals and strategies to support their learning in a standard math course. The determination of the appropriate intervention is based on a second aspect of this study, that we call the Personalized STEM Intervention Matrix (PSIM). The function of PSIM is to assign students to intervention
activities that will treat their unique needs – so that they can rapidly improve their performance as well as manage the anxiety responses that they typically experience.

This NSF proposal will allow us to continue work we have already completed that indicates that there are essentially three primary “types” of academic anxiety experiences that students encounter. The first type of academic anxiety is rooted in a form of cognitive interference (self-deprecating thoughts, worry, self-doubt, etc.) induced in the target academic task. These students have the ability or knowledge to succeed – but academic anxiety interferes with performance by drawing cognitive resources away from the learning task. Students with this type of anxiety find themselves focusing on non-academic thoughts and their learning session and subsequent performance suffers.

A second type of anxiety response is experienced by students who have poor study skills. These students aren’t just distracted; they actually have ineffective or inefficient learning abilities. During learning situations these students recognize their inability to solve problems or comprehend content. This causes a discrepancy between what they can do, and what they believe they should be able to do. This leads to an anxious or fear response because of the awareness that their performance will fall short of their desired levels of success.

The third type of anxiety manifestation is connected to motivation and self-regulation skills. These students generally adopt motivational goals centered on preserving their sense of self-esteem or self-concept in the face of impending failure. Students often respond to feelings of anxiety in this way by adopting avoidance coping strategies (e.g., procrastination, withdrawal from course activities, justification for not trying) which naturally lead to lower success than could be achieved with more proactive attempts to master the content.

Once we have identified the profile of anxiety, we can “prescribe” interventions for the students that directly address the primary barriers they face using the PSIM. At the conclusion of our work, we will have a simple process that will allow course instructors or individual students to identify primary learning needs to overcome barriers to optimal success.

While we are starting our work in math courses, the protocol we are developing can be easily translated to support identification of anxiety barriers and strategies to intervene at a personal level in any domain of academic performance.
Emotion sensing software, using digital cameras as input devices, has been under development for at least seven years. The most widely used project, prior to 2013, was the Computer Expression Recognition Toolbox (CERT), developed at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) Machine Perception Laboratory. In 2012, the UCSD CERT team joined forces with other researchers and formed Emotient, Inc.

Emotient immediately set about developing FACET, emotion recognition software that is faster, more sensitive, and more accurate than its CERT predecessor. The initial beta of the FACET Software Development Kit (SDK) was released during the summer of 2013 and Ball State University signed on as one of the first adopters and licensees.

FACET employs the Facial Action Coding System (FACS) to analyze the movement of facial muscles, assigning an Action Unit (AU) to each movement. Previous investigators have correlated the AU scores to a variety of emotions. The FACET software can report both the raw AU scores and the emotions to which they correlate in near real-time.

To date, CERT and FACET technology has been deployed exclusively in stand-alone computer applications. iLearn Research is breaking new ground, incorporating FACET into a Web-based environment.

The discreet nature of academic research and the need for reliable, immediate communication guided our technology choices. After reviewing the options and seeking the advice of Emotient’s technical staff, we decided to use Web Real Time Communication
(WebRTC), a technology so new that the standard was not set until September, 2013. In fact, the Application Programming Interface (API) is still in a state of flux, necessitating individualized programming for specific browsers.

Despite the problems associated with creating software in a new and developing environment, WebRTC uniquely satisfies our needs. It offers always-on voice and video encryption to prevent eavesdropping, reliable establishment and maintenance of media streams, outstanding signal quality, and the ability to dynamically adapt to changing network conditions. In the future, we shall even be able to interoperate with existing digital voice and video systems.

Deploying our software on the Web will allow researchers to analyze the effects of student/teacher emotional affect beyond their laboratory environments, free of reliance on expert observers and dedicated equipment. Larger studies with greater varieties of subjects will immediately become feasible. On-line students will actively participate in research that promises to enhance teaching and learning outcomes for learners at every level, in every learning environment.
In online and blended classrooms, social media can be a method for “cultivating the imagination” of our students. That phrase intentionally recalls the work of John Seely Brown and Doug Thomas in their book, A New Culture of Learning.

