In August 2000 I joined the faculty at The Citadel as an assistant professor of English with a specialty in teaching with technology. My department head suggested I spend my first year learning about the department and the school, teaching core courses, and applying technology in my own classroom. I followed his advice. During this time I was awarded a grant for an electronic whiteboard for the department, and the school renovated one of our classrooms, installing full multimedia capabilities. By December of 2001, it was time for me to take a more active lead in advancing technology in the department. My charge was to motivate and train approximately fifteen (15) traditional English professors to use appropriate technology in their literature and composition classes. My response to this challenge was TIDE: Technology Initiative at the Department of English.

I. Preparation: Christmas Vacation 2001/2002

I began preparation for the program over Christmas vacation 2001/2002. I wanted a series of technology workshops to be a main component of TIDE. To create this series, I first needed to determine the curriculum. What technologies were appropriate for teaching literature and composition? What was I prepared to teach? What did the faculty want to learn? To answer the first question I did extensive reading in recent journals. From this reading and from my own experience it was clear that the faculty could benefit from just about every technology available. The only limitations were what I could teach and what they wanted to learn.

When I initiated the TIDE program, I was proficient in HTML, MS Word, WebCT, and, to a lesser extent, PhotoShop. My years at Computer Services at USC had given me confidence that I could learn whatever I needed to know, however, and I was willing to learn whatever was necessary to give the faculty what they wanted and needed. Over the term I learned PowerPoint (easy), the basics of SoundForge, Premiere, and Director, and how to use the electronic whiteboard. To learn these applications I plowed through a tall stack of books from Macromedia, Peachpit Press, and O'Reilly, consulted with the go-to guys in the Computer Science department, at ITS at The Citadel and at CSD at USC, and watched some training videos.

To figure out what my colleagues wanted to learn, I designed a survey which listed possible course offerings grouped into five different areas: WebCT, Web Work without WebCT, Grading (Excel and Adobe Acrobat), PowerPoint, the Numonics electronic whiteboard, and multimedia presentations. This step was crucial in creating a discipline-specific curriculum.

The final course schedule reflects the responses to the survey. Although the department has mixed attitudes toward WebCT, some faculty did want to learn about it. Some who had not used WebCT were interested in getting a basic overview of its
capabilities, and those who were using it were curious about more advanced tools such as the Quiz tool, Chat, and the Whiteboard, and about posting and receiving assignments via WebCT. Many people were interested in learning HTML. Those who perceived WebCT as cumbersome and limiting viewed HTML as a way to become independent of WebCT. Some faculty members simply wanted to understand what went on behind the scenes of a web site. No one was interested in learning to use Excel for grades. Those who wanted to use it already knew how; others didn't want to learn. Very few of my colleagues were interested in the PowerPoint classes. The story here was the same as with Excel; most of those who wished to use the software already knew how to use it, and those who didn't know it didn't want to learn it. Those who did already knew PowerPoint basics were, however, very interested in learning how to add sound and movies to their slides. Almost everyone was interested in learning how to use the electronic whiteboard to teach writing and to literature. They had seen the board on the wall in room 107 and were curious about it. Finally, many people were interested in learning how to create a multimedia presentation.

The next step in creating the program was finding a time and a place to teach. The department offered an ideal place for instruction: Capers 107. This new multimedia classroom provides a computer, two projectors, a projection screen, and an electronic whiteboard. The room is equipped with a second network connection, so the presenter can project a laptop onto the screen while the desktop computer in the room projects onto the whiteboard (or vice-versa). Other technology includes a document camera, a VCR, and a DVD player. Having a classroom in the department was essential to this department-level program. Faculty were able to learn new technologies and then to experiment, practice, and finally teach with these technologies in the same familiar room right down the hall from their offices.

Unfortunately, no time was available that was quite as ideal as the place. No classes meet at 11:00 on Tuesdays and Thursdays, so these times eliminated conflicts with teaching schedules. However, we were not able to begin technology workshops until the middle of February because of the department's search for a new assistant professor. In January and early February job candidates gave presentations during the 11:00-12:00 Tuesday time slot, and the meeting to vote on the candidates also took place at this time. Further, campus-wide committee meetings are held at 11:00 on Thursdays, and several faculty members had to miss Thursday workshops to attend such meetings. Next term I will continue using the 11:00 Tuesday time slot because there will be no conflict with a job search, but I will discontinue Thursday classes. Since I will not be offering as many classes next term, this adjustment should not be difficult.

I structured the curriculum according to a strong distinction I perceived in the minds of my colleagues between technology applied to classroom presentation and technology used to expand the classroom beyond its scheduled time and place. Clearly many technologies cross this boundary, but I wanted my program to reflect the way in which my colleagues conceptualized the applications of these technologies. I offered classes on technology outside the classroom on Tuesdays and classes on technology in the
classroom on Thursdays. Next term, when I drop Thursday as a class time, I will simply alternate Tuesdays instead.

