

UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD

FACULTY CENTER FOR LEARNING DEVELOPMENT

Making SMART Classrooms SMARTer

A SMART classroom is a loose term that basically means the classroom is equipped with some form of a projection system for using computers in the classroom. There are many flavors. While an effort has been made to standardize general classrooms – those classrooms run by MTS – school and college classrooms may be set up differently. General purpose SMART classrooms include a SMART Podium. With a SMART podium, all your instructional technology – videos, DVDs, computer applications - can be run at the touch of a button from a panel on a podium and projected through a computer projector. If you want to connect your laptop, there are connections right on the podium that allow you to do so easily. This has helped bring instructional technology into every day teaching. In recent years, additional technologies have been added that make your SMART classroom even smarter. You can now use a stylus connected to a computer to add impromptu notes and annotations to your digital presentations. These interactive ‘pens’ are essentially the computerized equivalent of the overhead projector’s grease pen. Here’s a quick overview of the different types of interactive pen technologies available. Contact FCLD if you would like to learn best practices and try them out, 768-4661. MTS can provide you with information on pricing and installation. Contact them at 768-4643.

SMART Sympodium – This provides all the functionality of the tablet technology, but is hard-wired into a SMART Podium. This means that every instructor can use it, but at the cost of mobility. A digital pen is used to annotate over applications, videos, etc. and the annotations can be captured, saved, and shared with the students via email, etc.



The software that comes with the Sympodium allows instructors to capture any and all annotated work in one place as a ‘notebook’. This notebook also has useful templates such as maps, diagrams, planning calendars, etc. There is a SMART Sympodium installed in the Wood Classroom in Morentsen Library.

SMART Boards – These provide you with all the advantages of the interactive whiteboards, but also add Internet interactivity. In addition to a digital pen, you can use your finger on the board as a mouse, opening software, surfing the net, etc. They are great for collaborative student activities, but instructors end up with their backs to the class. Because you have to be able to reach to the very top of the screen, the overall board size is better suited for a seminar room than a large lecture hall.

Interactive Whiteboards – These are hanging (or standing) whiteboards that work with actual dry erase pens. The whiteboard is pressure sensitive, so writing on the board will show up as regular dry erase markings, but can also be captured to a computer as an image. There is a camera button on the side of the board that snaps a picture of whatever is currently written. This technology is nice for capturing classroom notes (e.g., computer programs, algorithms, math equations, etc.). Since you can take a snapshot of the board any time you like, you no longer have to worry about erasing the board before the students have written down all your notes. Students love this technology. Unfortunately, these boards tend to be small – better sized for a seminar room than a large lecture hall.

SynchronEyes - SynchronEyes allows instructors to monitor what students are doing on their computers – right from the instructor’s podium! It was designed to work like the foreign language labs of earlier years, but instead of listening to students, instructors can monitor their computer screens. This software is often used to proctor computer tests in a lab because it allows you to lock the student’s ability to use other applications. Typically, instructors do not use an LCD or classroom projector in the classroom while using SynchronEyes. SynchronEyes is a specific vendor; there are other types of applications that do the same thing.



Tablets – These refer to anything from a low cost, simple handheld slate to an iPad – with costs changing accordingly. A low end tablet like bamboo has a digital pen and a USB Bluetooth receiver system to an iPad. Then, the pen is used to write or draw on a slate, and the images are projected to the students through a computer projector. Images can be captured to file and saved. This software includes useful templates such as maps, charts, etc. Since the slate is small and wireless, you can wander around the classroom with it. However, on some of them, you can’t see what you are drawing or writing on the slate itself; you have to be looking at the projected image. Because they are mobile, you can have students in the room use them too. Higher end models like the iPad use apps that are usually relatively cheap, but the iPad itself is expensive...\$400 - \$900.

WhiteBoard Apps - There are wide variety of tablet apps that can be used as whiteboards or that can be projected wirelessly in a classroom. These are still relatively new, and some work better than others. Two that FCLD is currently investigating are AirSketch and Splash Presenter. A stylus is used to annotate over applications, videos, and the annotations can be captured, saved, and shared with the students via email, etc. Just like the slates, the tablet PCs are nice because they allow the instructor to be mobile in the classroom.

Getting Help with Technology at the University of Hartford

Faculty Center for Learning Development (FCLD)

FCLD provides consulting and instructional support to faculty and staff who are using technology in teaching and learning. The FCLD Faculty Lab in Mortensen 203a is available for faculty support and use and is equipped with instructional technology-related equipment including: PCs, Macs, scanners, and projectors as well as support staff. Faculty and Staff needing support with Blackboard or other instructional technologies, should contact FCLD.

Phone: (860) 768-4661 **Email:** fcd@hartford.edu

Website: <http://www.hartford.edu/fcd>

Student Blackboard Support

The following is student support for Blackboard only. All other support technical support issues need to be addressed to the Office of Technology Services (below).

Phone: (860) 768-4636 **Email:** bbsupport@hartford.edu

FAQ/Submit a Ticket: <http://www.hartford.edu/studentbbsupport>

Information Technology Services (ITS) Help Desk

For general computer and Internet/network support questions (not directly related to the classroom but rather passwords, Internet/email problems, Banner/Self-Service, campus Facebook).

Phone: (860) 768-4357 **Email:** helpdesk@hartford.edu

Website: <http://hartford.edu/ots>

Media Technology Services (MTS)

Faculty should contact MTS for assistance scheduling or implementing classroom technology (2-Way interactive video classrooms, Smart Podiums, laptops, etc.), for setting up WebEx accounts, or for scheduling and instruction for a wide variety of media equipment and resources like LCD data projectors, CD/cassette players, TVs and VCRs, digital video, and more.

Phone: (860) 768-4357 **Website:** <http://www.hartford.edu/mts>