

THE JOURNAL RECORD

Thursday, March 26, 2009

www.journalrecord.com

Vol. 114, No. 60 • Two Sections

OCU professor plans to market Interactive teaching tool

BY KELLEY CHAMBERS

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OKLAHOMA CITY – Students at Oklahoma City University may soon find it harder to zone out during class. Others will have few excuses for missing a lecture.

Bob Greve, professor of information technology at OCU's Meinders School of Business, created a program where students can interact with their professors during class, answer questions, and take quizzes online. Quiz results are tallied and displayed immediately on a screen behind the professor.

"I always joke with my students that it was difficult to know what they were thinking," Greve said. "I thought, 'Wouldn't it be great if they could tell me what they were thinking?'"

LiveClassTech is the brainchild of Greve, and developed by his friend Luke Woodard. It is an interactive Web site that requires only laptops. Students and professors log on and no additional hardware or software is required.

"We're taking advantage of resources we already have," Greve said.

The program has been on test runs in

Greve's graduate-level information technology and operations management classes and by other faculty. The response from faculty so far has been positive, and the program keeps students on their toes.

"I will teach for 15 minutes and then I will throw a quiz question up there," Greve said. "The students know the questions are coming and they get a kick out of seeing how their peers are answering."

All answers displayed publicly are anonymous and show up as a pie chart, but the professor has access to how each student performed. Students can also anonymously post questions.

Other professors have dabbled with the technology and Greve hopes to get more professors to use the program.

With OCU as a test ground, he next plans to sell it to other universities for \$5 to \$9 per student. The fee would be paid by the school or by students.

Greve said in his classes no student is penalized for not having a laptop, and often if only a few students in a class have laptops others gather around.

Don Skinner-Noble, associate professor of biology, said he will incorporate LiveClassTech into his curriculum this fall.

He has already incorporated supplemental teaching materials from podcasts to class lectures available online. He comes to his classes armed with a laptop and an iPod to record lectures.

Many of Skinner-Noble's lectures, educational videos and demonstrations are available through iTunes U, a function of Apple Inc.'s iTunes that is geared toward schools and universities.

"It provides the students with another tool they can use," he said.

Gerry Hunt, director of campus technology, said the entire campus has wireless Internet service. The number of students with laptops has also increased from about 50 percent three years ago to 90 percent this year. For those who do not have laptops, the university has 17 computer labs and public computers in the library and dormitories.

The school's IT budget this year is just over \$3 million.

Greve said he will continue testing his program.

"We can assess our students on the fly and get a feeling for if they are learning," he said. "It prevents the situation where you talk for 30 minutes without realizing that no one understood you."