



# Florida International University's Interactive Classroom

Florida International University's interactive classroom sparks student participation at the Chaplin School of Hospitality and Tourism.

## Flip the classroom

You're familiar with the traditional classroom: the instructor lectures, students take notes, homework is assigned.

Not so at Florida International University's Chaplin School of Hospitality and Tourism Management. There, instructors and curriculum designers decided to turn that concept on its head.

"We wanted to build a space where faculty could take advantage of the flipped classroom concept," says Dale Gomez, the school's director of information technology.

The initiative, as Gomez explains it, moves away from the traditional lecture-style classroom and toward a student-centric, interactive approach. Faculty and students would have all assignments and lectures done prior to class while working from home. During class, students work together to share

what they've learned.

"We sat down with four or five faculty of various technical skills and came up with this concept," says Gomez. "We then sat down with Martin to conceptualize our thoughts."

"It first starts with a meeting and discussing their vision for the room," says Martin Lois, AVI-SPL sales engineer.

Interactive technology for the classroom is one of the fastest growing segments in education, largely because of its potential for improving the learning process. That technology allows learners to annotate and interact with the material they present in the classroom.

"We want to encompass the technology that the students are familiar with, and we want to immerse them in the room itself," says Gomez.

**"We worked with AVI-SPL in the past. It's like working with another member of my team."**



## The new interactive classroom has allowed the Chaplin school to bridge the communication gap between FIU's Miami and China campuses.

### Help students work as a team

Prior to this project, FIU and AVI-SPL had worked together many times, including a recent integration for the school's kitchen and restaurant facility.

"It's like working with another member of my team," says Bhavik Bhakta, senior administrator for FIU.

The classroom combines interactive 1080p Sharp displays and wireless technology so that students can work as a team as they build knowledge through sharing and demonstrating ideas and concepts. Barco Clickshare devices enable students to wirelessly share their coursework on the interactive displays.

Four students at a time can be at each one of the five displays. Some teachers will change the seating arrangement and divide it into different sections. Chief wall mounts can accommodate such changes as they allow the displays to be extended and angled away from the wall. Instructors will sometimes assign students into groups and have them work with remote participants, including classes from China. Students and instructors can annotate over display content, and then post those annotations on learning management systems.

In a nearby control room, operators monitor classroom activities using NEC displays. Although the rooms are capable of functioning in fully automated mode, the control room is where FIU can help support the instructors

with a live operator. That operator can help the instructor with input switching, camera control, and some of the more advanced technology the room offers.

Gomez speaks with passion on technology as a vital part of today's education.

"Technology plays the most important role in modernizing global education systems," he says. "The use of interactive whiteboards, audiovisual equipment, and modular furniture is emerging as one of the powerful pedagogical innovations in the teaching and learning process."

Gomez notes that the classroom also has the capability to capture courses, transmit lectures, participate in video conferencing, and use virtual learning objects that foster technical training, simulations, and self-guided tutorials. Students explore subjects like operations of hotels, how airlines work, housekeeping, and human resource management.

"We love working with FIU because we're able to do a lot of fun and fascinating projects together," says Lois.

### Sharing, understanding, and demonstrating ideas

"Since the launch of the new interactive room, we've seen an increase in student participation domestically and internationally," says Gomez. "The interaction from student to student and

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student to faculty has totally changed.”

The room has allowed the Chaplin school to bridge the communication gap between FIU’s Miami and China campuses. It’s also booked 100 percent of the time.

“Faculty are fighting to reserve this room,” says Gomez. “They love it. We’re seeing other departments copying what we’ve done. The whole learning experience has changed.”

## At A Glance

**Organization**  
Florida International University

**Location**  
Miami, FL

**Market**  
Education

**Solutions**  
Barco Clickshare  
Sharp displays  
NEC displays  
Chief wall mounts

**Services**  
Integration

### About AVI-SPL

AVI-SPL designs, builds, integrates and supports solutions for AV and video communication, digital media, advanced visualization, and control systems for all types of organizations around the world. We also provide a wide range of support services, including cloud-based video conferencing, onsite staffing, call launching for video conferencing, and remote monitoring of AV and video systems to ensure optimal performance. Our Customer Care program delivers manufacturer-certified tech support and maintenance through our 24/7/365 help desk. Since 2006, we have been ranked the number one systems integrator in North America by *Systems Contractor News*.

### About Featured Partners

**Chief:** For over 35 years, Chief has designed state-of-the-art mounts, racks and accessories for displays, projectors and other AV components.

**NEC:** NEC’s medical displays, desktop monitors, large-screen displays and projectors are among the best in the industry.

**Sharp:** Sharp is the #1 selling brand of Large Format (600+ class) Commercial LCD displays in the USA through business-to-business sales outlets.

### Featured Partners





Fig 1.1



Fig 1.2



Fig 1.3



Fig 1.4



Fig 1.5

**Images**

Fig 1.1  
The classroom combines interactive 1080p Sharp displays and wireless technology so that students can work as a team.

Fig 1.4  
Since the launch of the new interactive room, FIU's Chaplin School has seen an increase in student participation in the classroom.

Fig 1.2  
Crestron touch panels consolidate control of the AV systems throughout the interactive classroom.

Fig 1.5  
Although the rooms are capable of functioning in fully automated mode, the control room is where FIU can help support the instructors with a live operator.

Fig 1.3  
A pair of Collaboration Rooms feature Cisco video-conferencing systems and 90-inch interactive Sharp displays.