I see “cultivation of the imagination” as the major learning outcome for higher education. Regardless of your favorite learning theory, whether you are a constructivist, a clicktivist, a connectivist, or subscriber to any other learning theories, creating imaginative and self-efficacious thinkers rates highly in all of them.

If we successfully cultivate our student’s imaginations, we will be creating the lifelong learners we desire. Social media is one area to explore along that path.
Social media tools intrigue me, because they have the capacity to be tools to encourage and support lifelong learning, and they are also very informal. It is a commercial tool that can be used for learning from others through the open and global Web, but it takes some design and purposefulness to make that happen.

Currently, when we bring social media into the classroom, we tend to kill for blunt what makes it such a great learning tool to begin with. We tend to enclose it within the confines of a closed course model which short-circuits its engagement with larger online networks. In these instances, students start to wonder why they are using Twitter in the first place. Seldom, if ever, will a course hashtag trend worldwide.

An integrated learning approach tries to have it both ways—to combine formal and the informal learning.

The “walls” of a socially mediated classroom need to be more porous than solid. I see Twitter (to just pick one social media tool out of the many) as a way to support student-centered learning. I want students on Twitter in all its informal messiness. Twitter can bring in expert voices in your classroom that may be disruptive and unexpected. Twitter can be medium for your students to share their passions and curiosity with a large number of followers and thereby build new connections and new relationships beyond the classroom.
Beyond a tool for conversation and connection, Twitter is also a space of curation. But I would make a critical distinction between three modes of curation.

Twitter is built with informal curation tools. It is a way for any user of Twitter to receive and assess the constant flow of tweets. We can favorite a tweet and keep it for future reference. We can retweet to show our interest in another person’s tweet.

A step up on the curatorial ladder is a more formal personal curation. Using tools such as Storify, paper.li, or scoop.it, social media stories can be assembled and recalled later when one wants to review, or better still, apply that information in new contexts.

But thirdly, curation can be crowd-sourced and shared. It can be the basis of a networked curation. Students can produce new knowledge from an archive of aggregated tweets. They can add new information to others’ tweets by providing new contexts, new explanations, new insights using a host of social media aggregators. How do we design our course projects and use our learning outcomes to encourage these practices?
When students engage in networked curation, they will get closer to the goal of cultivating the imagination. As long as social media is locked within the confines of a course, we will likely experience something closer to #TwitterFail.

To reach higher learning outcomes, we need more learning experiments involving social media curation and cultivation. We are at an early phase of social media integration into the online curriculum. What we don’t know is much greater than what we do know at this point. How curation will continue to develop in the future is an open question in my mind, but now is the time for experimentation. And if the experiments are focused on generating more powerful learning outcomes through social media, we will find ourselves on the right track, even if some of our earliest experiments fizzle.
That brings me back to Twitter in its specific form. I see Twitter as having multiple layers and understanding its layered design can be useful for instructors. The top portion of an expanded tweet is the message and the person who sent the message - what we may call the “content.” There are some basic curatorial tools that require little effort on the part of the person who reads the message - one can retweet the message or favorite it.

The next layer down is the crowd sourcing information. You can find out if others have found this tweet interesting. How many times has it been retweeted? Favorited? Who did this? And should I follow some of these people since they might share some of my interests?

Twitter also gives you a “timestamp” that will be useful when you start to aggregate multiple tweets. Sometimes it is useful to Storify tweets chronologically.

But the bottom layer of a tweet is its cultivation layer. Retweeting and favoriting are good, but replying builds new connections and adds to the original knowledge object. It is in replying that the message is extended, and the learner can express new information. But this is the bottom layer of a tweet.
Compare this to a tool like Storify. Storify is one aggregator among many on the open Web, but it will stand in for other ways of cultivating social media knowledge. In Storify, the connection and cultivation layer is the top layer. To engage in Storify is to be both a curator and a cultivator. You need both. You need to sort through the massive information network and make choices (curation) and have a means for adding new information and new syntheses in a structured way (cultivation).

