Google Apps

Abstract

As a member of the University of Alaska you will soon be required to become familiar with, and use, Google mail (Gmail). This short guide will show you how to best make use of Gmail to organize and improve your contacts with students and others. You will also learn how to implement the free Google office tools (Google Docs) to add elements of collaboration and peer review to your online courses.

Topics Covered in This Section

- Introducing Gmail
- Address Book
- Composing Mail
- Using Labels and Archiving
- Searching your Mail
- Changing Settings
- Introducing Google Docs
- Documents
- Spreadsheets
- Presentation
- Additional Resources

Introducing Gmail

Gmail is a full-featured webmail program that includes support for essential webmail functions including labeling, a very accurate spam filter, a powerfully advanced search feature, and an easy-to-use address book that includes the ability to group contacts and to import and export your contacts from other programs.

Furthermore, you have the ability to chat with your contacts in real-time using an integrated instant messaging feature called Google Talk. You can customize your preferred language, add signatures to your email, create vacation auto-responders, send and receive email from other accounts (even one's that aren't Gmail-based), create filters, enable forwarding, and change the look of your Gmail interface.

Gmail has almost unlimited storage space for your e-mail as well. No more will you have to worry about deleting messages over two or three months old.

One of the nicest features of Gmail is that messages are automatically saved in the Drafts folder as you type. Thus, if something happens while you are writing your message, whatever you typed is automatically saved in the system, so when you log back into Gmail your message will still be ready to be finished or sent.

Address Book

Before you start using Gmail you'll probably want to add your contacts to the Gmail address book, which is called just 'Contacts' in Gmail. Go ahead and click the Contacts link on the left-hand side to get started.

Click one of the insert contacts button above the words My Contacts to add an individual contact or a group. Or, click the Import link on the right-hand-side to import contacts from an excel spreadsheet (CSV format works best). Click the Export link to export your existing Gmail contacts to a spreadsheet in CSV, or vCard format.
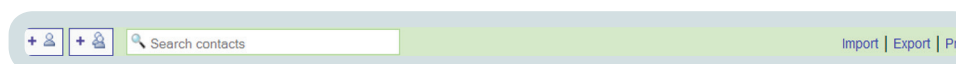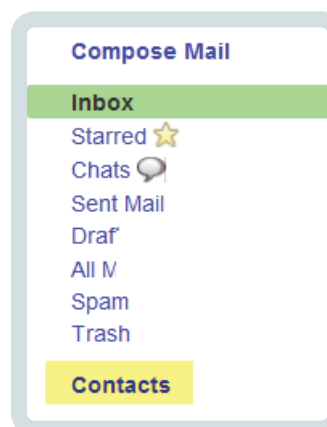
When you add a contact individually you can add many details about the contact including name, title, company name, e-mail address(es), phone numbers(s), address(es), instant messaging address(es), notes, and even a picture if you have one.

Composing Mail

Once you have your contacts in Gmail you might want to send a message! Just click the Compose Mail link under the University of Alaska banner in the upper-left-hand side of the page.

Your compose mail interface will look familiar to other e-mail programs. You'll have a send button, a discard button, a to field, subject field, and the body of the message, a signature if you've added one (under settings), and an editor for formatting your e-mail message.

You may also notice a button that says Save Now, which allows you to manually save an e-mail you are working on in the Drafts folder (located on the left-hand side of the screen). But you usually don't need to use this button because Gmail automatically saves your messages
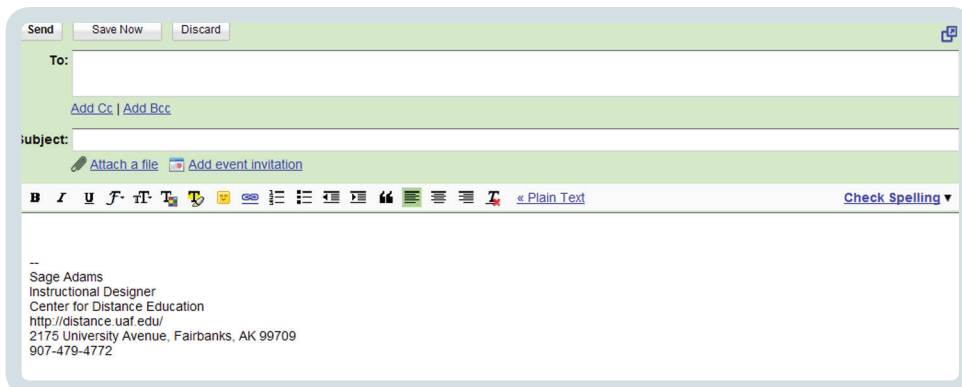
every few minutes. Note in the screenshot how it says Draft autosaved at 3:38 PM. This is just a note to let you know when Google automatically last saved your e-mail message. If your computer goes offline suddenly, your e-mail message will still be available for you to finish and send when you get back online.

You can format your messages using the formatting toolbar. Options for formatting your messages include bolding, italics, underline, font, text color, lists, indenting, quotations, text alignment, and there is even a spellchecking tool.

When you're done crafting your message, just click the send button.

Using Labels and Archiving

You use labels to organize your mail. Now, you don't have to of course, but labeling your mail makes it easy to find messages once your mailbox gets overwhelmed with mail. You could also just star the message and come back to it later, but labeling has the added advantage of cutting down the size of your inbox and also allow- ing you to put a name on the message that will make it easy to retrieve later using the search tool, or just by clicking the name of the label on the label sidebar, which will bring up all messages with that specific label. Think of a label as a folder or a category.

To label a message just click the checkbox next to the message you want to label and select the Labels drop-down menu above your message. In the drop-down select the label you want to ap- ply, or create a new label by typing the name of the label in the text field.
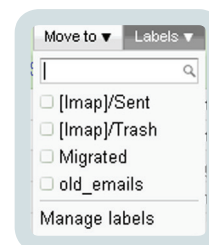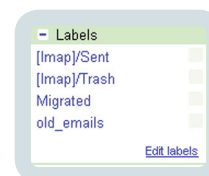
Searching your Mail

A particularly useful feature of Gmail is the ability to search your mail for messages. It's not just a basic search either; it's a very powerful search that allows you to search the from, to, body, and subject fields of your messages. Moreover you can choose what words to include in your search and which one's not to include. You can search by date range. Last but not least you can search in your inbox, any of your labels, your trash, sent mail, and even your spam box for messages that match your search criteria.

Changing Settings

You can change certain settings in your Gmail account to streamline it to your way of working. Click the Settings link in the upper-right-hand corner of the page to access the settings dialog.

In the settings dialog, you'll see multiple tabs including: General, Accounts, Labels, Fil- ters, Forwarding and POP/IMAP, Chat, Web Clips, Labs, and Themes. The General tab is selected by default. Here you can change your preferred language (the default is Eng-

lish), your picture, signature, and vacation responder. Whenever you make changes to the settings in any of these tabs click the Save Settings button at the bottom of the screen to save your selections.

In the Accounts tab you can add other email addresses you use frequently. Doing so will allow you both to receive messages from other accounts you specify and send messages from those other accounts. This is a very efficient feature!

The Labels tab is just a shortcut for adding, renaming, and deleting your labels.

To add a new theme to your Gmail account select the Themes tab and choose the theme you think looks best. If you don't like any of them select the link that says Choose your own colors.

Introducing Google Docs
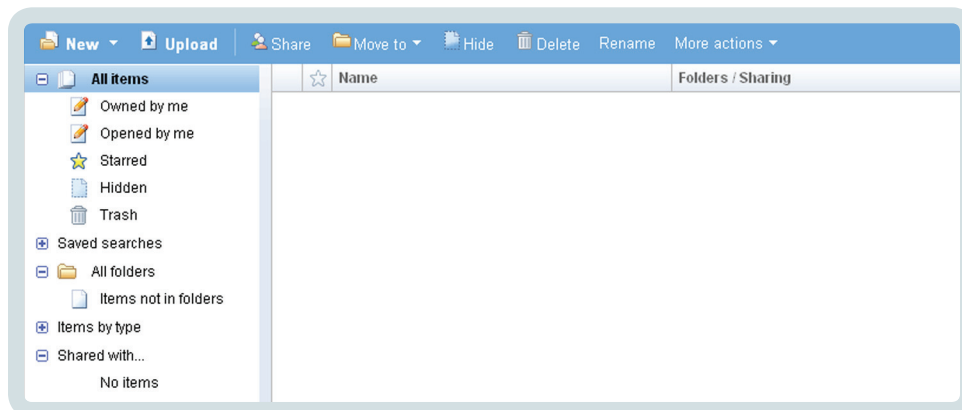
With Google Docs you can easily create documents, spreadsheets, and presentations. The amazing thing is they all work fairly similarly to what you would expect from the Microsoft Office products, except of course they are completely online.

You'll find Google Docs to have most of the common features of Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, although it is missing some features that are less commonly used. For most people however, the features that are included will be sufficient. In any case, you don't need to replace Microsoft Office. Think of Google Docs as a supplementary toolkit for online collaboration.

Once you're logged into Gmail, click the Documents link in the upper-left-hand corner of the page to visit Google Docs. At first because you haven't yet created any documents you will see a virtually blank interface, save for some buttons on the top, and links down the left-hand side.

Next to the University of Alaska logo is a search field where you can search all your documents if you have any - by the words included in them, or by what they are named. You can also search documents by type.

Below the search bar is a toolbar where you can choose options such as creating new documents, spreadsheets, presentations, or folders, uploading existing documents, sharing and moving documents, hiding, deleting, and renaming documents.

You can upload documents you have created from other programs. You can upload HTML, plain text, Word, Rich Text, PowerPoint, CSV, XLS, and PDF documents. Just select the Upload tool button, find the file on your computer, or the Internet, you want to upload, give it a name, and click Upload File.

On the right side of the main page you'll see various options for filtering your files. For example, you can choose to see all the things you have hidden or trashed. You can also view any searches you have performed in the past as long as you saved them. You can also view documents by type, such as PDF, and you can view documents you have shared with specific individuals; just click the item by which you wish to filter and the main documents area will be updated to reflect your filtering.

Documents
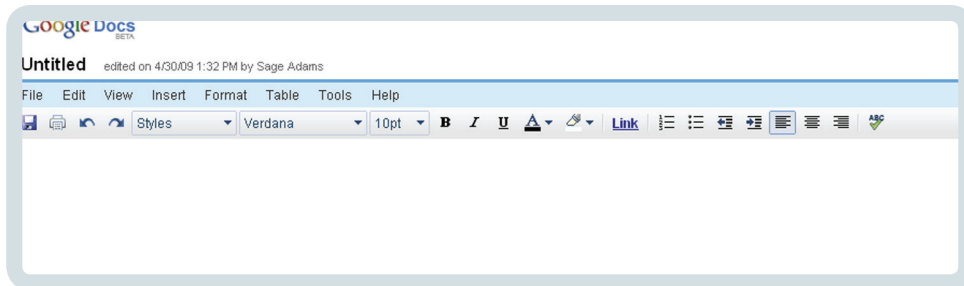
Select New > Document to create a new document. When you first create a document you'll see it has a title which is Untitled by default. You can either select File > Rename to change the name to something else, or you can just start typing. The first words you type will become the title of the document but don't worry, you can always change it later!

Notice how the menu and toolbar look roughly similar to Microsoft Word, but with many fewer bells and whistles. Some of the most useful features include the various editing tools, the ability to share and collaborate on documents, and revision history. Let's discuss the editing tools first.

Besides all of the regular tools such as being able to save, rename, and load documents, format text, insert links, add tables, find and replace text, and insert images, there are some editing tools that are really handy and surprising given that these are free, online tools that anyone can use.
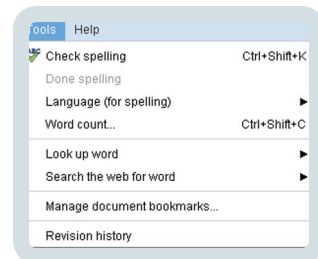
There is, for instance, a very good spell checker. There is also a language setting, so if you are writing your documents in a language other than English, you can change the language setting and the spellchecker will work with the new language. Finally, there is a word count feature and a dictionary and encyclopedia. All these tools are available under the Tools menu.

