

DIGITIZING THE LABORATORY EXPERIENCE IN MEDICAL SCHOOL

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With the advances in educational technology, medical schools are faced with developing new formats for enhancing classroom lectures. To strengthen self-directed student learning, the School of Medicine at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center has moved to provide students with online course materials as well with links to outside resources to enhance student learning tools. The School of Medicine uses WebCT, a management tool to organize course materials managed by the Office of Curriculum. The Office has two educational technology experts who work with Course Directors and Course Coordinators to develop these courses online.

Human Histology and Cell Biology and Human Gross Anatomy have both extended the use of the WebCT to include laboratory instruction. Prior to the use of WebCT, students would checkout slide carousels and anatomy videos prior to lab or to use as study guides. With a fixed number of items on hand, departments limited the amount of time students could hold these study aids. A solution to this issue was to incorporate WebCT into these two courses. In Human Histology and Cell Biology faculty are able to get slides converted to a digital format—these are now uploaded to WebCT. In Human Gross Anatomy, lab instruction videos were converted to streaming over the internet. Students now have 24 hour access to these study aids and course materials and report increased satisfaction with these methods of enhancing self-directed learning.