For each of the two workshop tracks I designed classes which stood alone but related to each other. For example, the class on using the Numonics electronic whiteboard to teach writing included a lot of basic information on how to operate the board itself. I repeated some of this information when I taught the class on using the board to teach literature. I simply instructed those who attended the first class (on writing) to arrive about 20 minutes late to the second class (on literature). The faculty who had not attended the first class received all the basic instruction they needed in the second class, and those who had already heard the basics in the first class did not have to sit through them again. Another example is the multimedia sequence. A number of the multimedia classes were cancelled because of low attendance, but my plan was to provide five related sessions: a demonstration class to show what could be done, several classes on independent but related skills (image editing, sound editing, and video editing), and a do-it-yourself workshop in which faculty could put together the skills learned in the previous classes to complete -- or at least to begin! -- their own projects. I will offer this same sequence next term on a more convenient day and at a more relaxed pace. I believe these adjustments will result in better attendance.

II. Rollout: February 4, 2002

I rolled out TIDE in February 2002 using two strategies: a flyer and a web site. Publishing the IT Bulletin while I was at Computer Services at USC was invaluable experience when it was time to get the flyer together for TIDE. I applied my PageMaker knowledge and adapted the layout I had used for the bulletin. In the flyer I advertised individual technology needs assessment and training. I emphasized this personal approach to assure those whose preferences did not end up on the class schedule that their needs would still be met. I also used the flyer to present TIDE workshop offerings in two formats. Bullet lists made the two separate tracks and the topic groupings clear while the calendar was convenient for posting as a reminder to attend desired classes. In fact, I saw the flyer, turned to the calendar and with classes circled, posted in some of my colleagues' offices. The flyer also publicized the TIDE web site at www.citadel.edu/faculty/frame/TIDE/tideindex.html, which is an integral part of the TIDE initiative.

I wrote the code for the TIDE site using BBEdit at home on my Mac and HomeSite on my PC at the office. I did the graphics in PhotoShop. My experience creating and maintaining IT support pages for Computer Services at USC gave me the skills I needed to make the TIDE site attractive and easily navigable, if somewhat simple. The site offers a number of useful features. It includes two easy-to-use forms to request personal help. The Personal Technology Assessment form gathers some initial information about the faculty member's teaching schedule and technology use and allows him or her to set up an appointment with me to determine what technologies
would most benefit him or her. The Jumpstart Request form allows a colleague to sign up for assistance from me in setting up his or her first WebCT course web site.

The site also offers a Literature Review that reports on recent articles from two leading journals: Computers and the Humanities and Literary and Linguistic Computing. I selected articles that focus on applying technology to teaching, especially those including specific suggestions for lessons and assignments. I chose only two of the many articles on using online discussion to supplement classroom discussion. I also included one or two articles that document the production of a CD-ROM to supplement a course and an article on the development and use of a virtual reality program to teach African-American literature. I did not include articles that deal with large text-encoding projects, using computers for textual analysis, or implementing technology across an entire institution.

To build on the Literature Review I arranged for Daniel Library at The Citadel to subscribe to the two journals the review covers. The subscription will begin in January 2003 and will include subscription to the electronic version of both periodicals. The TIDE site includes a link to both journals, and when The Citadel's subscription is in place, faculty will be able to follow up on articles I have mentioned in the Literature Review by reading the entire articles online.

At The Citadel almost all professors teach at least one core course (most teach several) each term. A forthcoming feature of the TIDE web site will be a Course Resources area where faculty will find multimedia resources customized to the needs of the department's core courses. For example, faculty teaching English 201 and interested in developing a presentation on Coleridge's "The Aeolian Harp," will find a sound file (.wav) of an aeolian harp playing. Resources from this area of the site will make it much easier for my colleagues to put what they learn in TIDE workshops to use to develop classroom presentations, course web sites, or both.

Finally, the site includes an area for Workshop Archives. Here I post handouts from all TIDE workshops. Faculty who attend TIDE workshops can use the online handouts for reference even if they lose their paper copies from class. Faculty who are unable to attend workshops can learn from the handouts directly. When handouts are posted prior to workshops, they can assist faculty members in determining whether the session will cover material of interest to them.

The site is not completely developed yet, nor is it yet being used to its fullest potential. I will build the Course Resources area during the fall term of 2002, and, as noted, the online journal subscriptions will not begin until January 2003. While many faculty did visit the site as a result of seeing the flyer, others did not. To follow up on the flyer I tried to catch my colleagues in the hall or in their offices. These patient souls allowed me to show them around the site and to place a bookmark to it on their machines. Clearly this approach is possible only in a small department such as The Citadel English Department. No faculty signed up for individual technology needs assessment or training, and no one asked for a WebCT Jumpstart. When I present the new English
Department site to my colleagues in the fall, I will show them the TIDE site again and encourage them again to sign up for WebCT help, TiDE classes, and personal technology training.