You can easily insert a table of contents, headers or footers, and footnotes as well. These tools are all available under the Insert menu.

As you can see, Google Docs provides many useful tools for creating and editing documents. But the most innovative feature is the ability to collaborate on documents. No longer will you have to send hefty attachments to students and peers - attachments that routinely get 'lost' on the web or put in spam boxes. No longer will you need to worry needlessly about whether a student has the same version of MS Word, Excel, or PowerPoint. You, or your students, can now create a document on the fly and allow others to view or edit it. This is a great tool for commenting on student work or allowing students to work together on projects.
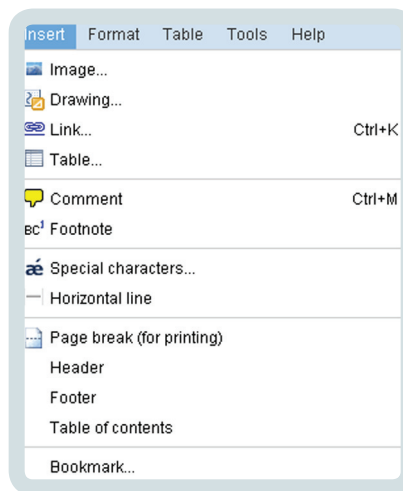
To share a document with someone, just click on the Share drop-down menu in the upper-right hand corner and select Share with Others. Another dialog will open that will allow you to invite people to either collaborate or view your document. You can add as many e-mail addresses as you like, so you could send a document to all your students. They, in turn, can send documents they create to you or any of the other students. You can even publish the document so anyone in the UA system who knows the link can view it!

If you've shared your document with others and you don't like the changes they've made, you can revert the document back to
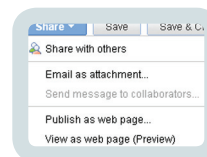
a previous version. This feature is called 'revision history'. Because Google Docs saves your files automatically ever few minutes, that's a lot of drafts you can revert to. This is a very handy feature!
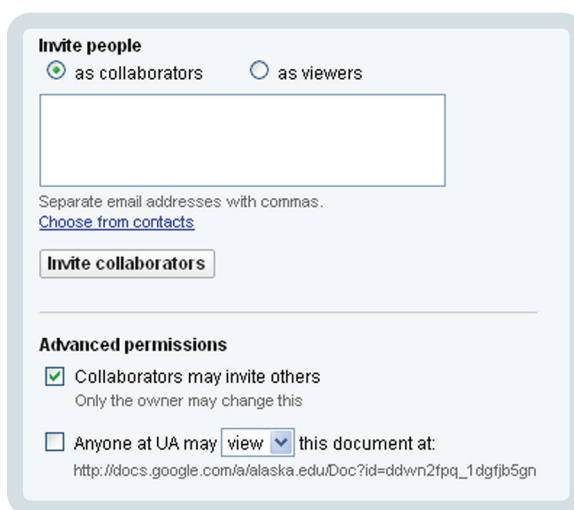
Spreadsheets
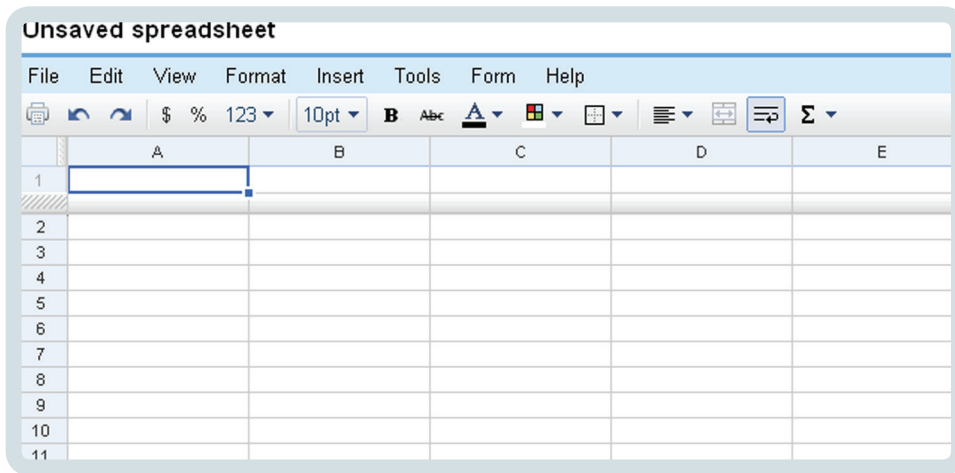
Select New > Spreadsheet to create a new spreadsheet. When you first create a spreadsheet you'll see it has a title which is Untitled by default. You can either select File > Rename to change the name to something else, or you can just start typing. The first words you type will become the title of the spreadsheet – don't worry; you can always change it later.

Notice how the menu and toolbar looks roughly similar to Microsoft Excel, but with many fewer bells and whistles. Some of the most useful features of Google Spreadsheet include the various editing tools, the ability to share and collaborate on documents, and revision history. Most of these features we've already covered when we talked about Google Docs, but we'll cover some of the editing features specific to Google Spreadsheet here.

Google Spreadsheet has many of the features you would expect from a spreadsheet program such as the ability to save, rename, and load documents, format cells, freeze rows and columns to make them easier to work with, create notification rules, find and replace text, and insert images.
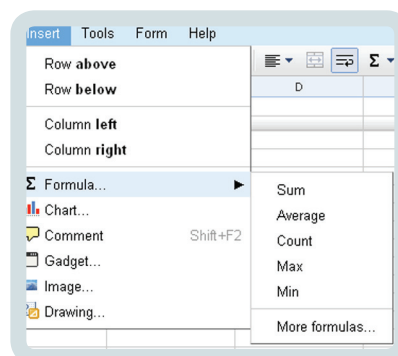
Google Spreadsheet also has an awesome collection of formula for you to choose from. To insert a function into a cell or range of cells select Insert > Formula ... > Formulas to open up the Formulas dialog box. When you explore the formulas dialog you'll see there are quite a few formulas to choose from, just as there are in Excel.

You can also insert charts and gadgets into your spreadsheets. Gadgets are little widgets created by Google and other application developers, to give your spreadsheets added functionality. You can include gadgets such as Gantt and organization charts. To insert a gadget select Insert > Gadgets and choose from the collection. If you'd rather just have a chart select Insert > Charts.
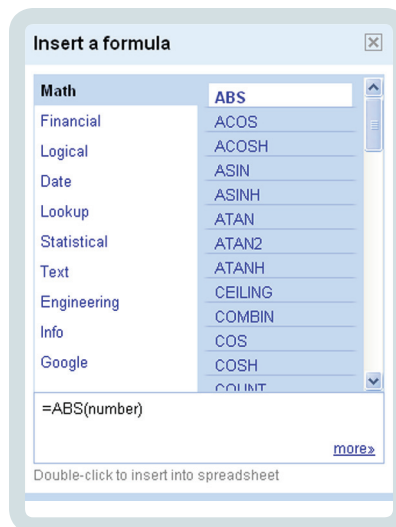
Presentation
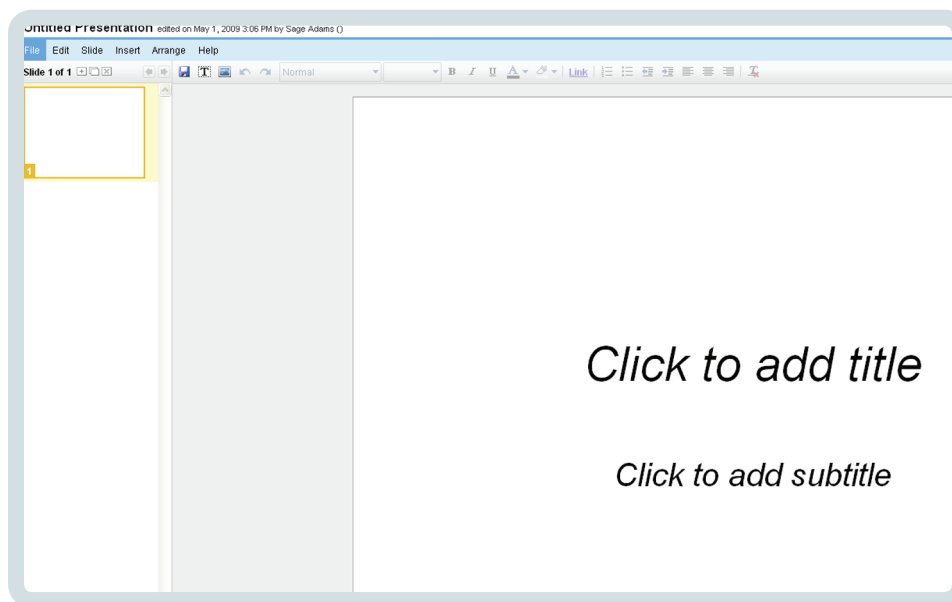
Select New > Presentation to create a new presentation. When you first create a presentation you'll see it is called Untitled Presentation by default. Select File > Rename to give your presentation a good name.

Notice how the menu and toolbar look roughly similar to Microsoft PowerPoint. Just like Google Documents and Spreadsheet you have various editing tools, the ability to share and collaborate on documents, and revision history available to you. Most of

these features we've already covered, but we'll discuss some of the editing and other tools available specifically to Presentation here.

Google Presentation has many of the features you would expect from a presentation program such as the ability to save, rename, and load documents, change themes and background, find and replace text, insert images, shapes, and video, and arrange slides.

You also have the ability to upload presentations you've created in Microsoft PowerPoint or in Google Presentation. Simply select File > Upload a Presentation to do so. You can also import slides that you've already created by selecting Insert > Import Slides.

Once you have made your presentation you can download it as a PowerPoint presentation, if you wish, so you can present it like you normally would. Just select File > Download Presentation As... and choose to download your presentation as a PPT, PDF, or text file.

Once you are ready to present, it's very easy to show or share a presentation in Google Presentation as well. Just select the Start presentation button in the upper-right-hand corner to begin your slideshow. You'll see a link in the slideshow you can share with anyone else so they can see your presentation. You can even text chat while showing your presentation to others.

Additional Resources

10 Reasons to use Gmail: http://mail.google.com/mail/help/about.html

Why use Gmail? http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBbmiQhuAhU [video]

Gmail for your Phone: http://www.google.com/mobile/default/mail.html

Google Docs for Educators: http://www.google.com/educators/p_docs.html

Getting Help with Google Docs: http://docs.google.com/support/?hl=en

Google Docs in Plain English: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eRqUE6IHTEA [video]

Google Docs Templates: http://docs.google.com/templates
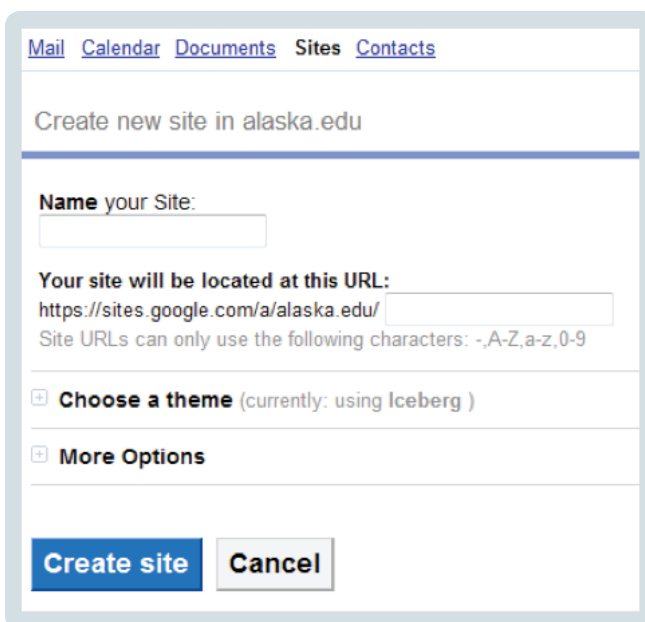
Sites created within the UA System: https://sites.google.com/a/alaska.edu/sites/system/app/pages/meta/dashboard/categories

Getting Help with GoogleSites: http://sites.google.com/support/?hl=en

Google Sites

Google Sites allows you to make collaborative websites quickly and easily. You don't need any technical knowledge to create a website on Google sites. You can design your own using a tool editor similar to the one in Blackboard or you can just use one of the many customizable templates available for free. You can upload files and attachments to your site and embed rich content.

