**Windows 8 – What You Will Love to Teach**

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I am not sure about you, but when I teach Windows, I find varying degrees of expertise. I have some students who legitimately know a lot about Windows, and some students who are intimidated by it. That wide range of skill makes it tough to keep the entire class engaged.

This semester, I demonstrated Windows 8 to my introductory class (called Computer Concepts and Applications at my College). I have found there are a lot of questions. The ones who have never used Windows 8 immediately ask “so how do I do things if there is no Start Menu???”. The students who have used Windows 8 also have questions. This has been a chance to truly train students who were all confused in some way by what they saw. I had a captive audience.

While I was working on Pearson’s *Your Office: Getting Started with Windows 8* book, I found many frustrations at first. Keyboard shortcuts in Windows Explorer changed. And it’s not even called Windows Explorer anymore, it’s now File Explorer!

Students responded well to the following:

**Picture Passwords**: I found that students were not as enthused about PINs, but when I showed them picture passwords, they had some interest. This seemed more interesting than the same old password they were used to.

**The Search charm**: Though we could do this in Windows Vista and 7, just showing students that they can type to find a list of programs from the Start screen seems to be something they had interest in. Now that they have no Start Menu, they were more receptive.

**Customizing the Start screen**: I think students really appreciated pinning Web sites to the Start screen. Things like unpinning, reordering, and resizing were easily guessable for them.

**Live Tiles**: Demonstrating how they can get customized news, weather, sports, and financial information directly on their Start screen was well appreciated.

**Signing in with a Microsoft Account**: Students really seemed excited by this. Once they saw their settings could be applied on multiple computers, I had a number of questions. I took this time to also demonstrate the Office 2013 “Save to SkyDrive” feature. I think that more than anything shows my students how cloud computing will impact their lives. I had students ask whether they will need a USB flash in the future.

Once I can get my College to spring for a touch-screen interface, I look forward to showing gestures as well.

My personal experience thus far is that students will ask questions. I favor exploring the software with the students, and letting their questions guide the lecture. I am looking forward to a few years of teaching this software, just because that attentive class makes lecture fun for everyone.

Happy teaching!