Spring 2015, Issue 8

Coming to Hostos:

Spring 2015

- The 2015 Bronx EdTech Showcase
  May 8, 2015

Articles.
- Blackboard’s Spring 2015 Upgrade
- Universal Design in Online Teaching
- Teaching Coding in Pre-K
- Nearpod

News and Events.
- 2015 Bronx EdTech Showcase - at Hostos
- Celebration of Innovation

Workshops.
- New! - Tests on Blackboard, Socrative
- Grade Center Intro and Advanced
- ePortfolio
- Blogs and Wikis
- Smart Classrooms
- and more!

Office of Academic Affairs
Office of Educational Technology
www.hostos.cuny.edu/edtech
EdTech invites you to participate in a series of workshops aimed to help you take full advantage of technology tools and strategies to enhance teaching and learning. These workshops are centered on experiences acquired through the use of different technologies in the classroom, and will demonstrate the pros and the cons when used in the educational setting. All sessions will be held in the Faculty Commons (C-559) except some Smart Board Essentials workshops, which are posted on the online registration page.

To find out exact times of the workshops, and to register, go to: http://www.hostos.cuny.edu/edtech/for-faculty/workshops/

CELEBRATION OF INNOVATION
Wednesday, April 22, 2015, 2-3 pm, in the FDR

Editor-in-Chief - George Rosa
Editors, Contributors - Kate Lyons, Iber Poma, Wilfredo Rodríguez
Executive Editor, Consultant - Carlos Guevara
Spring 2015 is seeing some new and very important updates to the CUNY Blackboard environment.

Student Preview
The Student Preview is one of the most useful additions to the Blackboard toolkit to come along in a long time. The new Student Preview button allows you to see the course as the student is seeing it at that moment. It is the best way to verify which folders and items are available and how they appear in the content areas. Also, you can try out assessments like assignments and tests that you post and get your own grade report in the Grade Center and in "My Grades", which previously was not possible. Besides making it possible to verify what you are posting to your students, it makes it less confusing for both you and your students when you demonstrate your course and how to access the assets you post on it.

ePortfolio and Group Assignment Submission
When you create an assignment, in the Create Assignment page you are given submission options under Submission Details. One option is for the type of assignment - individual, group or portfolio. Individual submissions are the standard assignment which has been used in Blackboard for years. With Group submissions groups that have already been created are selected for the particular assignment.

ePortfolios in Blackboard is something completely new to Hostos and CUNY Blackboard users. Blackboard has its own ePortfolio system, which is separate and distinct from the one Hostos uses in its ePortfolio Initiative. That ePortfolio system is hosted by Digication. There is no functional connection between Blackboard and Digication ePortfolios, so that ePortfolios created in Blackboard cannot be easily imported into Digication and vice versa. However, it might be desirable for some faculty for students to submit assignments in a portfolio format. Blackboard portfolios are a topic that really can't be covered sufficiently in this article. If you have any questions or are interested in using Blackboard portfolios please contact us at the EdTech office.

Also in this area you can set to Exclude submissions from the Institutional and Global References Database. This is useful when multiple attempts are selected for submission.

Anonymous and Delegated Grading of Assignments
In the Create Assignment page under Grading Options, you can choose to Enable Anonymous Grading. Faculty may find this useful if they are concerned about bias in grading. Another option is to allow for Delegated Grading by different course users. For the graders, you can choose to have them grade all submissions or a random set, and if random set is chosen, the number of submissions in the set.

Please contact us at EdTech if you have any questions about these new features or any questions concerning Blackboard or anything related to technology applications in teaching and learning.

Setting Significant Figures in Calculated Formula questions
When adding a calculated formula question, you have the options to define the variables, set minimum and maximum values for the variables, and determine number of decimal places. A new option allows you to set the number of significant figures that the answer is calculated to.
Despite the great technological advancements in many areas, especially in education, there are still areas for improvements. Specifically in online learning there is a lot to enhance the way content is created and delivered to students in the different Learning Management Systems. This is when Universal Design (UD) concepts and principles can be applied in education to provide more accessibility for all students.

Universal Design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design as defined by the Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University. We will explore the seven principles of Universal Design and how they relate to Education.

Most online courses content has been designed for normal students or the majority of them, but not for all. When preparing content for online learning, intuitively the content is targeted for the majority of students. Simultaneously, this does not include other students that might be in the class. As the Universal Design suggests, when designing a course, it should be inclusive of all students that might enroll in the class without adjusting it to target a specific group of students.

