A Lumen Ladibug Document Camera Makes a Difference in the way Teachers Lecture to Students

My classroom is crowded. With my desk and demonstration desk, a table for dispensing chemicals and supplies, 6 student lab tables, 24 student desks and some other miscellaneous furniture, there is barely room to circulate. I try to use a lot of demonstrations with my students, but the students in the rows beyond the first two often complain that they can't see the demo very well and they can't really move their desk to a better location because, like I said, it's a pretty crowded room.

Several years ago my colleagues and I tried to solve this problem by trying to project a tabletop experiment to a SMART board using a gooseneck camera. It was a fine idea, but it failed miserably in practice. The resolution was bad, so the lights had to be out to help with that and that meant I was demo-ing in the dark -- then even the students in the first couple of rows couldn't see the demo.

This is why the Lumens™ Ladibug™ portable document camera caught my eye at OETC in January. As I walked by the booth, I was immediately struck by how clear the image was as it was projected on the screen. I am sure the salesman thought I was a lunatic as I held my travel mug beneath the camera and moved it around to see if I could see the liquid sloshing. I had no interest in projecting documents, but instead in creating my own jumbotron demo-cam and, at first glance, this looked like the answer to my problem.

We ordered one that arrived at the end of the last school year and today I tried it out. It worked like a dream! I love everything about this little camera. The camera itself has the gooseneck so I could tip it in many directions to get exactly the angle I wanted on the demo. No one had to adjust their seat in order to see today's demo, The Candle in the Jar. And I think students were impressed when they saw the projected giant version of my demo. We also ordered a wireless base so I will be able to move around the room with the camera and show student work -- on paper or in the lab -- from any place in my crowded room. The Ladibug is small and easily portable. One of

my colleagues is using it tomorrow. The software was easy to install from the website; it was almost plug and play.

If all that wasn't enough, it occurred to me that I could use the camera and screencast-o-matic to create a screencast of my demo too. Here it is:

Doesn't it look great? This opens up even more possibilities. Now I can easily record all my demos and labs for students who are absent or want to see them again. Or I can embed them in presentations or online assessments. Or share them with colleagues.

In short, the Ladibug was easy and fun to use, not very expensive, lived up to its sales pitch. I am anxious to try out many new uses for this powerful little camera.