Abstract
The ubiquitous software programs Adobe Acrobat, Blackboard, and PowerPoint were used for curriculum development, teaching, and student learning by the instructor and students of the Honors study abroad program when students of Nicholls State University participated in a program at the University of Plymouth in England for five weeks during the summer of 2004. The humanities course, British Art and Society, was developed to promote learning with four major objectives tied to technology. The objectives were for students to gain knowledge of the history of British art and the humanities; for students to develop analytical skills and research skills; for students to write critically on the art and to address the social factors that informed the art; and for students to exchange ideas. The final essays were edited as a collection that will be made available to the next students participating in the study abroad program. The essays will introduce future students to the art of Britain.

Technology Use
Thematic units for the historical study of British art addressing the Neolithic period, Roman Britain, Medieval Britain, the British Renaissance and Baroque period, and Modern and Contemporary Britain, were developed and presented in the form of PowerPoint slides. The slides were made available for individual student use on the Blackboard site and on CD-ROMS and were used for classroom presentations and discussions.

Readings from articles and texts were processed using Adobe Acrobat and were posted on Blackboard. Furthermore, each student received an individual copy of a CD-ROM with the readings. In addition to the readings, the bibliography for the course included references to electronic resources on the Internet and World Wide Web.

The development of electronic resources for all of the lectures, readings, and assignments gave the course many of the same features of a program using the World Wide Web. However, there were benefits to the hybrid format. For example, while students had access to computers at the foreign University, the Blackboard site was not always available, making it necessary for them to refer to the CD-ROMS. The PowerPoint slides were also studied in class and served as the basis for more in-depth course lectures and extensive group discussion. Similarly, the residency in England allowed for students to visit the archaeological sites, the churches, the historic houses, and the original art in museum collections.

Technology was integral as the instructor and students used educational technology to enhance student learning as they attended presentations of the PowerPoint slides, completed the course readings, and conducted research using the Internet as well as library resources. Participation in the course and the completion of the assignments contributed to mastery of technology as students prepared for travel to sites under study and collected and shared information that would be incorporated in their written guide to the major monuments that were visited.

The Curriculum
The course content (delivered using PowerPoint presentations and readings) consisted of five units that began with the Foundations of Neolithic Art, Celtic Art, and Roman Britain. In this unit students were asked to consider the questions: What is a civilization? How do we define culture? The second unit addressed the art of the Middle Ages and the re-emergence of Celtic art. In this section students studied the feudal system and discussed Christianity as a rich source of imagery. Unit three examined the church and state during the British Renaissance and Reformation. Students were introduced to major architectural sites near Plymouth. They visited the Elizabethan House and the Merchant’s House Museum in Plymouth to discuss the medieval features
of Tudor and Elizabethan architecture. The fourth unit considered the role of aesthetics during the Baroque period. The fifth and final unit considered continuity and change in Contemporary British art. Students were asked to discuss elements of art that were informed by tradition and to speculate on the future course of British art and society.

PowerPoint slides used in the course were designed to encourage student involvement and interaction. Students contributed to the corpus of material as they described works of art, noting the chief characteristics of an object or artifact. They assessed passages of readings in terms of factual content, methodology, and the author’s perspective (i.e., their opinions and biases). Student learning was assessed using quizzes and writing assignments.

The Summative Evaluations
In their evaluations students described the readings as challenging and appreciated the convenience of the CD-ROMS. The PowerPoint slides were said to be effective and informative. The quizzes were less highly rated because they were administered during class and would have been more successful if they were posted on Blackboard as a device for self-assessment.

Students noted that greater emphasis was placed upon the writing assignment, an assignment that required that the first draft of the eight page paper be written in Europe while the final revision was due several weeks after students returned to the home campus. The students regarded the paper assignment as a valuable opportunity for them to re-assess what they had learned and to provide a synthesis of the material they had studied abroad. The papers will be posted for the next group of Honors students studying abroad as a link on the Faculty Web site at http://www.nicholls.edu/art/cibelli.htm/.

References for Educational Resources
Digital & Print Course Packs:
XanEdu at http://www.xanedu.com/

Educational Tours:

Casterbridge Tours at http://www.casterbridgetours.com/

EF Educational Tours at http://www.eftours.com/

Webpage

Bibliography