What is 3D printing? It is the ability of the latest generation of printers to create 3-dimensional objects. The use of 3D printing is attracting interest across numerous market categories such as medical devices, car component parts, the jewelry trade and even the shoe industry. It is now possible for students to take their ideas forward by designing and making a prototype. “Students go far beyond ‘Hear, See, and Do’ and now take the amazing leap to ‘Create’. When students work together to develop an idea and then watch it take form before their eyes, it makes learning real and exciting, and demonstrates what they are capable of achieving." According to Mary Beth Kreml, Engaging Solutions.


Key observations from Prof. McGovern’s class:

- Overall positive response by the students to make use of this printer for their group work.
- operation and software applications associated with 3D printing are somewhat intuitive but only a small percentage of students displayed a keen interest to adapt and learn this new behavior.
- The printer needs a dedicated desktop computer to store and utilize the required software.
- It is not feasible for individual students to use their laptops with the printer, as the software components are too complex.
- There is huge opportunity for growth with this new digital manufacturing category. Faculty must explore how they can engage such new technologies into their classrooms in preparing students for the careers of the future.