



E117 High Tech, High Touch Learning for High School and Undergraduate Forensic- and Crime Scene-Related Fields of Study

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Learning Overview: The goal of this presentation is to demonstrate a model in which experiential learning can be utilized in high school and undergraduate forensic- and crime scene-related fields of study by integrating traditional classroom and online learning for a tech-enhanced learning modality.

Impact on the Forensic Science Community: This presentation will impact the forensic science community by highlighting the benefits of educators developing experiential learning courses and of students participating in career-building experiences before graduation.

Online education is beneficial and continues to grow in popularity. Graduates from forensic and crime scene-related online programs frequently leave with an understanding of key concepts but with little ability to demonstrate the skills and techniques they can explain. By requiring experiential learning courses in a mostly distance-learning program, students graduate with relevant real-world experience on their resume and are better prepared for the job hunt and workplace. Students are buoyed by the ability to point out to potential employers that they know about a particular subject and have completed the processing, testing, analysis, etc.

There are many challenges when it comes to incorporating hands-on learning into a mostly online educational program. This presentation will detail how the Florida State University (FSU) faculty have developed curriculum for the Crime Scene Investigation Major that uses technology to deliver lectures and labs live, online for distance learners and uses accelerated on-campus summer semesters to further develop skills. With proper planning, this strategy can be emulated by interested institutions.

This presentation will detail how students at FSU participate in introductory course work that is lecture-based to gain understating of a particular forensic discipline. This is done traditionally for face-to-face students in the classroom and Using Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, distance learners join the classroom remotely from their laptop or other mobile device. Distance-learning students are able to join in in the discussion using their microphone or the built-in chat feature.

During hands-on labs, traditional students are in the laboratory with the instructor. For the online student, a box is mailed at the start of the semester with the materials needed to participate in the lab. Like the lecture, distance learners join with traditional students from wherever they are located and participate in the lab using their own lab in a box. These technology-enhanced courses provide the underpinnings of the more intensive on-campus summer labs.

Summer labs are held in an accelerated summer semester on campus only and are required. Students travel and stay on campus for one week and attend lab Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. daily. During this week-long, 40-hour lab, students receive the full lab credit that would normally be taught over a traditional 13-week summer semester. During this time, the traditional and online students have the opportunity to get to know one another personally and work together in small groups, problem solving and completing casework.

At the end of the program, students are required to participate in a Capstone internship program. This is done with a crime scene-related agency in the student's area and does not require relocation. Students must apply for the Capstone and have their agency and position approved by the program. While working at the agency, students complete weekly assignments highlighting what they are learning. Results from this program, which had its first graduates in the summer of 2017, have been obtained in post-graduation surveys and reveal alumni are at certain hands-on labs and the required internship gave them an advantage in hiring.

Education, Curriculum, High School/College