To get started creating a new Google Site simply select the Sites link at the top-left-corner within your Google Apps account and click the Create new site button that you see. You'll then be directed to another page that looks as follows:

Name your site. Your URL (or address) will be created automatically for you – although you can change it if you want. Select the theme you want to use from a template and click Create Site. That's all there is too it! Making a website has never been so easy.

Once you've created your site you can add links to the navigation menu, create pages, edit pages, and allows others to see or edit your pages as well so you can work together on the site. Google Sites act like wikis in that people can collaborate easily while also preserving a log of who changed what and when so you can undo edits others have made. Google Sites is a great tool to use in classrooms to allow students to work together in knowledge creation.

You can attach files to sites and also comment on pages people have created. This is a great way to provide feedback to student work within Google Sites.

Digital Literacy

Digital Literacy

What do we mean when we talk about digital literacy? Is it a our ability to effectively navigate through a digital environment? How do we communicate effectively with others with so many tools at our disposal? How do we access information productively when the amount of information available continues to grow exponentially? The level at which we respond to these questions is evidence of our digital literacy.

The Internet is an environment capable of presenting a multiplicity of formats - text, audio, and video all at once. It enables us to interact with information and people from around the world synchronously or asynchronously. These affordances are changing the very nature of how we communicate with each other - at home, with extended family and friends, and at work.

Digital literacy isn't a set of skills that are "nice to know". It is something we, as educators, must master well enough to pass onto our students. They must learn these skills to be successful in the professions we are preparing them for.

This section will introduce you to tools to assist with reading and interpreting data, reproducing/manipulating it, and discerning its validity.

KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS

Keyboard shortcuts aren't just for programmers. Knowing the keyboard shortcuts for repeated tasks may seem like something small, but they save a great deal of time.

Command	PC	MAC
Select All	CTRL + a	Open Apple + a
Cut	CTRL + x	Open Apple + x
Copy	CTRL + c	Open Apple + c
Paste	CTRL + v	Open Apple + v
Undo	CTRL + z	Open Apple + z
Find	CTRL + f	Open Apple + f
Help	F1	Open Apple + ?
Minimize all windows	Windows Key + m	Open Apple + m
Switch windows	ALT + Tab	Open Apple + Tab
Close window	ALT + F4	Open Apple + w
Select multiple from list	Shift + Click	Shift + Click

USING THE CONTEXT MENU

The context menu is another short-cut to access commands in a program. While using the context menu isn't as fast as using a keyboard shortcut, it is still faster than using a program's menu bar. Access the context menu by right-clicking if you're on a PC, or CTRL +clicking if you're on a Mac.

Be aware that commands available in the context menu change depending on what part of a program you are in. Knowing when certain options are available saves time by allowing you to keep your cursor close to your work instead of surfing the main menu.
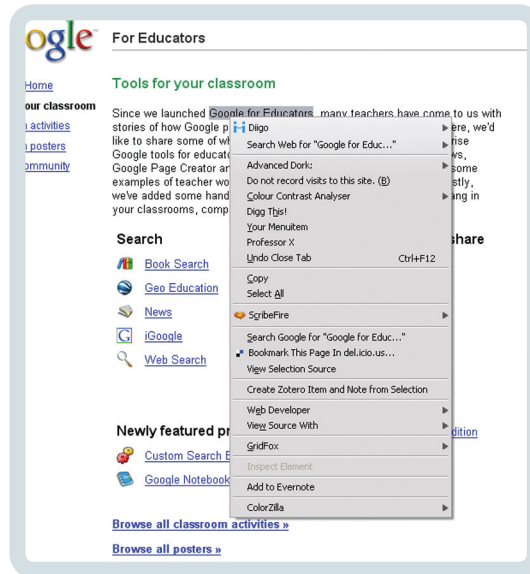
PASSWORD MANAGEMENT

Something that is difficult to guess but easy for you to remember your the goal when creating passwords. A good password is patterned but not predictable. The pattern assists with memory recall, but inevitably, you will find yourself forgetting a login from time to time. Maintain a master file of passwords but be sure that file is safe from prying connections on your computer. There are password management programs that can keep your passwords safe and accessible. You can also keep your master file on an encrypted flash drive (just don't lose it!).

Checking the validity of the site where you enter your personal information is as important as keeping your passwords secure. When using your passwords online protect yourself by checking that the address of the page(s) you enter your user/pass on begins with https://. This indicates that your information will be transmitted over the network securely.

Look at the rest of the address and ensure it belongs to the domain owned by the entity/company/person it should. Look at the spelling of the domain. Fraudulent web sites often use misspellings of popular web site names to trick users into sending their

sensitive information to the site.

Don't :

- store passwords on Post It Notes that you then leave on your computer screen
- use short words, names, dates, SSN, any easily accessible information about yourself
- any of the above spelled backward
- email your user/pass to anyone
- transmit your user/pass over IM

Do:

- Use a combination of 8 or more letters, numbers, and special characters
- check for https://
- ensure the web site domain is valid and correct
- change your password periodically even if it has not been compromised

THE BROWSER

Your web browser is a window onto the web and if you find yourself spending more and more time online that browser should be helping to make that time more productive. Finding a browser that is right for you and customizing it to fit your particular needs are the first steps. A good browser to start with is FireFox. FireFox is highly customizable and incorporates features such as tabs and a pluggable architecture. The pluggable architecture enables you to install extensions and plugins to enhance the functionality of your browser easily without having to program it yourself. FireFox is also open source software with a rich community that contributes in order to continuously make the browser better. FireFox is a free download available at: http://getfirefox.com

Tabs

Tabs are a mechanism that allows you to open many web pages in the same browser window. This can reduce desktop clutter and assist in organizing your workspace by giving you a way to display all pages related to one task in one window,.

FireFox enhances the tab feature even further by allowing you to implement Session History. Your Session History will remember how many windows and tabs you had open during your last session (or previous sessions) and open them all for you the next time you restart your browser.
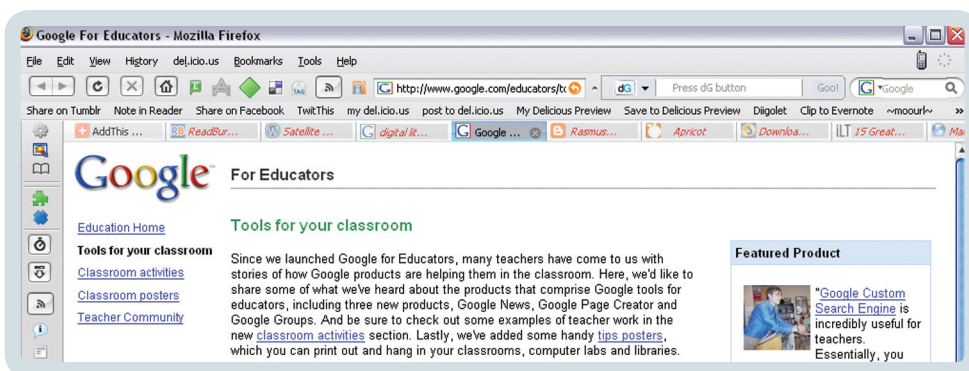
Extensions

There are numerous extensions that enable you to customize the functionality of your browser to help you with your online tasks. Think of extensions as tools and your browser as a toolbox. Depending on the job you're doing, you will need different tools in your tool box.

Extensions can seamlessly connect you to online services you may already use such as a bookmarking service such as del.icio.us or Diigo, a photosharing site like Flickr or Picasa, or to your own blog. By extending Firefox to integrate with other services you use online you no longer have to visit those sites as often. You can browse the Mozilla web site to see what sorts of extensions are available: https://addons.mozilla.org.

Here are a few extensions to get you started.:

- All-in-One Sidebar
  Lets you quickly switch between sidebar panels, view dialog windows such as downloads, extensions, and more in the sidebar, or view source or web sites in the sidebar.
  https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/1027

- Clear Cache Button

  Adds a clear cache toolbar button. After installing the extension, find the clear cache button in the toolbar customization area. Drag it onto your toolbar to make it available.

  https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/1801

- Xiniah Here

  Have a visual text editor at any time, even when one isn't available.

  https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/1449

- Foxmarks Bookmark Synchronizer

  Install Foxmarks each computer you have Firefox installed on and it will work silently in the background to keep your bookmarks synchronized across all computers. You can also log in to my.foxmarks.com to manage your bookmarks from any computer.

  https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/2410

- PDF Download

  PDF Download relieves the irritation experienced when encountering PDF files on the Web. Whenever you click on a PDF file, PDF Download lets you know before trying to open it, and then offers you choices such as downloading, opening, or converting it straight to HTML.

  https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/636ScribeFire

- Zotero

  Helps you collect, manage, and cite your research sources. Automatic capture of citation information from web pages. Stores PDFs, files, images, links, and whole web pages for access later. Visit www.zotero.org for full information and the quick start guide.

  https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/3504

- ScribeFire

  ScribeFire is a full-featured blog editor that integrates with your browser and lets you easily post to your blog.

  https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/1730

MOZILLA FIREFOX CHEAT SHEET

BASIC

Home:
http://www.mozilla.com/firefox/
Extensions & Themes:
https://addons.mozilla.org/
Support Forum:
http://forums.mozillazine.org/

GENERAL KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS

Add Bookmarks	Ctrl + D
Bookmarks	Ctrl + B
DOM Inspector	Ctrl + Shift + I
Downloads	Ctrl + J
Full Screen View	F11
Help	F1
History	Ctrl + H
Page Source	Ctrl + U
Print	Ctrl + P
Refresh Page	F5
Refresh Page & Cache	Ctrl + F5
Save Page As	Ctrl + S

NAVIGATION KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS

Back	Alt + Left Arrow
Down One Line	Down
Down One Page	PageDown
File Open	Ctrl + O
Forward	Alt + Right Arrow
Frame Next	F6
Frame Previous	Shift + F6
Home Page	Alt + Home
Jump to Address Bar	Ctrl + L
Jump to Search Bar	Ctrl + K
Page Bottom	End
Page Top	Home
Stop	Esc
Tab Close	Ctrl + W
Tab New	Ctrl + T
Tab Next	Ctrl + Tab
Tab Previous	Ctrl + Shift + Tab
Tab Select	Ctrl + [1 - 9]
Up One Line	Up
Up One Page	PageUp
Window Close	Alt + F4
Window New	Ctrl + N

TEXT KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS

Copy	Ctrl + C
Cut	Ctrl + X
Delete	Del
Text Size Decrease	Ctrl + -
Text Size Increase	Ctrl + +
Text Size Default	Ctrl + 0
Undo	Ctrl + Z

SEARCH KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS

Find Again	F3
Find as You Type Link	'
Find as You Type Text	/
Find in This Page	Ctrl + F
Find Previous	Shift + F3

MOUSE SHORTCUTS

Back	Shift + Scroll Down
Forward	Shift + Scroll Up
Open Link in Background Tab	Ctrl + Left Click or Middle Click
Open Link in Foreground Tab	Ctrl + Shift + Left Click
Open Link in New Window	Shift + Left Click
Scroll Line by Line	Alt + Scroll
Tab Close	Middle Click on Tab
Tab New	Double Click on Tab Bar
Text Size Decrease	Ctrl + Scroll UP
Text Size Increase	Ctrl + Scroll Down

LOCATIONS

Cached Elements

C:\Documents and Settings\[username]\Local Settings\Application Data\Mozilla\Firefox\Profiles\[profilename]\Cache\

Profile Manager

Close Firefox. From the "Start" menu, select "Run", type "firefox.exe -p"

User Profile Folder

C:\Documents and Settings\[username]\Application Data\Mozilla\Firefox\Profiles\xxxxxxxx.default\

Advanced Configuration

Address Bar: about:config

Cache Info

Address Bar: about:cache

Plugin Info

Address Bar: about:plugins

TIPS/TRICKS

Block Popup Windows

Tools -> Options -> Web Features

Customize Toolbars

Right click on a toolbar and chose customize toolbar. To add icons drag and drop them on the toolbar. To subtract icons drag them from the toolbar to the "Customize Toolbar" window.