Or as I prefer to state it: we achieve cultivation through curation. We demonstrate critical thinking at both the level of the assemblage and its new context, and like cultivation in agriculture, bring forth an entirely new ecology of knowledge.

I particularly like Storify because it foregrounds your role as a knowledge cultivator through its trope of “stories.” To tell a story is an act that brings together many different learning outcomes.
Which brings us back to cultivating the imagination. How does this approach to social media apply to online and blended course design?

I would argue that “cultivation through curation” touches on many key learning outcomes we might seek in our course designs.

Twitter and Storify can support the evaluation of information, as student learners evaluate tweets. Twitter and Storify can support the synthesis of knowledge, and we can assess how well students bring together tweets to show their engagement with disciplinary knowledge. Twitter and Storify can aid in the assessment of student comprehension as students have to sort through and make sense of information in these social media flows.
Starting summer of 2013, the Department of Accounting and the Integrated Learning Institute (iLearn) coordinated a strategy to implement the Homework Improvement & Tracking System (HITS) designed to create a more personalized learning environment for Ball State University students with the intent of impacting student learning outcomes. With the resources supplied by iLearn, I created a new online course for ACC 201 (Principles of Accounting I) while integrating HITS.

HITS incorporates a variety of options to capture data concerning student outcomes, such as general assessment through question and answer as well as measuring meta-cognitive insights. The program provides similar options as the popular Blackboard application; however, HITS captures certain details Blackboard has yet to integrate. For example, to impact student learning, a series of pre-tests were administered through HITS to determine content-specific knowledge prior to exposing students to weekly learning activities, materials, and other resources. HITS and Blackboard offer traditional
tools for creating multiple-choice assessments. However, HITS allows the educator to incorporate immediate, specific remediation which is displayed upon completion of the assessment to guide the student through weekly activities as emphasized in the image below. It is at the discretion of each educator to offer various types of remediation; however, I selected to refer students to the course textbook to align questions with chapter and course objectives.

Another popular tool utilized by online and traditional educators is the Blackboard discussion board, where students and educators may congregate to discuss a variety of topics. HITS offers a similar tool labeled “Homework/Self-Assess,” where the educator may create questions at their discretion, and the student is expected to answer with an informative discussion. Although the discussion tool within Blackboard offers anonymous posting as well as specific subscribing options, students, as well as the educator, are able to view all posts.

It is my belief, as a recent student and now educator, the current system inherently encourages students to withdraw from candid discussion. However, HITS allows for confidential discussion directly between educator and learner. Therefore, in each session, I created at least one meta-cognitive question within HITS to encourage students to share their insights as shown in the image below. If they were unable to answer the question, students were further requested to speculate in regards to why they misunderstood. This process allowed me to engage each student on a more personalized level. After reviewing each discussion, I selected and addressed specific students who identified they were struggling with the concepts.

The collaboration between the Department of Accounting and iLearn is an ongoing process. Although most of the results have been summarized from the fall 2013 semester, the data continues to be assessed. I encourage Ball State faculty and educators everywhere to engage in more activities that create a personalized learning experience for students to demonstrate our substantial level of commitment to student success.
The discipline of history is evolving. While retaining a commitment to the analysis of multiple documents and artifacts in order to construct the narrative most reflective of the actual past, new methodologies and media enrich our ability to reconstruct previous eras.

On the one hand, scholars like David Christian, Cynthia Brown and Craig Benjamin are showing us the extent to which humans have evolved their own methods of survival in a natural panorama that started with the Big Bang some 13.8 billion years ago. This is Big History. On the other hand, new media gives history powerful tools to refine its delivery of crucial information. The facsimile reproduction of historical documents online and the data mining of such sources will give us even more ways to expand a collective species memory that, for better and worse, other animals cannot rival.

At Ball State University, History 150, “The West in the World,” necessarily focuses on one limited (or not so limited) theme in human history. It explores the development of Mediterranean and northern European cultures in the context of the interaction of those cultures with other peoples and ways of life around the world.

