Conversations on Technology
Other words of wisdom...

prepared for

The Institute on Learning Technology

part of the

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This conversation also is available from the Learning Through Technology web site,
http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/nise/cl1/ilt/
Conversations on Technology:
Other words of wisdom...

**Question #9:**
"I know you have to go in a few minutes. Any last words of wisdom for me? - Thanks so much - this learning technology business is a big step for me!"

**Remember that technology is only a learning tool.** Technology is to a teacher what a calculator is to a mathematician or a periodic chart is to a chemist. It is simply a tool, which if used appropriately, can enhance learning. Good luck.

**Get in and try it - you'll like it.**

**Start small.** Get one really good turnkey application that can only be done using a computer and that is very appealing to students. Make it the high point of the course. Discuss it to death in class, use it as the basis for all kinds of mathematical development. When you are so comfortable with it that it gets boring, then it will be time to introduce a second one. Also, software manuals are all unreadable. Find someone who can hold your hand while you write that first Maple® worksheet.

"Thanks so much - this learning technology business is a big step for me!"

**Hey, no problem.**

**Nothing succeeds without substantial effort.** There is no royal road to geometry or the use of technology.

**Start with what you know and progress systematically from there.**

**Talk to folks you respect who are doing things and then do experiments and try.** Students I think will respect an honest effort. They will see through a phony baloney professor who is not helping them to meet the challenges of their future careers.
**C**onstantly remind them in a gentle unassuming way that this is what is done on the job and what they will be expected to know when they graduate.

**D**on't make too many changes at one time. Add semester by semester as your skills and energy permit.

**L**ean on others then pass it on to the new professors as they come on board.

**S**tudents like computers and want to use them for meaningful projects. Go for it...

"Thanks so much - this learning technology business is a big step for me!"

**N**o problem. We have an excellent IT staff on campus. They are here to help and they like to help.

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**S**ee if your department chair can reduce your teaching or committee load while you learn the process.

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**L**earning technology should be applied very thoughtfully. Otherwise a lot of time will be wasted doing things that have no positive effect.

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**S**o-and-so of the University of Arizona has said that you should obtain the full level of tenure and promotion that you intend to have in your life before you embark on curricular revision or reform. I think that in many four-year institutions he is correct. Be careful.

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**T**ry it, you'll like it! In Spanish we say "if don't taste it you'll never feel the good taste."