

# New BC3 video studio gives future job-seekers interview edge

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(Butler, PA) Butler County Community College students perfecting communication skills in a new video studio within the \$5 million high-tech Heaton Family Learning Commons may be better prepared for a future of online job interviews, says Ann McCandless, the school's dean of educational technology.

More students are beginning to embrace the One Button Studio at BC3, operated literally by a singular, silver button, and discovering and correcting unwanted presentation behaviors before they graduate and begin to compete with other applicants.



Kaitlyn Turney, a Butler County Community College pre-nursing freshman and Moniteau High graduate, is shown Feb. 14, 2017, inside the One Button Studio at BC3.

“A lot of students have never recorded themselves,” McCandless says. “They don’t realize what their quirks and mannerisms are, if they say ‘ah’ or ‘and’ a lot. They can record themselves speaking and watch themselves so they can pick up their quirks and enhance their speaking ability.”

Preliminary job interviews “are the latest part of the hiring process to undergo digitization as companies use video interviews to cut recruiting costs and times,” The Wall Street Journal reported in August. The newspaper also stated that “Cigna Corp., Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and International Business Machines Corp. were among employers now asking some applicants to log on to a website and submit video responses to interview questions in lieu of talking with a human.”

More than 60 percent of 500 human resource managers at U.S. companies with 20 or more employees said their company often conducts employment interviews by video, according to a survey developed by OfficeTeam, an international staffing company based in Menlo Park, Calif.

“Many companies are embracing video interviews, which are often conducted online via webcam, as a way to quickly and cost-effectively evaluate applicants,” Robert Hosking, executive director of OfficeTeam, said on the company’s website. “Job-seekers can use these virtual meetings to put their best foot forward, just as they would in person.”

BC3 has literally put its best foot forward – twice, in fact, inside the One Button Studio at BC3.

## “More and more interviews are video interviews”

Two sets of blue footprints stand secured to the carpeting, toes pointed toward the high-definition Canon VIXIA Camcorder. Those to the right indicate where the student should stand if he is to be centered in the frame. Those to the left, if he will stand off-center and use a digital presentation projected onto the Chromatte Reflecmedia backdrop for visuals.

Kaitlyn Turney, a freshman pre-nursing major and member of the BC3 Scholars Program, stands in the center and fields Michael Dittman’s extemporaneous questions for nearly three minutes, preparing for a project that includes a public presentation next semester.

“I want to go into neo-natal and work with babies,” says Turney, a Moniteau High graduate. “So I think it will help with the way I talk to parents.”

Dittman’s classes are capitalizing on the technology that will provide opportunities for dry runs in video presentation before graduation.

“We just finished talking about video interviews,” says Dittman, assistant professor in humanities and social sciences and adviser of the Scholars Program. “More and more interviews are video interviews. I’ve undergone video interviews as well. So they are going to come in here and see what it is like to interview when there is just a camera looking at you.”

The One Button Studio is located on the main floor of the Heaton Family Learning Commons, which opened in August. The software was developed by Penn State University.

“It is very user-friendly,” McCandless, the dean of educational technology, says of the studio. “Students and faculty can use it for presentations, speeches, video resumes, skits, drama, theater or demonstrations.”

## “Business is all about presentation”

Jen Kriess, a freshman and member of the BC3 Scholars Program, plans to enter the business field after graduation.

Public speaking and being on camera, she says, “is not my thing. But it wasn’t bad.”

Like Scholars Program classmates Turney, Kylie Sheppeck and Seth Queen, Kriess faced unexpected questions from Dittman while on camera: “How did you hear about the Scholars Program?” “How has your experience been in the Scholars Program?” and “If someone came to you and said, ‘I know you are part of the Scholars Program, and I can go elsewhere or come to BC3 as a scholars student, what do you think I should do?’”

It’s that kind of thinking on her feet planted atop those blue footprints inside the One Button Studio at BC3 that will benefit her future, Kriess says.

“Business is all about presentation and being able to talk in front of people and persuading,” says Kriess, a Butler High graduate. “So I really need to work on that.”

Sheppeck, a sophomore secondary education-social studies major, says the One Button Studio at BC3 will help her to practice delivering her lessons.

“This will help a lot,” says Sheppeck, a Butler High graduate and member of the BC3 Scholars Program. “I really like taking speech classes, delivering speeches and getting a lot of criticism, to see how I can better my teaching and reaching students.”

### “It seems simple to use”

Users plug their thumb drive into a dock on a lectern in the middle of the studio. Once the software recognizes at least 500 megabytes are available for use on the thumb drive, back, key and fill lights near the ceiling automatically activate.

Students then press a large, silver button positioned near the thumb-drive dock. A countdown from 5 begins on the right of two flatscreens, atop of which peeks the high-definition Canon VIXIA camcorder.

“The 5-second countdown gives them enough time to walk back to the spot where they are going to present,” McCandless says.

At zero, the student begins his presentation, his voice recorded by a professional-grade Rode microphone suspended from the ceiling.

The camera is equipped with a Chroma Key light ring that illuminates green or blue light and allows a student with video editing skills to eliminate the Chromatte Reflecmmedia backdrop and add visuals to his presentation.

The One Button Studio at BC3 also allows for a PowerPoint presentation to be projected onto the backdrop from a projector suspended from the ceiling.

When the student is finished, he removes his thumb-drive – which has captured the audio and video – the key, back and fill lights dim, and he is ready to leave and critique his performance. The student will walk away with a standard MP4 video file on the thumb-drive.

“It seems simple to use,” Sheppeck says, “and the countdown was nice.”

Adds Queen: “It’s good to know this technology and how it works.”

## “I would already know what to expect”

BC3’s technology staff tries to give users an overview in their first visit, McCandless says, adding that appointments can be made through an online schedule. Appointments are usually for one hour, she says.

“Most of them are going to be in here for only a half-an-hour at the most,” McCandless says.

Enough time to practice for a future that might hold a video job interview, BC3 students say. “I think it is a valuable tool that you can use to practice,” Kriess says.

Turney says the One Button Studio at BC3 provides a different type of experience.

“If ever I would have an interview online,” she says, “I would already know what to expect.”