It is as much a course about what Europe has borrowed, as it is a course about European
influence. In that sense, it is an introduction to global citizenship for students who primarily come from western cultural traditions, and the class can be difficult for students who have not been extensively exposed to the processes leading to globalization in the modern world. In order to provide struggling students with tools for success, iLearn has created five modules focused on the European Enlightenment and China. Among other things, the goal of these modules is to make the skeletal underpinnings of a university-level history lecture a bit more transparent. By “sidebarring” the bullet points that normally appear on PowerPoint slides in the classroom, it is hoped that it becomes apparent that students must elaborate those points with the professor’s spoken words recorded as notes. Prompts will appear on screen to suggest when notes might be taken, and what might be most significant. Finally, assessment exercises will expose students to the multiple testing methods that an instructor might employ. Not every instructor at Ball State will use China’s influence on early modern Europe and the Enlightenment movement as a case study example, but every instructor will expect History 150 students to contextualize and explain the significance of human events. I only hope that these modules help some students to become more critical and complex social analysts.
Conference planning is a team event! The Integrated Learning Institute (iLearn) Learning Technologists (LT) are educators focused on faculty development and believe that it is imperative to get faculty talking with and learning from each other. For our first conference we invited faculty to showcase their latest course projects and assignments that involved the use of new technology. LT stall teamed up with faculty presenters to highlight the relationship between pedagogy and technology.

Due to the success of the 2013 iLearn Mini-Conference, we are following a similar planning template this year. Here are nine tips for planning a mini-conference:

**STEP 1**

**SET A GOAL/TOPIC**

We built a theme around the topic “Learning Technologies for Innovation”. (8-10 months out.)

2013 KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

SCROLL RIGHT FOR MORE ➔
Conference planning is a team event! The Integrated Learning Institute (iLearn) Learning Technologists (LT) are educators focused on faculty development and believe that it is imperative to get faculty talking with and learning from each other. For our first conference we invited faculty to showcase their latest course projects and assignments that involved the use of new technology. LT stall teamed up with faculty presenters to highlight the relationship between pedagogy and technology.

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**STEP 2**

**HAVE A “WHAT?” MEETING**

- What is the budget and scope of the conference
- What is the venue?
- What about presentation styles?
- What technologies are needed by the faculty presenter?
- What food are we providing?

**2013 KEYNOTE SPEAKERS**

- Dr. Jennifer Bott – Associate Provost for Learning Initiatives and Associate Professor of Management
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**STEP 3**

**CREATE A TIME LINE**

We used Dropbox so that the team can access it at any time. The timeline keeps us on track with invitations, facility reservations, meal orders and publication deadlines and more. Bonus: recycle and reuse the timeline for next year’s conference!
Conference planning is a team event! The Integrated Learning Institute (iLearn) Learning Technologists (LT) are educators focused on faculty development and believe that it is imperative to get faculty talking with and learning from each other. For our first conference we invited faculty to showcase their latest course projects and assignments that involved the use of new technology. LT stall teamed up with faculty presenters to highlight the relationship between pedagogy and technology.

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**STEP 4**

**SET A DATE & RESERVE THE FACILITY**

Although we did reserve well in advance, we had a short notice facility change, which was beyond our control. Be flexible as plans may change at a moment’s notice!
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**STEP 5**

**SEND “INVITATIONS TO PRESENT”**

Once the presenters were booked, then program tracks were established and keynote speakers were booked. Also, we teamed up each faculty presenter with an LT. Get everyone on board early as calendars fill quickly!

**2013 KEYNOTE SPEAKERS**

Scroll right for more
Conference planning is a team event! The Integrated Learning Institute (iLearn) Learning Technologists (LT) are educators focused on faculty development and believe that it is imperative to get faculty talking with and learning from each other. For our first conference we invited faculty to showcase their latest course projects and assignments that involved the use of new technology. LT stall teamed up with faculty presenters to highlight the relationship between pedagogy and technology.