Desktop Shortcut to Current Page

Drag the icon in the address bar to the desktop

Make Firefox Default Browser

Tools -> Options -> General -> Set Firefox As Default Browser

Manage Cache, Cookies, History and Passwords

Tools -> Options -> Privacy

Set Home Page

Tools -> Options -> General -> Home Page

Tabbed Browsing Options

Tools -> Options -> Advanced -> Tabbed Browsing

For use with Firefox running on a Windows machine. OS X users should use Cmd instead of Ctrl and Option instead of Alt. Based on the work of David Tenser. Last Updated: 06.21.06.

If you would like this...	Type this...
Headings and Subheadings	
# Title ## Heading ### Subheading Topic **Subtopic** **Sub-subtopic**	<h1>Title</h1> <h2>Heading</h2> <h3>Subhead</h3> <h4>Topic</h4> <h5>Subtopic</h5> <h6>Sub-subtopic</h6>
Bold text	
This text is **bold**	This text is Bold
Italic text	
This text is *italicized*	This text is italicized
Line break	
If you would like to break text into two lines without creating a new paragraph.	If you would like to break text into <br/> two lines without creating a new paragraph.
Non-breaking space	
There are three non-breaking spaces here	There are three non-breaking &nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp; spaces here.
Citing a reference	
Gone with the Wind is a very long novel	<cite>Gone with the Wind</cite> is a very long novel.
Bulleted list	
• Item 1 • Item 2 • Item 3 • Item 4	 Item 1 Item 2 Item 3 Item 4
Numbered lists	
1. Item 1 2. Item 2 3. Item 3 4. Item 4	 Item 1 Item 2 Item 3 Item 4

	If you would like this...	Type this...
Indenting a block of text		
	Using blockquote tags will indent your text from both the left and right margins. Ideally is should be used for lengthy quotations.	<blockquote> Using blockquote tags will indent your text from both the left and right margins. Ideally is should be used for lengthy quotations.</blockquote>
Creating paragraphs with space before and after		
	When using Smart Text, Blackboard recognizes your carriage returns and adds a space between paragraphs. HTML does not recognize carriage returns; you must add paragraph marks.	When using Smart Text, Blackboard recognizes your carriage returns and adds a space between paragraphs. HTML does not recognize carriage returns; you must add paragraph marks
Creating a link to another web page		
	The Center for Distance Education offers many online courses.	The Center for Distance Education offers many online courses. *(Note: To create your link, place the URL between the quotation marks.)*
Making your link open in a new window - not in the Blackboard frame		
	The Center for Distance Education offers many online courses.	The Center for Distance Education offers many online courses. *(Note: To create your link, place the URL between the quotation marks.)*
Making an email link		
	Please email your assignments to youremail@uaf.edu when you have finished them	Please email your assignments to youremail@uaf.edu when you have finished them
Linking an image		
	ⓘTeach	

Personal
Learning
Environments

Personal Learning Environments

A Personal Learning Environment (PLE) is a combination of a philosophy of learning and communication facilitated and supported by a personalized collection of tools, techniques and resources. In today's increasingly technologically connected (and sometimes co-dependent) educational environment, educators and students alike— after all, teachers are themselves lifelong students--should pay some attention to their PLE… because each is creating one whether they realize it or not.
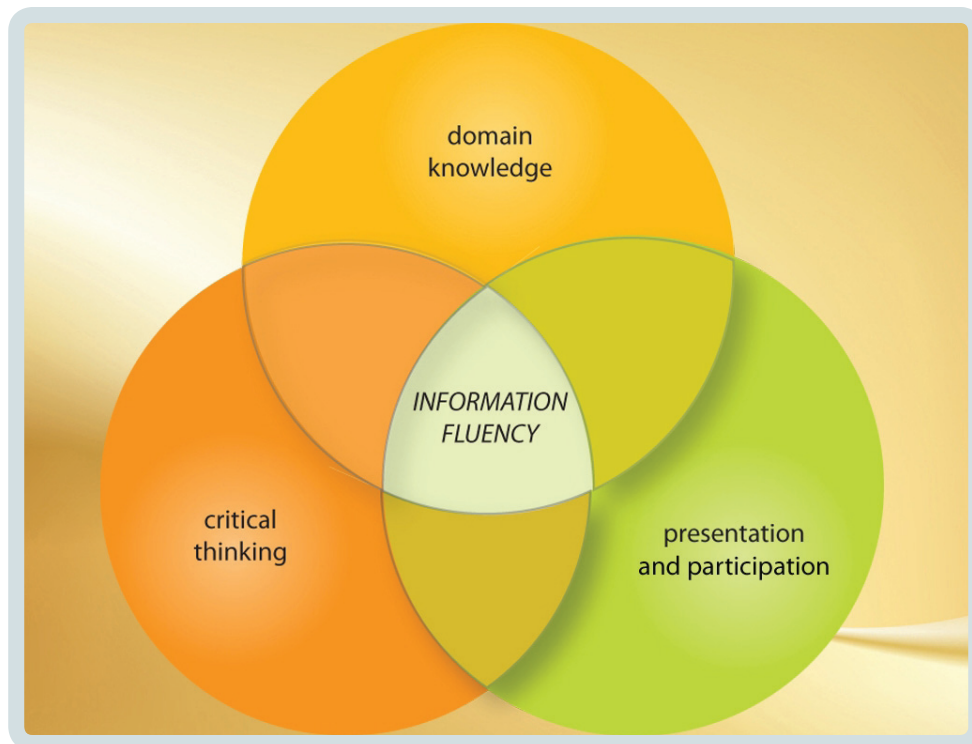
The Philosophy: Information Fluency

 Underlying the operations and processes of the PLE is the concept of Information Fluency (IF). Information Fluency is a model that builds on the skills of traditional digital literacy, integrating technology with domain (discipline) specific knowledge, critical thinking, presentation, participation and communication skills.

Domain Knowledge is the "stuff" we teach. However, this is not limited to discipline specific information and facts, but also:

- knowledge of information resources such as publications, databases, search tools, web resources, etc.

- understanding of the community of learners, enthusiasts and professionals in that area

- tools needed to browse, explore and discover needed information

- methods for storing, managing, retrieving and sharing

Critical Thinking is something every educator thinks about and probably has a pet definition for. The intent with the Information Fluency model is that critical thinking is represented by the ability to:

- analyze and evaluate information

- conceptualize and integrate new learning

- analogize and create parallels

- formulate and answer questions

- use knowledge for problem-solving

- think tangentially and orthogonally

Most important of all, to be complete critical thinking skills must involve paying attention to oneself and modifying one's own behavior to improve understanding and ability.

Presentation and Participation represent a trend toward increased emphasis on learning community, both inside and outside the classroom. Presentation and participation include traditional activities, such as in-class presentations and readings, but also new activities and forums possible due to the affordances of technology, including participation in discussion boards, collaborative activities using tools like wikis and Voice-Threads, blogging and participation in social networks.

Important characteristics of presentation and participation include:

- the ability to create effective presentations designed for the specific audience using the appropriate media

- comprehension of context, tone and basic rhetoric

- knowledge to re-purpose information successfully for use in new contexts

- a developed capacity for handling, evaluating and integration commentary and criticism from others

- an understanding of the processes and value of self-reflection

These three core areas work together to create Information Fluency. As you can see, combinations that involve just 1 or 2 of the areas won't really have the desired outcome:
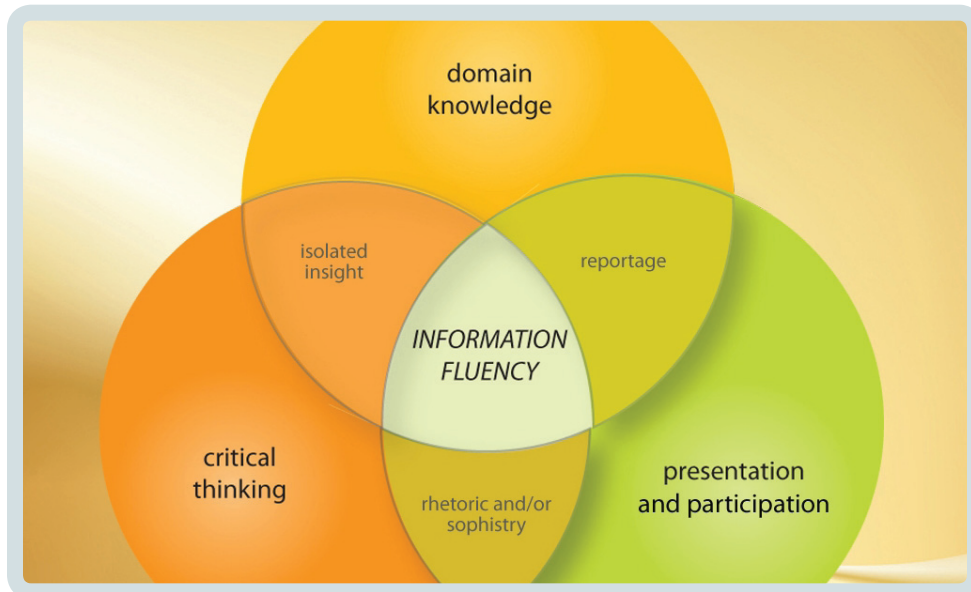
Information Fluency isn't just a theoretical concept, but one which has practical application throughout any course. It is a lens by which you can evaluate individual outcomes, assessment and activities in your course and the course as a whole.

In this diagram we have mapped some common activities, products and characteristics of understanding to the Information Fluency triad. In real, messy world of actually developing a course and teaching these lines are often not nearly as explicit... a literally accurate diagram would look much like a cloud of electrons than these spoke and wheel simplifications:
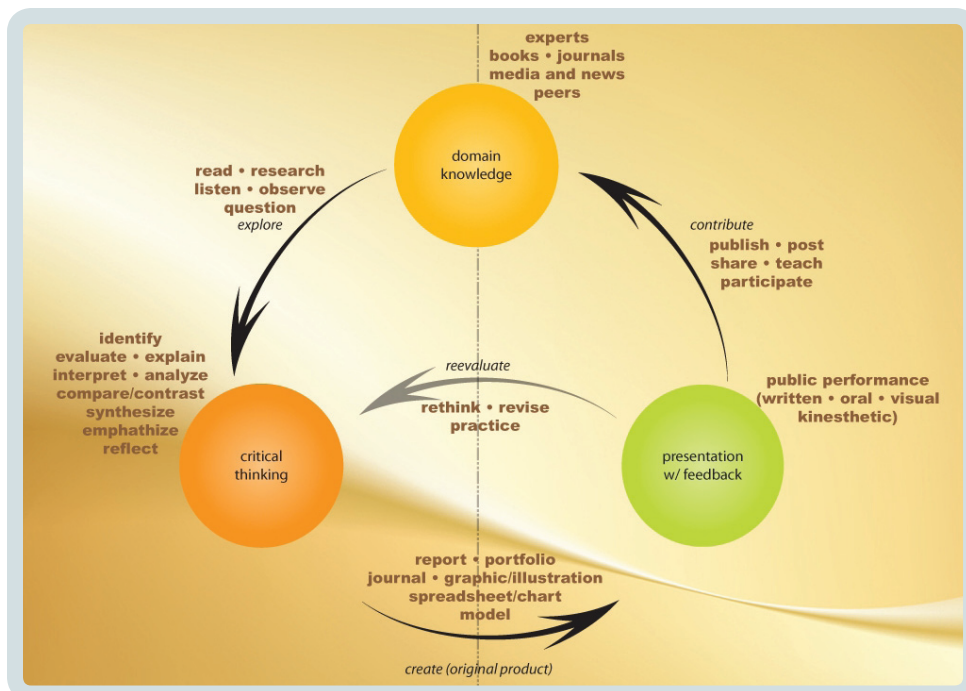
The Tools and Techniques of the PLE

Information Fluency provides a model for educational activities; the Personal Learning Environment is the place where those activities happen. Just as learning activities and their products map to the three areas that comprise Information Fluency, those activities and their products can be mapped to different tools and resources.