There are seven principle designs which have been put in practice in other fields such as architecture, engineering, computer science among others. They are Equitable Use, Flexibility in Use, Simple and Intuitive, Perceptible Information, Tolerance for Error, Low Physical Effort and Size and Space for Approach and Use. As mentioned in the paragraph above, instructors should make sure that the content they deliver is geared for every student and not creating content for different groups of them or creating special content for special students.

Design Principles dictate that course organization should be consistent throughout the course and links should work at all times. If the content is organized by week or modules, it should be kept in the same manner from beginning to end. This helps students to navigate the content fluently and without difficulties. This also includes the making content accessible for all participants. Audios and videos content should contain caption for those who have deaf and visual impediments. Without doubts, this also helps students who are learning a second language.

Universal Design also highlights important statements that must be included in your course documentations. It is imperative that the syllabus delineates the consequences of academic dishonesty, grading policies, course goals and objectives should be clearly identified. Principle designs also account for different learning styles and focus the instructor to include visual, contextual, media elements as part of the course. These course contents provide a better and richer learning experience for different students who learn differently. The LMS or CMS nd the reading materials should be able to be read using screen readers and have the ability to be zoomed out.

In summary, the Universal Design brings clear and precise ways to tremendously improve the learning experience in online teaching. Course content can definitely be inclusive of all students by designing it in such a manner that it includes different learning styles and provides accessibility. Adding captions to audios and videos help students who have visual and audio impediments as well as those who English is a second language. Providing websites that work with screen readers and having a consistent design in the course development greatly enhance the learning experience. All the above is possible due to the Universal Design principles applied to online learning.

References:
http://jolt.merlot.org/vol10no2/he_0614.pdf
http://www.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/pubs_p/docs/poster.pdf
Happy 25th Anniversary to the Internet!

Nearpod is a complete solution to manage what students see on their screens. Faculty can get immediate feedback and track their class progress with detailed reports. Students interact and submit responses using any device, PC/MAC laptop, or mobile devices such as an iPad (iOS), Samsung Galaxy (Android) and Microsoft Surface (Windows). Also, students can join sessions from anywhere.

The Nearpod app can be downloaded and used for free with size restrictions. You will have limited storage space to develop Nearpod sessions. The free option will give you access up to 50 MB of storage space, up to 20 MB Presentation size, up to 30 students per live session and reporting only in PDF format. The college has purchased a limited number of School Edition licenses. With these licenses, faculty will enjoy the full Nearpod experience with enhanced features and benefits. The college is able to create a Private library to access exclusive content. Faculty have access to content tool and reporting tool advanced features, 100 students per session, 10 GB storage space, Presentation size up to 60 MB and premium training and support.

Creating Interactive lessons with Nearpod

Nearpod is a cross-platform application and an all-in-one solution for the synchronized use of mobile devices in the classroom. With Nearpod, instructors can create and download interactive multimedia presentations, share content and assessments in real time, monitor classroom activity, and easily control students’ devices.

Teaching Programming Skills in pre-k

Last month I handed my 5-year old a brightly colored robot for kids (created by Make Wonder--https://www.makewonder.com), and an iPad. I didn’t have time to begin to explain how the app worked because immediately she said, “What happens if I do this, will he (and yes, we talked about why she immediately decided her robot was male) move that way?” and then “Yes! I knew it!” She arranged her toys as an obstacle course and tried to get the robot to maneuver though, and somehow during this game adopted If/Else statements (for example, if I push the top button the robot should say “hi” and start the obstacle course, otherwise/else, if I clap, the robot moos like a cow). And I thought about the push to get girls into computer science. But mostly I thought- look how much fun she’s having, look how complex her thinking can be. It’s a game- a big brightly colored doll she’s named and is controlling with an iPad. Look how much she’s learning.

And I wondered, how are we preparing the students we’re sending to work in daycare centers (coincidentally, a current Hostos student works at my daughter’s Washington Heights daycare) and teach in pre-k classes, to get these youngest kids, especially girls, excited about computer programming? And then I marveled at the question and at the new educational technology at our fingertips, because my kid who was only fully potty-trained 18-months ago just constructed a do-while loop. I can’t wait until she can read. I’ve got scratch (https://scratch.mit.edu) bookmarked for next year.
We support the use of technology in teaching and learning. We strive to enhance faculty development, provide students with a high level of computer literacy, and foster online education. Through collaboration with Academic Computing, we empower faculty, serve students, and create a supportive environment for all types of learners. And we work to make technology an integral part of the academic websites and develop a variety of specialty applications.

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http://www.hostos.cuny.edu/etlc
Call for Proposals
Deadline
March 23, 2015

Friday May 8, 2015
9:00 am - 4:00 pm
Hostos Community College
cuny.is/bronxedtech