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**STEP 6**

**SPREAD THE WORD**

We created a [Web page for conference information and materials](#). A unique design was carried through for all media and details. By utilizing various advertising methods we had 76 registrations for the 2013 conference.
Conference planning is a team event! The Integrated Learning Institute (iLearn) Learning Technologists (LT) are educators focused on faculty development and believe that it is imperative to get faculty talking with and learning from each other. For our first conference we invited faculty to showcase their latest course projects and assignments that involved the use of new technology. LT staff teamed up with faculty presenters to highlight the relationship between pedagogy and technology.

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STEP 7

PEOPLE POWER!

Know who the key people are to call for troubleshooting, food, facility and technology questions, and appoint a videographer to record the event.
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**STEP 8**

**INFORMATION, PLEASE!**

We placed evaluation cards at the closing keynote address on the chairs or at individual table settings. It was easy to collect them as people left the session.
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**STEP 9**

**FOLLOW UP!**

We had an “after conference” team meeting to discuss the evaluations. This was an essential element of setting the stage for the 2nd Annual Learning Technologies for Innovation Conference: Expanding Horizons at the Ball State University Student Center on Friday, August 8, 2014.
Ball State University’s Integrated Learning Institute (iLearn) recently completed an NSF CCLI-TUES sub-award, through Taylor University, to create an educational website and an Apple iBook project to support the wide spread dissemination of a high-altitude ballooning curriculum for STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education. Led by principal investigator Dr. Richard Edwards and project manager Steven Schuler, the NSF-funded effort involved synthesizing and organizing more than three years of high altitude ballooning data, lesson plans, and videos.

The sub-award and its deliverables were focused on transforming undergraduate education in STEM by making a high-altitude ballooning (HAB) curriculum available to pre-service teachers. The HAB curriculum provides educators and their students the ability to explore space science.
through a hands-on experiment (including an actual balloon launch into near-space). Not only does HAB enrich a science curriculum, it frequently can inspire students to pursue a career in a STEM field such as science or engineering.

Undergraduate educators and pre-service teachers can access HAB lesson plans through iLearn’s “Teaching on the Edge” website. The lesson plans describe how to perform three HAB experiments, as well as the science behind them. Detailed videos and teacher guides provide additional resources to incorporate high altitude ballooning in the science curriculum. Dr. Melissa Mitchell, from Ball State, recognized the value of empowering her pre-teaching undergraduate students to create their own STEM experiments in the mold of HAB. Her students spent time gathering research and creating these curriculum modules. The instructional materials on the website were all produced by Ball State undergraduate teaching majors and the videos and simulations were performed with local middle school students.

Furthermore, Ball State’s iLearn, Emerging Technology, and the Digital Corps developed and authored an iBook on high altitude ballooning in STEM education. Students can download the iBook for free on their iPads to learn about the science behind the experiments. This cross-curriculum iBook was written for students to grasp the scientific, mathematic, and physical concepts at work. The iBook also contains a HAB Simulator so that teachers and students can explore the science of high-altitude ballooning using the results of previous balloon launches.
In January 2010, Wired Campus quoted Bill Gates as saying: “So far, technology has hardly changed formal education at all.” And he has a point — at least on the teaching side. One startup company headquartered in Muncie, Indiana has set out to revolutionize formal education and is leveraging technology to do so. Vizi Courseware provides a groundbreaking new approach for the classroom through an educational resource that meets students where they live: online. By building multimedia experiences using video, simulations, animations, games, and interactive exercises as part of a rigorously-designed pedagogy triggering multiple learning centers in the brain, Vizi provides an update to the multimodal learning of the past.

The bottom line is that Vizi texts are designed to engage students where and how they prefer and to foster interactive study. And the early results of these efforts are exciting.