While each person will naturally evolve their own PLE, adding and discarding parts as needed, it can be useful to examine the tools and resources other people use. You can view a large collection of PLE Diagrams from an assortment of educators (and some students) on the EdTechPost wiki: http://edtechpost.wikispaces.com/PLE+Diagrams. I've selected a few to illustrate the diversity in tools, application and philosophy.

Alec Couros (http://educationaltechnology.ca/couros/) created this visualization as part of his PhD dissertation, illustrating the networked teacher. The resources Alec surrounds himself maybe facilitated technology, but include people, documents and media:
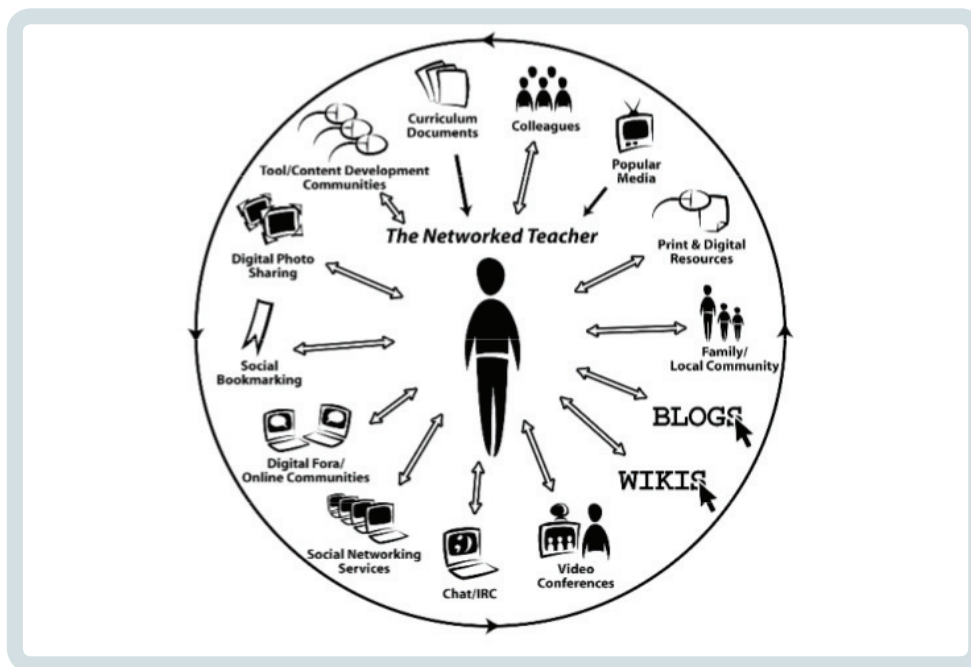
Jared Stein (http://flexknowlogy.learningfield.org/) attempted to capture some of the complexity of his PLE including some very specific items and not forgetting his hobbies and enthusiasms. Note that this kind of rendering looks more complex than it actually is, as simple behaviors can work themselves through the social network in various ways:

Jeremy Hiebert (http://headspacejblog.blogspot.com/) is quite interesting because he gets directly at what the network has allowed him to do in the past and will allow him to do in the future. The Collect, Connect, Reflect, Publish cycle is important:

Finally, because these diagrams can seem a bit daunting, D'Arcy Norman (http://www.darcynorman.net/) boils the whole thing down to its essential: you + tools that let you learn from and work with smart people (and, I would add, smart resources):

smart people

blogs communities flickr twitter email

me
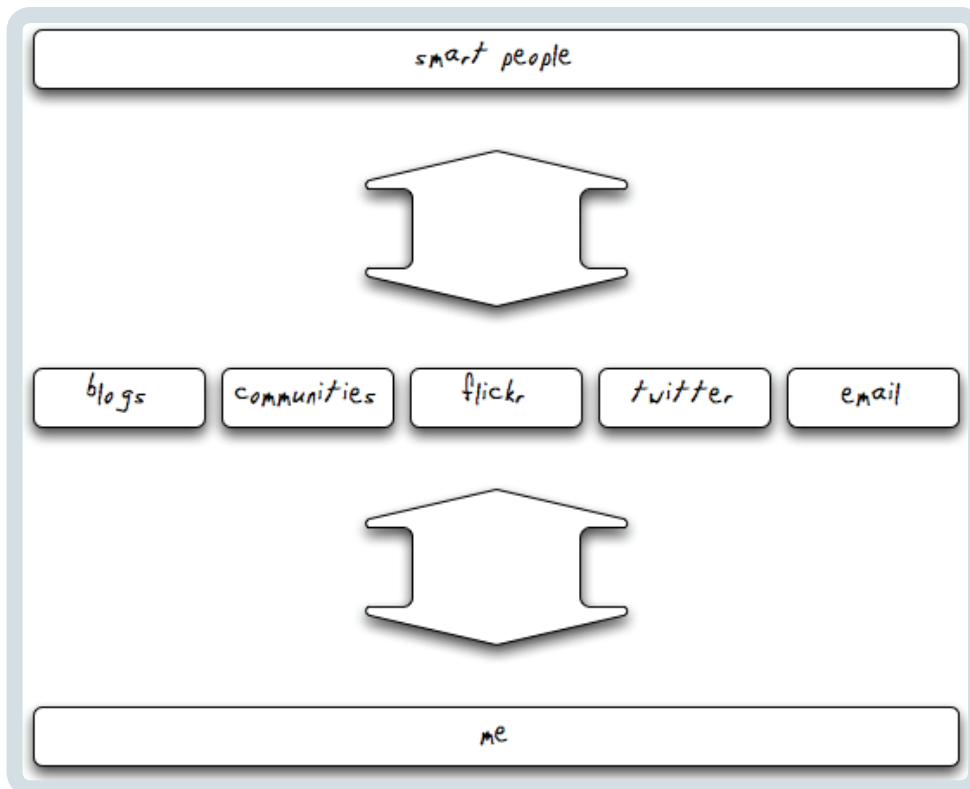
Getting Started
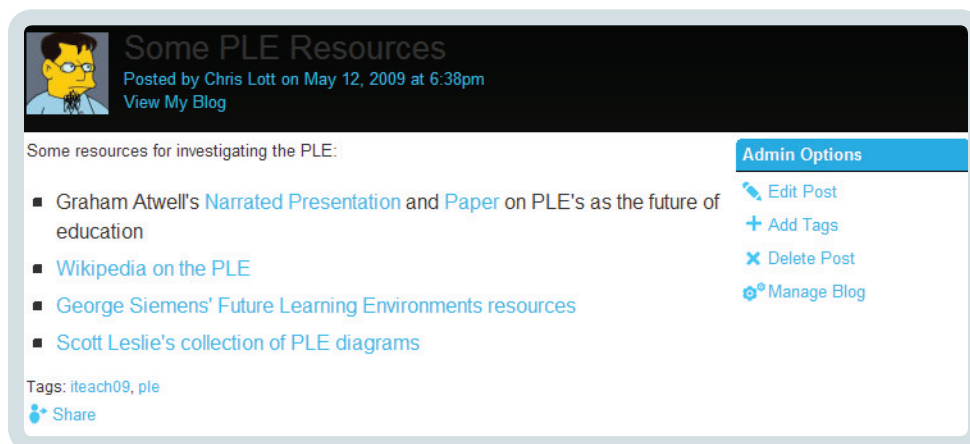
Keeping in mind the aforementioned "Collect, Reflect, Connect, Publish" idea and the last simple, but effective, diagram, the question becomes: how do I get started?

In fact, you have already started. Even before reading this you've used search engines and email, you've probably developed some method for storing information and links to use later, you've found ways to share interesting information with other people. In addition many of you will participate in some online discussions and have probably used social media such as YouTube. Here are some specific ways you can get started building up your own PLE during this workshop:

Collect

Many people make the mistake of considering the blog as a publishing tool to share with other people... but it is also a great place to store information that is of use to you. In fact, it might be best to consider most tools in your PLE (and most social tools in general: wikis, blogs, social bookmarking systems, etc) as utilities for your personal productivity first and as a publishing mechanism second (if at all). Many of the network effects generated through one's Personal Learning Environment come from "passive" activities that aren't directly meant for or directed to other people, but feed into the ecosystem nonetheless.

For example, in the post below I have noted some resources for learning about the PLE. I'm collecting these first and foremost for myself... but by collecting these resources "out in the open" I am contributing something that may turn out to be useful to others, both inside the eLearn community and outside.

Some PLE Resources
Posted by Chris Lott on May 12, 2009 at 6:38pm
View My Blog

Some resources for investigating the PLE:

- Graham Atwell's Narrated Presentation and Paper on PLE's as the future of education
- Wikipedia on the PLE
- George Siemens' Future Learning Environments resources
- Scott Leslie's collection of PLE diagrams

Tags: iteach09, ple

Admin Options
- Edit Post
- Add Tags
- Delete Post
- Manage Blog

Share

Reflect

It is important that you have places to engage in reflective activities. Again, the eLearn community provides tools for that. You can use your blog for this as well. By setting the appropriate privacy level you can, if you wish, limit your reflections so that only other members of the eLearn community or even just yourself can see them. This last is particularly useful if you are a "write it down to know what I think" kind of person and your reflections are intensely private or simply not ready for prime-time.

The eLearn community also allows you to create a group, which can be public or private, moderated membership or open enrollment, where you can reflect, discuss, share links, etc. For instance, here I have created—in just a few clicks—a group to discuss a particular topic in more depth and/or privacy than otherwise:
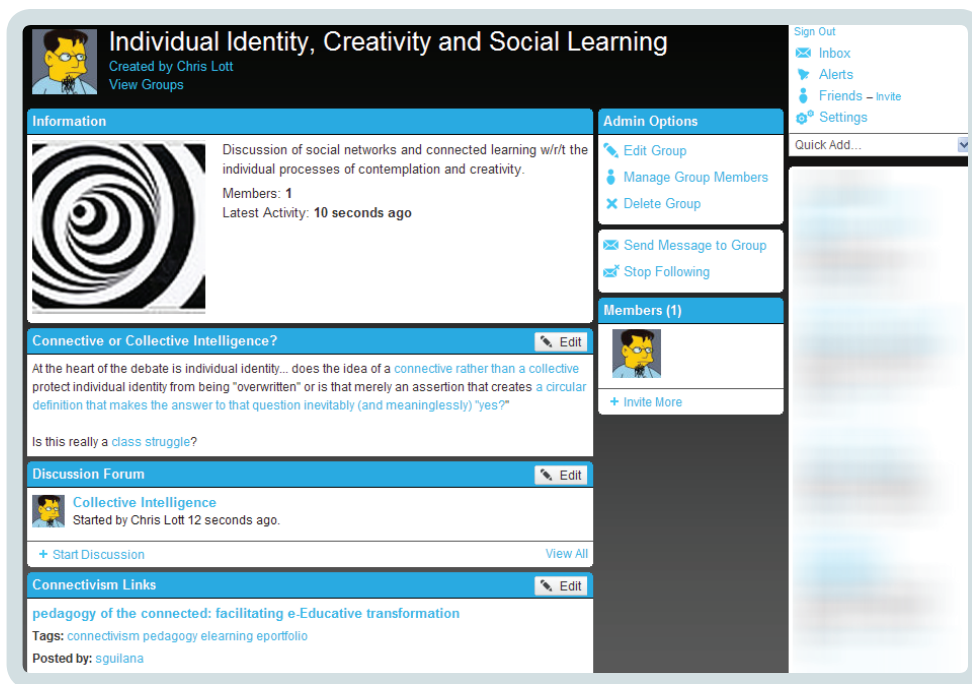
Connect

You likely already have various ways to directly connect to others—email is perhaps the most common—but there are many ways to connect to colleagues locally and from around the globe. Connections are meaningless if they aren't relevant, but they are perhaps the most powerful force in education when you find the right one. Many people have a hard time finding "their" community. It can take a while, but remember that you are already the member of one community: eLearn, and also a much larger one that you may not have interacted with much: the group of educators improving and enhancing their educational efforts with technology.