III. Classes

The meat of the TiDE program is in the workshops. For each class I wrote an extensive handout and developed examples that applied the technology I was teaching to literature or composition instruction. For example, I tailored the lesson on "Adding Sound and Video to PowerPoint" to literature instruction by creating a slide on Coleridge’s "The Aeolian Harp." I demonstrated how to add a .wav file of an aeolian harp playing to the slide. Teachers who had taught the poem for years and never heard the sound of the harp were delighted to hear the sound and to learn how they could incorporate it in their lessons. In a workshop on the Numonis board and writing I demonstrated eleven ways to use the board for composition instruction (see workshop handout), and in "Using the Numonsics Board to Teach Literature" I showed seven ways to use the board to teach literature (see workshop handout). These discipline-specific examples were integral to creating a successful department-level program.

Although I developed a clear structure for each class session, I wanted attendees to feel free to ask questions, so I kept the workshop atmosphere relatively casual and open. This strategy worked well. In a class on adding sound and video to PowerPoint slides, I was able to spend some time answering a colleague’s question about how to obtain sound and video files from the Internet. The entire class benefited from the demonstration. In a session on the electronic whiteboard, my incidental use of Word’s Autoshapes feature as a part of my lesson prompted the class to explore what this feature of Word had to offer for marking papers electronically. The class exhibited such interest in this technology that I will offer a session next term focused just on grading with Word.

Attendance at the workshops was not as high as I had hoped. I had expected about five or six of the approximately fifteen faculty members to attend each session. Although I sent out email reminders, attendance averaged around two or three people. Some classes were cancelled because of low attendance (0-1), and I combined others, such as the class on editing images for multimedia presentations and the class on making buttons and banners for the web.

Evaluations of the workshops were uniformly very positive. All faculty selected "Strongly Agree" (the most positive response) on all evaluation questions, with the exception of a single form on which the evaluator selected "Agree" for a few questions. One faculty member noted he was ready to give WebCT a second try as a result of the WebCT Overview workshop. After the HTML workshop, a colleague wrote on his form that he was eager for an additional class on the subject. Under the Additional Comments section of the form, one respondent noted that I tried to cover too much material in the allotted time. All evaluations were anonymous (names were not solicited
by any blank on the form), although a few respondents signed their name at the bottom of the page.

IV. Assessing TIDE

Before moving into the second semester of the TIDE program, it is important to assess what worked and what didn't, so I can improve the program. In spring 2002 I believe I tried to offer too many workshops. I could barely keep up with the preparation for TIDE along with my other classes. Also, I think fewer sessions might result in better attendance at individual sessions. Also, I think scheduling classes on Thursday resulted in low attendance at the Thursday "Technology Beyond the Classroom" sessions. Next term I will continue to offer two tracks of workshops, but I will hold all classes on Tuesdays and simply alternate tracks.

Several strategies did work, and I will continue to implement them. Surveying the faculty about their interests was crucial to meeting their needs. Also, offering focused classes at different skill levels allowed faculty to select classes that neither bored nor overwhelmed them. Learning new technologies myself allowed me to offer a wide variety of classes and helped me maintain my enthusiasm. Providing examples from literature and composition in each workshop was essential to demonstrating the technology's relevance to the faculty and generating class enthusiasm. Allowing plenty of time for questions in each class was useful in all the ways noted above. I will also continue to put workshop handouts online; at least one faculty member who was unable to attend a certain workshop consulted the handouts online. Finally, making myself available in the department every day is critical. Without this daily interaction, I would not be able to promote the program adequately or to follow up with on the workshops by answering my colleagues' questions when they try to apply what they have learned.

V. What's next?

Several tasks are on the docket for the remainder of the summer and the 2003/2004 academic year. Workshop evaluations indicate that attendees are happy with the instruction I am providing, but I would like to measure the extent to which they apply what they learn. Implementation of technology, not simply technology education, is the ultimate goal of TIDE, so over the 2003/2004 academic year I will assess faculty implementation of training and adjust the TIDE program according to the results. Also, one of the most underused aspects of TIDE was the personal technology assessment and instruction; I will push these opportunities more in the coming year. The more I know, the more I can teach, so I will continue developing my own technology skills and creating new classes with new sample projects for illustration. The TIDE site also requires further development, especially the Course Resources area, and continued maintenance -- updating the forms, the Literature Review, etc. Finally, I will survey my colleagues again about their technology interests, develop a new slate of classes, and publicize them and other TIDE concerns in a new flyer each term.
Frances Frame
Assistant Professor
Department of English
The Citadel