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### ▶ Syllabus Magazine

October 2001

## Highlights from Syllabus Magazine

### From Dumpster to Desktop: Combining Old Technology with High-Tech Tools

Often, adopting new teaching technology requires coping with transferring analog materials to digital formats and having to discard the "old" technology completely. Sometimes the amount of work involved in digitizing documents and learning a whole new approach to presentation is so burdensome that it's easier to maintain the status quo. Perhaps there's a middle ground, however, that takes advantage of the new tools without forcing existing materials into obsolescence.

One such solution is working for Douglas Navarick, professor of psychology at California State University at Fullerton since 1973. Navarick's introduction to psychology courses typically enroll 100 to 120 students in a large, theater-style classroom. Last year, the Southern California campus upgraded the lecture hall, adding a high-resolution LCD projector, a large screen, a powerful computer that is always online, DVD and VCR capability, and remotely operated carousel slide projectors. Navarick was interested in taking advantage of the new classroom appliances, but wanted to find a way to continue using the images and other materials he had collected over many years of teaching—hundreds of carousel slides, films, and transparencies.

Experimenting with PowerPoint gave Navarick the idea to combine electronic presentation tools with his traditional materials. "I started using PowerPoint to recreate some of my lecture materials," says Navarick, "and one thing led to another."

Navarick has developed three techniques. First, he sets up PowerPoint on the large screen with a black background and projects his carousel slides onto the screen. He can then use the PowerPoint pen as a pointer, which he says is very visible to his students, or as a tracing tool to circle, underline, or label slides. For instance, he might label a graph that his students are viewing. "Doing the labeling or circling while students are watching keeps their attention focused much better than having things pre-labeled," the professor of learning and memory notes.

His second technique uses a similar set-up, but with Word's background (in black) as a replacement for PowerPoint. Navarick then can type captions or comments under or over a slide, using large-font white type on the black background.

His third technique is to caption films while students are watching them in the lecture hall. While some professors have switched to videotapes, CD-ROMs, and DVDs and

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no longer use films, Navarick still relies on film in cases where the videotape quality is less sharp or no videotape version exists. "I found out that the media department was throwing out all the movie projectors, so I ran over and saved one from the dumpster," he says.

While showing a movie, Navarick used to have to interject his comments aloud, but he says that students were very distracted by this. "Some students don't listen or don't hear you, and then you find yourself repeating it over and over. This way, the definition or comment is right on the screen, and students can watch as you type it. Having it appear before their eyes is an attention-getter."

Although this pedagogical approach does require one to work simultaneously with PowerPoint, an LCD projector, and a slide or movie projector, Navarick finds it easy to manage. This approach allows him to reuse existing materials and save time digitizing documents. Best of all, there are absolutely no costs involved in teaching this way, since neither he nor the university has had to purchase anything. Navarick has all the tools he needs to continue his teaching approach indefinitely while he gradually builds a set of digitized and Web-based resources.

For more information, contact Douglas Navarick, [dnavarick@exchange.fullerton.edu](mailto:dnavarick@exchange.fullerton.edu).

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