Connections aren't made just by sharing information or providing a directed resource. A very important part of joining a community—or creating one—is informal interaction, particularly discussion and comments. It's amazing how often one informal comment or one incidental resource shared out to the world can be the key to a profound change for someone else! Here I'm commenting on an article to share a resource that the original poster—and anyone else reading that post—might find useful:

Introduction
Posted by Sage Adams on May 12, 2009 at 2:04pm
Add as Friend   View Sage Adams's blog

Hi, this is Sage Adams, Instructional Designer. I just signed up to this Ning page; I like the design. Awesome work Christen!

I've already been in touch with the iTeach participants about getting set up on their Google Apps accounts. It can be a painful process moving over to Google Apps but it is worth it. We'll be discussing some of the ways to use Google Apps in your online classroom and for organizing your e-mail and documents, spreadsheets, and presentations on Monday. It'll be a lot of fun!

See you all on Sunday (for the potluck). Or Monday if you can't make that.

Share

1 Comment

Comment by Chris Lott just now
The pain is worth it, that's for sure! No more full mailboxes. Real search. A web client that doesn't stink up the joint! This video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9JJDugn4RoQ is a nice intro to the gmail part of Google Apps... which is just the beginning!

And remember... the eLearn community is just the beginning! An advantage of the socially networked age is the ability to learn from—and interact with—people with immense amounts of talent and experience from just about everywhere. The quickest way I've found to join in these global conversations is to comment on their blogs, communicate via Twitter, or share links with them. I've been fortunate enough to learn from many people this way who I never would have otherwise. For example, with Twitter:

iconolith @fncll maybe people are planning contingencies for the recent outbreak of hamthrax.
about 9 hours ago from feedalizr

budtheteacher @fncll: I hear you. Thanks for the clarification.
about 9 hours ago from web in reply to fncll

fncll @budtheteacher Gotcha. But it's not necessarily a reason NOT to either. My point was just to note that they work for me and that IS a reason
about 9 hours ago from TweetDeck

sleslie @fncll haven't run into that yet but had heard of the issue. != but liking the "spaces" and "expose" functions to virtually expand workspace
about 9 hours ago from Nambu in reply to fncll

fncll @sleslie Let me know when you figure out a dual-monitor solution. I need the space and the apple cinema display doesn't cut it.
about 9 hours ago from TweetDeck

budtheteacher @fncll: And I was trying to say that liking something isn't necessarily a good reason to use/do it. Poor Twitter use on my part. Sorry.
about 9 hours ago from web

budtheteacher @fncll: You said they were "well-received" by some of your students. I assumed, perhaps wrongly, that you were saying they liked sbs.
about 9 hours ago from web in reply to fncll

fncll @budtheteacher I fail to see a reasonable parallel between using step-by-step instructions to learn and eating chocolate.
about 9 hours ago from TweetDeck

fucci RT @fncll I cant believe the Bacon Flowchart is edging toward 100K views. http://tinyurl.com/2zlvpu
about 9 hours ago from Power Twitter

Publish

In a way, almost every use of social software such as blogs, wikis, and open discussion forums is a kind of publication. The simplest transformation engendered by new media is changing the publication process from one where most people had to choose between forcing their way through gatekeepers or having almost no reach to an egalitarian system where global publication was in the hands of everyone (for better and for worse). In this environment words matter more than who you know and the scope and duration of the publication is practically unlimited. And in the educational sphere the size of one's audience is much less important than their suitability—the right 10 readers are worth 1000 idle passers-by, and your words—at that moment they need them—worth any number of irrelevant publications with more readers.

Understanding By Design

The ISTE
National Educational Technology Standards (NETS•T)
and Performance Indicators for Teachers

Effective teachers model and apply the National Educational Technology Standards for Students (NETS•S) as they design, implement, and assess learning experiences to engage students and improve learning; enrich professional practice; and provide positive models for students, colleagues, and the community. All teachers should meet the following standards and performance indicators. Teachers:

1. Facilitate and Inspire Student Learning and Creativity

Teachers use their knowledge of subject matter, teaching and learning, and technology to facilitate experiences that advance student learning, creativity, and innovation in both face-to-face and virtual environments. Teachers:

   a. promote, support, and model creative and innovative thinking and inventiveness

   b. engage students in exploring real-world issues and solving authentic problems using digital tools and resources

   c. promote student reflection using collaborative tools to reveal and clarify students' conceptual understanding and thinking, planning, and creative processes

   d. model collaborative knowledge construction by engaging in learning with students, colleagues, and others in face-to-face and virtual environments

2. Design and Develop Digital-Age Learning Experiences and Assessments

Teachers design, develop, and evaluate authentic learning experiences and assessments incorporating contemporary tools and resources to maximize content learning in context and to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes identified in the NETS•S. Teachers:

   a. design or adapt relevant learning experiences that incorporate digital tools and resources to promote student learning and creativity

   b. develop technology-enriched learning environments that enable all students to pursue their individual curiosities and become active participants in setting their own educational goals, managing their own learning, and assessing their own progress

   c. customize and personalize learning activities to address students' diverse learning styles, working strategies, and abilities using digital tools and resources

   d. provide students with multiple and varied formative and summative assessments aligned with content and technology standards and use resulting data to inform learning and teaching

3. Model Digital-Age Work and Learning

Teachers exhibit knowledge, skills, and work processes representative of an innovative professional in a global and digital society. Teachers:

   a. demonstrate fluency in technology systems and the transfer of current knowledge to new technologies and situations

   b. collaborate with students, peers, parents, and community members using digital tools and resources to support student success and innovation

   c. communicate relevant information and ideas effectively to students, parents, and peers using a variety of digital-age media and formats

   d. model and facilitate effective use of current and emerging digital tools to locate, analyze, evaluate, and use information resources to support research and learning

4. Promote and Model Digital Citizenship and Responsibility

Teachers understand local and global societal issues and responsibilities in an evolving digital culture and exhibit legal and ethical behavior in their professional practices. Teachers:

   a. advocate, model, and teach safe, legal, and ethical use of digital information and technology, including respect for copyright, intellectual property, and the appropriate documentation of sources

   b. address the diverse needs of all learners by using learner-centered strategies and providing equitable access to appropriate digital tools and resources

   c. promote and model digital etiquette and responsible social interactions related to the use of technology and information

   d. develop and model cultural understanding and global awareness by engaging with colleagues and students of other cultures using digital-age communication and collaboration tools

5. Engage in Professional Growth and Leadership

Teachers continuously improve their professional practice, model lifelong learning, and exhibit leadership in their school and professional community by promoting and demonstrating the effective use of digital tools and resources. Teachers:

   a. participate in local and global learning communities to explore creative applications of technology to improve student learning

   b. exhibit leadership by demonstrating a vision of technology infusion, participating in shared decision making and community building, and developing the leadership and technology skills of others

   c. evaluate and reflect on current research and professional practice on a regular basis to make effective use of existing and emerging digital tools and resources in support of student learning

   d. contribute to the effectiveness, vitality, and self-renewal of the teaching profession and of their school and community

Introduction

Understanding by Design provides a flexible framework for the pragmatic development of online courses. Of all the material we have reviewed, we believe this method best serves our purposes for the thoughtful design of curriculum.

Using a "reverse engineering" approach, we will explore the desired outcomes for your course, and then work backward to create a rich learning experience for your students. Along the way, we'll talk about "understanding" - what it really means and how you'll recognize when your students achieve it.

Credits and Sources

Our primary resource for this method is the 2nd edition of Understanding by Design, written by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe. We've provided a copy in your packet of materials. A workbook is available by the same authors; from this workbook we've chosen a handful of worksheets that we find particularly useful. We've secured reprint permission and included copies in your binder. While the binder as a whole is licensed under Creative Commons - and free for you to share with others simply by giving attribution - the pages from Understanding by Design and the accompanying workbook are copyright protected.

Agree or Disagree?

"Teaching and learning are two sides of the same coin."

Figure 1.1
UbD: Stages of Backward Design

1. Identify desired results.

2. Determine acceptable evidence.

3. Plan learning experiences and instruction.
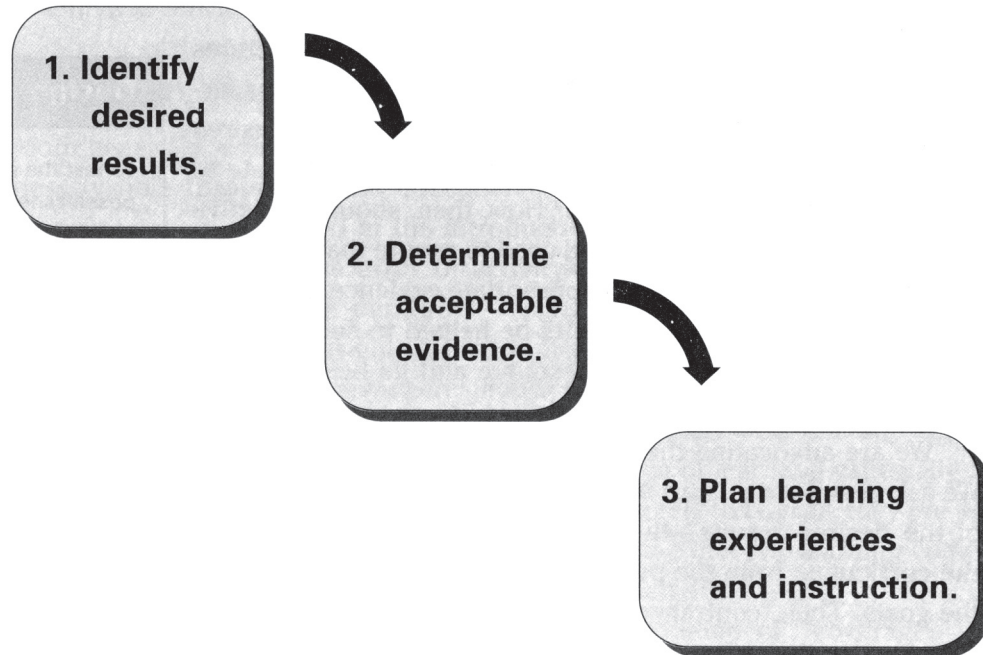
3-Minute Response

What do students want to know when they come to your class?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What do they need to know?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What do students always get stuck on?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Write one thing that students need to understand before they go on to the next level (i.e., the next course in the discipline):

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

A Big Idea . . .

(description)

Provides a "conceptual lens" for prioritizing content.

A Big Idea refers to core concepts, principles, theories, and processes that should serve as the focal point of curricula, instruction, and assessment. Big Ideas reflect expert understanding and anchor the discourse, inquiries, discoveries, and arguments in a field of study. They provide a basis for setting curriculum priorities to focus on the most meaningful content.

Serves as an organizer for connecting important facts, skills, and actions.

Big Ideas function as the "conceptual Velcro" for a topic of study. They connect discrete knowledge and skills to a larger intellectual frame and provide a bridge for linking specific facts and skills. A focus on these larger ideas helps students to see the purpose and relevance of content.

Transfers to other contexts.

Discrete facts do not transfer. Big Ideas are powerful because they embody transferable ideas, applicable to other topics, inquiries, contexts, issues and problems. Because we can never cover all the knowledge on a given topic, a focus on the Big Ideas helps to manage information overload. Big Ideas provide the conceptual throughlines that anchor a coherent curriculum.

\Manifests itself in various ways within disciplines.

