Going Paperless:
Advantages & Challenges of the Paperless Classroom

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Technology does not replace best practices for teachers.

Technology allows us to enhance our students’ learning experiences and to facilitate greater learning.
Advantage #1 = Less Paper

Creates a more efficient and greener approach to the classroom

• Better for the environment

• Eliminates battles with the copy machine
Advantage #2 = Seamless

Students already operating in this realm

• Personal / Daily Lives (i.e. Facebook)

• Easier transition than you might think
Advantage #3 = Organization

Potential for greater classroom management and course organization

- Syllabus
- Schedule
- Announcements
- Absences
- Late Work
- Student Questions
Advantage #4 = Follow-Up

Easier follow-up on missed classes / work

• Information is always available

• Clearly shows what students are missing (and correlation to grade)
Advantage #5 = Record Keeping

Promotes a better record keeping environment

- Greater student involvement with assignments / grades
- Grades are more accessible and transparent for students
Advantage #6 = Time Stamping

Student submissions are time stamped

• Greater adherence to class policies = greater equality in classroom

• More student accountability to deadlines
Advantage #7 = Interaction

Increased student engagement, collaboration, and interaction

- Online discussion forums can foster more dynamic, less intimidating arenas for discussion
- Textbook reading accountability
Advantage #8 = Dynamic

Provides dynamic opportunities for content delivery, feedback, and submissions

• Videos, Pictures, Audio
• Hyperlinks, Embedded Comments
• Can address multiple modes of learning
Advantage #9 = Borderless

Allows for class to function outside of class time and classroom walls

• Classroom is always available

• Greater accessibility to instructor for concerns, questions, etc.
Advantage #10 = Reusability

Greater reusability and opportunity for curriculum improvement

• Easier carryover from semester to semester - after initial construction

• Easier transferability to other classes (when applicable)
Challenge #1 = Student Skills

Students may not have the computer skills or may not be comfortable with computers and technology

• Part of our shared role in higher education is to help students in this area

• Build an orientation component into course (Be flexible and patient)
Challenge #2 = eTextbooks

Students may be challenged learning from electronic texts

• Have a hard copy of the textbook as an option

• Create class material that can be printed out as hard copies
Challenge #3 = Accessibility

Paperless classrooms may not be full accessible to students with disabilities

• Check with your Disabilities Counselor or Technology Accessibility Committee to ensure best practices

• Seek information and training opportunities
Challenge #4 = Technology Issues

Computers sometimes malfunction and technology can fail

- Encourage students to work ahead of class deadlines
- Provide students with ITS help contact info
Challenge #5 = Student Computers

Classrooms may not have computers or students may not have computer access at home

- Advocate for more computers on campus and for innovative programs or grants for personal student computers
Final Thoughts

The paperless classroom has the potential to far exceed the possibilities of the traditional face-to-face classroom.

Careful consideration of the advantages and challenges of the paperless classroom must be taken into consideration.

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