Cast Away! from Advancing Learning

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On May 24-25, 2018, I attended the Advanced Learning Conference at Fanshawe College in London, Ontario. I was primarily attracted to the title of the conference as I am eager to improve one of my professional weaknesses: using technology in the classroom and for learning. When Seneca granted me the opportunity to go on behalf of the college, I was thrilled and keen to learn new technological nuggets. In this article, I will comment on the highlights and take-aways from the one session in particular; I found this session very interesting and I think teachers can apply to their course regimens and learning repertoire.

I had heard of a screenshot, but a **screencast**? A screencast is short video, usually with audio, that shows the audience how to perform a particular task on the computer. What an incredible tool for learning! I sat in my chair excited and considered some possible uses for screencasting in my future COM101 classes.

The first use I thought about was delivering instructions. What an incredible way to provide instructions to students in addition to the Blackboard announcement. What's more, screencasted instructions reach a variety of students: those who would like the instructions repeated because they did not understand them in class but were too shy to ask for clarification; those students who were absent from class; those students who struggled to clearly understand the written instructions; and those students who prefer to have instructions demonstrated and explained visually. Eureka!

Other possible uses for screencasting:

- How to engage in discussion boards

- How to complete online quizzes

- Technology demos

- How to submit assignments

- How to access electronic resources,

e.g. Seneca Libraries

Some useful tools to get your screencasting adventure going:

- Panopto

- Screencast-O-Matic

- Camtasia

For even more accessibility, faculty and instructors can upload their screencasts to a designated YouTube channel, so students can easily access the collection of videos and information. YouTube also offers editing and captioning functions to further support students in processing the information.

Not only is screencasting an effective tool to help students navigate around electronic resources and webpages, but it offers another dimension of UDL (Universal Design Learning). Students can choose their preferred method of instruction: audio/visual/text.

The Advanced Learning Conference was a fascinating and valuable learning experience for me, and although I've described only one of the many sessions offered over the conference, I'm happy to sit down and chat anytime about the other sessions I participated in and discuss further take-aways from the conference. Especially while enjoying a cappuccino. With biscotti.

Note from the Teaching & Learning Centre: In summary, screencasting can provide many ways for faculty to continue conversations and interact with students. In addition, it would also be beneficial for students to use screencasting tools for practicing presentation skills, sharing their learning, and consolidating course content.

If you'd like to learn more about screencasting, we have the following resources:

- Screencasting Webinar

- How to use Screencast-O-Matic

- How to Use Screencast-o-Matic (PDF)

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