Big Ideas are typically revealed through one or more of the following forms: a core concept (e.g., adaptation), a focusing theme (e.g., man's inhumanity to man), an ongoing issue or debate (e.g., conservative vs. liberal), a puzzling paradox (e.g., poverty amidst plenty), an important process (e.g., writing process), an authentic problem or persistent challenge (e.g., illiteracy, voter apathy), an illuminating theory (e.g., Manifest Destiny), an underlying assumption (e.g., the markets are rational) or differing perspectives (e.g., terrorist vs. freedom fighter). Additional examples of these Big-Idea categories are provided on the next several pages.

Requires uncoverage because it is an abstraction.

A Big Idea is inherently abstract. Its meaning is not always obvious to students, and simply covering it (i.e., the teacher or textbook defining it) will not ensure student understanding. "Coverage" is unlikely to cause genuine insight; understanding must be earned. Thus, the idea must be uncovered—its meaning discovered, constructed or inferred by the learners, with the aid of the teacher and well-designed learning experiences.

Clarifying Content Priorities
Statistics, High School or College

Familiar with
- Key figures who contributed to the development of modern statistics (Blaise Pascal and Lewis Terman)
- The history of the bell curve (normal distribution)

K **S**

Important to know and do
- Measures of central tendency: mean, median, mode, range, standard deviation
- Statistical terminology
- Data displays: bar graph, line plot, stem and leaf plot
- Various statistical formulas

U

Big Ideas
- Sampling
- Correlation
- Patterns
- Prediction
- Degrees of confidence

Understandings
- Statistical analysis and data display often reveal patterns. Patterns enable prediction.
- Sometimes sampling is better than counting.
- Correlation does not ensure causality.
- Statistics can lie as well as reveal.

Worth being familiar with

Important to know and do

Big Ideas and Enduring Understandings

Clarifying Content Priorities

Familiar with

K **S**

Important to know and do

U

Big Ideas

Understandings

Worth being familiar with

Important to know and do

Big Ideas and Enduring Understandings

An Enduring Understanding . . .

(description)

Involves the Big Ideas that give meaning and importance to facts.

Enduring understandings are made up of the concepts, principles, and theories that weave many facts into revealing and useful patterns. They involve the (few) organizing priority ideas that enable us to make sense of past lessons, conduct current inquiry, and create new knowledge.

Can transfer to other topics, fields, and adult life.

Such understandings endure in that they enable us to make vital and informative connections in our learning—as students and as adults. For example, the idea that "might does not make right" applies to both playground disputes and international diplomacy.

Is usually not obvious, often counterintuitive, and easily misunderstood.

An understanding is an inference, not a fact. It is an insight derived from inquiry. Key understandings in intellectual fields (e.g., in physics: *Objects remain in motion at a constant velocity if no force acts on them*) often violate common sense and conventional wisdom. They are thus often prone to misunderstanding by students. These understandings therefore cannot be covered; they must be uncovered.

May provide a conceptual foundation for basic skills.

Though skill-based teaching in mathematics, foreign language, and physical education does not seem to deal with "understandings" in most units, all skills derive their value from the strategic principles that help us know when and how to use the skill. The understandings also justify the use of a skill (e.g., the student who can explain why you should use a bent-arm pull in swimming freestyle) and enable the student to extend the use of the skill to new situations (e.g., the use of bent-arm pull in backstroke).

Is deliberately framed as a generalization—the "moral of the story."

An understanding is a generalization derived from inquiry. It is the specific insight that should be inferred from study of the topic (not just the stating of the topic)—what we want the student leaving the study to realize. Note: The enduring understanding of a unit might be that there is no single agreed-upon understanding, or that people disagree about how the issues, facts, text should be understood.

Essential Questions

(description)

Have no simple "right" answer; they are meant to be argued.

Essential Questions yield inquiry and argument—a variety of plausible (and arguable) responses, not straight-forward facts that end the matter. They serve as doorways into focused yet lively inquiry and research. They should *uncover* rather than cover the subject's controversies, puzzles, and perspectives. They are intended to result in conclusions drawn by the learner, not recited facts. For example, Does art reflect culture or help shape it? Can we look but not see? Why do "seers" see what the rest of us don't? Does the artist see more clearly or look elsewhere?

Are designed to provoke and sustain student inquiry, while focusing learning and final performances.

Essential Questions work best when they are designed and edited to be thought provoking to students, engaging them in sustained, focused inquiries that culminate in important performance. Such questions often involve the counterintuitive, the visceral, the whimsical, the controversial, the provocative. For example, Is the Internet dangerous for kids? Are censorship and democracy compatible? Does food that is good for you have to taste bad? Why write? Students develop and deepen their understanding of important ideas as they explore these questions.

Often address the conceptual or philosophical foundations of a discipline.

Essential Questions reflect the most historically important issues, problems, and debates in a field of study. For example, Is history inevitably biased? What is a proof? Nature or nurture? By examining such questions, students are engaged in thinking like an expert.

Raise other important questions.

Thought-provoking Essential Questions are naturally generative. They lead to other important questions within, and sometimes across, subject boundaries. For example, In nature, do only the strong survive? leads to What do we mean by "strong"? Are insects strong (since they are survivors)? What does it mean to be psychologically strong? Inquiries into human biology and the physics of physiology also follow.

Naturally and appropriately recur.

The same important questions are asked and asked again throughout one's learning and in the history of the field. For example, What makes a great book great? Are the Harry Potter novels great books? These questions can be productively examined and reexamined by 1st graders as well as college students. Over time, student responses become more sophisticated, nuanced, well-reasoned and supported as their understandings deepen.

Stimulate vital, ongoing rethinking of big ideas, assumptions, and prior lessons.

Essential questions challenge our unexamined assumptions, the inevitable simplification of our earlier learning, and the arguments we may unthinkingly take for granted. They force us to ask deep questions about the nature, origin, and extent of our understanding. For example, In light of fractions, place value, irrationals, and negative square roots—what is a number? Is it "democratic" to have an electoral college? What IS a friend? Can the enemy of my enemy be my friend? What is a story, if a story has no clear plot or moral? Is history more of a story than a science? What are the implications for studying history, if so?

Activities

Assessments

Evidence

Unit Questions

Essential Questions

Overarching Goals & Characteristics
What differentiates your course from others on the same topic?

One Enduring Understanding

Big Idea

Essential Question

Understanding

Worth Being Familiar With

Important to Know and Do

"Enduring" Understanding

3-5

Assessment
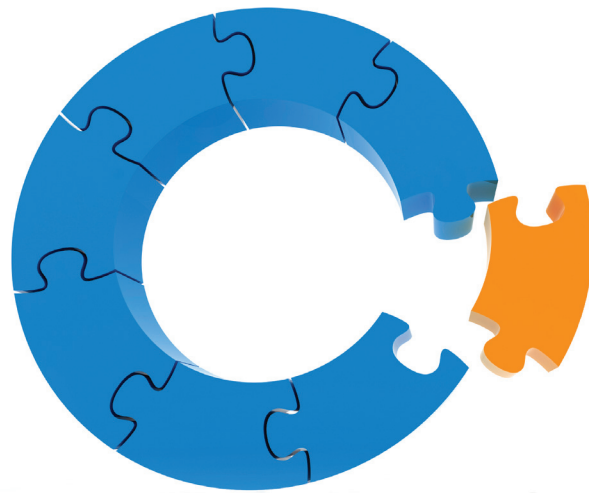
Case Study 1

User:Jbmurray/Madness

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
< User:Jbmurray

> This is an essay; it contains the advice and/or opinions of one or more
> Wikipedia contributors. It is **not** a policy or guideline, and editors are not
> obliged to follow it.
>
> Please update the page as needed, or discuss it on the talk page.

Was introducing Wikipedia to the classroom an act of madness leading only to mayhem if not murder?

Reflections on the use of Wikipedia in the University of British Columbia's course SPAN312, "Murder, Madness, and Mayhem: Latin American Literature in Translation," Spring 2008.

Contents

- 1 Wikipedia: unloved but ubiquitous in academia
- 2 Assignment: to create a featured article
- 3 Initial considerations: the advantages of wikipedia
- 4 Initial considerations: potential pitfalls
- 5 First steps: "our" project begins
- 6 First lesson: "this may be deleted"
- 7 The FA-Team: synergy, good and bad
- 8 Research: and then research again
- 9 Other observations: a professional piece of work
- 10 Pointless? No argument
- 11 Notes

Wikipedia: unloved but ubiquitous in academia

At present, wikipedia hovers at the fringes of academia, like an uninvited guest. Wikipedia's aims are eminently academic, concerned with collecting, processing, storing, and transmitting knowledge. Judging by the number of the site's articles and readers (http://www.alexa.com/data/details/traffic_details/wikipedia.org) , it has been remarkably successful at promoting a culture of intellectual inquiry. Yet it is fairly consistently derided by academics themselves.

Still, everybody uses it, in one way or another, even if they might want not to admit to the fact. Above all, our students use it, openly or otherwise (as they are often explicitly told not to cite wikipedia article in term

papers), but without necessarily knowing how it works. They are told that wikipedia is bad, but they are not often told why; and of course, they find it an incredibly useful resource.

Assignment: to create a featured article

I decided to include wikipedia as a central part of a course I was teaching in the belief that it was only by actively contributing to the encyclopedia that students would learn about its weaknesses, as well as its strengths. And also with the idea that they would thereby, and perhaps rather incidentally, improve articles in a field (Latin American literature) in which in my experience wikipedia has been especially weak.

Wikipedia was to occupy a central part of the course, but it was not to be the centre itself. This was not a course about wikipedia but rather, as with my other courses, its focus would continue to be on Latin America and on the reading of a set number of Latin American literary texts. In this case, a course entitled "Murder, Madness, and Mayhem," these texts were a series of dictator novels, by authors ranging from the nineteenth-century Argentine Domingo Sarmiento to the contemporary stars of Latin American letters, Gabriel García Márquez and Mario Vargas Llosa. These books are neither short nor simple; most of the students' time would be spent reading these hefty tomes, and most of the class time spent explaining and discussing them.

So there was little direct discussion of wikipedia in the classroom. Rather, the assignment was that, in groups, the students should edit (and in a couple of cases create) wikipedia articles on the texts and authors that we were covering, and that over the course of the semester they should bring these articles up to what in wikipedia parlance is called "featured article" status.

When setting that assignment, I had not really comprehended how ambitious it was. Wikipedia defines a "featured article" as an article that "exemplifies [its] very best work and features professional standards of writing and presentation." And its standards are, in fact, impressively high. Indeed, it is a central paradox of wikipedia that its standards are impeccable, even as its actual performance so often lags far behind these standards. To give some indication: fewer than 0.1% of wikipedia's articles are featured articles.

Indeed, as far as I can tell, while wikipedia has been the subject of numerous educational assignments, from universities as far apart as Sydney, Hong Kong, Minnesota, and Leiden, this would be the first time in which students were explicitly asked to create featured articles.

Initial considerations: the advantages of wikipedia

In addition to teaching (somewhat indirectly) students the weaknesses as well as benefits of wikipedia, as well as (perhaps incidentally) improving the encyclopedia's coverage of Latin American issues, there were other, more positive, reasons justifying my choice of assignment.

I liked the idea that students would be engaging in a real world project, with tangible and public, if not necessarily permanent, effects. In the end, an essay or an exam is an instance of busywork: usually written in haste; for one particular reader, the professor; and thereafter discarded.

It is a lamentable fact that, with rare exceptions such as in the Composition classroom, students are seldom motivated to re-read and reflect upon their own work. Indeed, they often scarcely even glance at the comments

professors laboriously write up on their work: understandably given that there is usually by this stage no chance to change things further, they are interested in the grade, and that is it. Students seldom learn about the importance of revision to good writing. And yet on wikipedia, revision is (almost) everything: contributors are called *editors* precisely because their writing is a near-constant state of revision.

Moreover, here they would be contributing to pages that in some instances (the article on Gabriel García Márquez, for instance) received over 60,000 page views per month. Even the least visited articles they were writing receive several hundred monthly visits. Here they would be writing for a public audience, also one that almost uniquely was in a position to write back, to re-write and comment upon what they were writing. Indeed, working on wikipedia had the potential to become a collaborative process: students would have to collaborate not only with each other, but also with fellow editors or wikipedians who they met only on the wiki itself.