Research studies of more than 500 students performed by the Ball State University Department of Psychological Science and the Center for Media Design compared Vizi to traditional texts. The results confirm that Vizi’s multimodal texts are significantly better learning resources than traditional textbooks. In fact, in every group of students tested, the Vizi learners outperformed the textbook learners — in some by as much as three letter grades.
While Vizi texts are designed to be engaging for students, they are also versatile for instructors. Vizi lessons can be used in traditional, flipped, blended or online class models. And Vizi texts are textbook neutral, so in the event that an instructor wants to use a traditional textbook along with a Vizi text, the two resources can work well together regardless of which specific book is selected. This flexibility allows teachers to use Vizi in whatever manner they deem most appropriate while at the same time providing a common learning experience for students across multiple sections. More than 10,000 students have experienced a new way of learning with Vizi. That number continues to grow as Vizi’s multimodal, interactive texts provide solutions to challenges that every university faces – student outcomes, engagement, course continuity, graduation rates, attrition and academic rigor. As challenges are magnified in a time of rising education costs, the research and the experiences of teachers and students using Vizi offer compelling support for the notion that Vizi is nothing short of a breakthrough tool to help solve these issues across the country.
RECOGNIZED FOR STRATEGIC INNOVATION IN ONLINE EDUCATION

BY VICTOR CALECA
SENIOR MEDIA RELATIONS MANAGER

The University Professional & Continuing Education Association (UPCEA) announced Feb. 18 that Ball State had been selected as a co-recipient of the UPCEA Strategic Innovation in Online Education Award. The University of Missouri was the other winner. UPCEA also announced awards in about a dozen other categories.

“This award from our peers recognizes that Ball State is providing innovation in online learning,” said Jennifer Bott, Ball State’s associate provost for learning initiatives. “Even more importantly, it shows that our innovation is sustainable and based on strategic planning, led by an understanding of what our students need.

“In less than three years, we reimagined and then, from top to bottom, restructured Ball State’s already robust support for online education in a way that puts students and the quality of their experience at the center.”

One key change was the creation of Bott’s associate provost position, which now oversees faculty development, instructional design, student services and a variety of other functions critical to running a top-tier online education program.

Recipients of the innovation award — along with winners in 12 other categories — will be honored at UPCEA’s 99th annual conference on March 27 in Miami.

Ball State offerings recognized in the 2014 U.S. News & World Report Best Online Programs were:

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TAP FOR VIDEO
What are your options when it comes to academically rich online programs?

Ball State University offers transformative, high-quality online degrees and certificates that are respected in the workplace.

For instance, our online master of business administration degree is ranked sixth in the nation among online, AACSB-accredited MBA programs by the consumer group GetEducated.com. And, our online bachelor’s degree completion programs were ranked in the top 20 by U.S. News & World Report.

Plus, our programs are competitively priced, and our professors and advisors give students all the personal attention they expect from Ball State. Learn more at www.bsu.edu/online.

All the programs listed below are fully online, unless otherwise noted:

**BACHELOR’S DEGREE COMPLETION PROGRAMS**
- Business Administration
- General Studies
- RN to BS in Nursing
- Early Childhood Education

**MASTER’S DEGREES**
- Adult and Community Education (blended program)
- Applied Behavior Analysis
- Business Administration (MBA)
- Business Education
- Career and Technical Education
- Curriculum and Educational Technology
- Educational Administration and Supervision
- Educational Psychology
- Elementary Education
- Executive Development (blended program)
- Interior Design Option
- Journalism
- Mathematics Education (blended program)
- Nursing
- Physical (Coaching) Education
- Public Relations
- Secondary Education
- Special Education
- Technology Education

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After coming to the U.S., Thailand native Prippan Tantiprasertchaei earned a professional certificate in interior design from UCLA’s Architecture and Design Extension program. He began his search for a master’s degree after more than a decade with architectural and design firms in California.

“I wanted to be involved in the academic side of interior design,” says Tantiprasertchaei, who wanted the opportunity to do academic research.

Believing that Ball State’s undergraduate interior design program had a strong reputation and that the online master’s program would not interrupt his career, he decided our master’s degree was “the perfect choice.”

“In addition to the academic research, it’s been a real benefit to share my experiences, visions, and design approach with other students,” says the 2011 Ball State graduate who is job captain for Shlemmer+Algaze+Associates, an interior design and architectural firm based in Los Angeles.