Finally, I liked the notion that the grade that they would receive for this assignment would come from outside the class itself; that their work would be judged by its external impact, and not by the professor's personal judgement (however professional that might be). I declared from the outset that a group that turned its article into a "featured article" would receive an A+, no questions asked; and that groups that achieved "good article" status (a lower hurdle, though good articles still account for only about 0.15% of wikipedia's total) would receive an A. The assignment grade, in other words, would be determined by collective, public, peer review.

Initial considerations: potential pitfalls

I have to admit that I had not really considered too many possible pitfalls to the plan. I recognized it was a bit of an experiment, but was happy to give it a go. In any case, this was not the course's sole assignment or method of evaluation: students would also have to write weekly blogs (http://posthegemony.blogspot.com/2008/01/span312.html) on their reading; there was a midterm; and also a final paper.

(Later in fact I dispensed with the final paper, but only after a secret and anonymous ballot among all the students, for which I said that change would only be made if two-thirds of the class agreed; in the end 85% voted in favor of scrapping the final paper and so expanding the role given to wikipedia in the final assessment.)

My one fear was that students might end up in unconstructive and even perhaps discouraging edit wars. An edit war is, in essence, a pushme-pullyou debate between editors who cannot agree as to what should be in an article. Quickly, as elsewhere in online interactions, such disagreements can become bad-tempered and provoke the intervention of wikipedia administrators who may decide to "block" one or both of the offending individuals. I knew this all too well as, in an exploratory foray on wikipedia a few months prior to the class, I had found myself (usually inadvertently) caught up in such wars, and had even once been blocked for a while.

There is always a danger to allowing students to interface directly with the public sphere. And we have a duty of care to them in some way, which is perhaps why so much educational technology (above all WebCT) is sealed off from the "real world." Plus it would hardly be productive were one of my students prevented from continuing his or her assignment thanks to a wikipedia block! I crossed my fingers and hoped that this eventuality would not occur.

First steps: "our" project begins

I was not a complete newbie to wikipedia; indeed, I had made a number of edits and created several articles, though these were mostly what are called "stubs," that is short, preliminary versions of articles. I had not really previously worked in sustained fashion on a wikipedia article. But I felt I more or less knew my way around, and had a sense of wikipedia culture, even though I was (and to be honest often still am) baffled by some of the more arcane technical and procedural details in what is by now a labyrinthine behemoth of an enterprise.

On the other hand, therefore, I felt I could sympathize with the students' likely sense of intimidation at the task before them. Only one or two students had ever edited wikipedia before. Few showed much sign of particular sophistication with web markup and the like, let alone wikipedia's special (albeit simplified) brand of code. I felt I could appreciate their mystification when, having probably for the first time clicked the button marked "edit this page" that is the hallmark of wiki software, they came across a confusing mass of indecipherable squiggles.

To establish some kind of framework, and to seek support, I registered the project at a wikipedia page dedicated to such things, indicated on each article included within the project that it was part of an educational assignment, and constructed a "project page" outlining our goals. I also left messages at various other related wikipedia projects (which are basically groups of wikipedia editors who focus on a particular topic such as literature or South America), even dropped a note at the encyclopedia's in-house newspaper, the Wikipedia Signpost, announced the project in class, asked students to register an account with wikipedia, and more or less sat back and hoped for the best.

You may notice that I have been talking about "our" project and "our" goals. I usually try to use such inclusive language in class: "we" are reading the texts "together"; "we" are trying to figure out how to interpret them. But here the sensation was quite palpable: from quite early on I felt that I was on the line also with this project; and this feeling would only grow stronger in subsequent weeks.

First lesson: "this may be deleted"

Early on in the semester, at a point by which everyone had now been expected to register and begin experimenting with editing, I brought my computer to class and went through some of the basics. Hooked up to a projection unit, I showed the students on the big screen where the "edit" tab was, how to make a minor edit (I changed one word (http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=University_of_British_Columbia&diff=prev&oldid=184559766) on our own university's wikipedia article), and how to make a more major edit (I stubified (http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Great_Northern_Way_Campus&diff=prev&oldid=184561202) the page of an article associated with the university, which was manifestly plagiarized from an external website).

Then one student asked me to show them how to create a new page. Two of the articles they were working on did not exist at the outset, so I created one of them: El Señor Presidente, which started off (http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_President_%28novel%29&oldid=184563569) containing as its sole text "El Señor Presidente is the title of a novel by Miguel Ángel Asturias." I then moved on to some other page, before coming back to the new page just a couple of minutes later... and this was the first lesson. For I

discovered to some embarrassment (and in front of the entire class) that within sixty seconds some other wikipedia editor had already pasted a huge pink banner (http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php? title=The_President_%28novel%29&direction=next&oldid=184563696) on our freshly-minted page that said "This page may meet Wikipedia's criteria for speedy deletion." "The bastards!" I said under my breath, and proceeded hurriedly to change the article's content to "El Señor Presidente is the title of the most important novel by Nobel-prize-winning novelist Miguel Ángel Asturias," anxious that our little project would not be sunk before it had barely begun.

But of course if I had actively wanted to teach the students that editing wikipedia was an exercise in negotiating with an entire community of fellow readers and editors, I could hardly have chosen a better way to do it. I have discovered (since) that for other educational assignments on wikipedia, often students have been encouraged to draft their articles away from the public gaze, and to upload them to the encyclopedia's public pages only once they were ready for general scrutiny. Here everything has been open and exposed from the start. But I don't regret this in the slightest. Indeed, it has allowed, I think, for some of the project's greatest strengths...

The FA-Team: synergy, good and bad

For it was not long before we stumbled across our first, and by far the most important, piece of good luck. Though nothing came of my messages to the various pre-existing wikipedia projects (most of which, as far as I can see, are defunct or, more likely, simply overwhelmed), it so happened that a small group of experienced wikipedia editors had apparently been kicking around ideas as to how best to increase the number of featured articles on the encyclopedia. They were calling themselves the "FA-Team" and they were looking for a project to work on. They found *us*, and wrote to see if we would like any help.

Would we like any help? Absolutely!

The FA-Team divided up the project's articles between themselves, wrote welcome messages on each of the students' user pages (which are personal pages assigned to every registered user of wikipedia, functioning as places where editors can talk directly to each other), and embarked on an ongoing task of encouraging, mentoring, and guiding all of us in the process of editing wikipedia articles to a high standard. These were (and are) a very meticulous, dedicated, and above all generous bunch of people.

And the FA-Team manifested what is, I now realize, the greatest strength (if also perhaps the greatest weakness) of wikipedia: synergy. Wikipedia editors are attracted to activity. Moreover, they are particularly attracted to activity that involves the input of new content to the encyclopedia. A case in point is the flag that I had received upon creating a new page: there is a whole cadre of wikipedia volunteers who keep their eyes tirelessly on page creations, ready to pounce should an inappropriate or unencyclopedic topic be proposed. Anyone can create a page on wikipedia, but if you create one about yourself, your garage band, or your cat, it is likely to be deleted at lightning speed.

Equally, though many (most notably perhaps, the US comedian Stephen Colbert (http://www.powerpage.org/2006/08/stephen_colbert_v_wikipedia.html)) have criticized wikipedia for the fact that anybody can add nonsensical content to any article, they most likely do not realize that there are squads of dedicated wikipedians watching recent changes to the encyclopedia, who will swiftly eliminate patent rubbish.

But the more constructive side to this rapid-response aspect of wikipedia also revealed itself when, within a couple of days of my creating El Señor Presidente, a whole number of other editors had made minor but collectively significant formatting changes. A student then added a snippet of content that they had found on another website. More formatting followed. So that by the very next class, that article now looked (http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_President_%28novel%29&oldid=185101382) like most other wikipedia pages: a little on the short side, rather incomplete, with a couple of half-random internet sources, but informing its reader at least minimally about its topic; and now integrated into the greater wikipedia enterprise.

(I should note that I was not much concerned if the final product of the students' assignment was not "all their own work"; I considered that persuading others to work with them, and working well with others, was an integral part of the operation. Of course, one could imagine somebody cheating in this assignment, as in any other: for instance by paying some third party to write the article for them. But in general, in fact, the wiki software, which tracks each user's contributions, allows for unrivalled transparency as to what students are doing, step by step, and how much, and when.)

In a sense, then, the FA-Team's intervention was not exceptional. It was simply a broader and rather more developed instance of this same principle of synergy, of the fact that the more you add to wikipedia, the more your activity resonates and is developed and multiplied by the activities of others. Yes, there are edit wars; but in my experience these do not on the whole revolve around the addition of new content. We had not simply struck lucky; we'd come across one of the basic principles of the wiki's operation.

The downside of this principle is that where wikipedia is moribund, it stays moribund. Though in theory wikipedia is an endless hive of activity, in practice a glance at the histories of a few pages (all of which are easily available for consultation, at the click of a few more tabs) demonstrates that they are in fact remarkably stable. A bad article remains a bad article for a long, long time. To take a couple of instances from this project of older (and so in fact more important) topics: the entries for Gabriel García Márquez and Mario Vargas Llosa have scarcely moved for years, bar a tweak here and a tweak there. Our job was to change this.

Research: and then research again

This was, then, a research assignment. The students' task was to find what in wikipedia jargon are termed "reliable sources." One of the encyclopedia's fundamental (if, to an academic's ears, peculiarly named) tenets is that there should be "no original research." What is meant by this in fact is that an encyclopedia entry should not be the place to develop an argument. This is the most fundamental difference between a more traditional essay assignment and wikipedia.

As the FA-Team had taken it upon themselves to supervise issues of formatting and procedure, students were freed up to devote themselves to research. Here, however, lay another unexpected pitfall, though it perhaps should not have been so very unexpected as its cause lay at the very heart of the wikipedia assignment. Indeed, the assignment itself was aimed directly at the very problem that has perhaps most stymied it: the fact that students fail sufficiently to evaluate their sources.

For after all, the premise of the project was that students had been using wikipedia as a source without properly considering its drawbacks. So it should have come as no surprise then that when seeking sources for the articles they were writing, again all too often they should make the same mistakes. They would add

information that was unsourced, poorly referenced (and too frequently even plagiarized), or cited from what were often enough merely other webpages and online encyclopedias.

Yet here lay also one of the great benefits of the assignment. Precisely because of wikipedia's injunction (oft-repeated by the various members of the FA-team) that every item in their article had to be referenced, students were forced to reveal their sources. These poor sources came to light in a way that they might well not have were they writing a term paper. Moreover, precisely because writing on wikipedia is a process of continual revision, they could be asked to go back and re-evaluate their sources, find better ones, and try again. Even with plagiarism, there was no longer the need to make a song and dance about it, because at no time were they handing in what purported to be a final product.

In short, the assignment is bringing out the weaknesses in students' research skills, but then those weaknesses are its very presupposition. However, it is also teaching them those skills, teaching them that research (like writing) is a process, often a lengthy one, whereby you might start with suboptimal sources (such indeed as wikipedia itself) but then progress to look for ever better evidence for the information at hand, or for new information that those first sources do not necessarily reveal.

Other observations: a professional piece of work

I'm writing this in what is still the throes of the project. One article, perhaps ironically the very one that I started in class, has passed its first formal, and I should say remarkably stringent, peer review hurdle and so has been named a "good article." My students have therefore already created, and created from scratch, part of Wikipedia's best 0.15% content. Moreover, there are no other Latin American literary works among that 0.15%. So they have contributed what is now the very best Wikipedia article on any work of Latin American literature. They (we?) can be rightly proud.[1]

As far as I am aware, this is the only educational assignment on Wikipedia ever to have directly contributed a "good article."[2]

Of course, not everything has been plain sailing. A couple of the articles have not so far progressed very much at all. The dream of creating twelve new featured articles will remain, most likely, but a dream. (Though imagine: it would mean that the entire class would be awarded an A+ for what is now 40% of the course assessment.) But I am confident that we will emerge with a spate of other good articles (two others are currently up for review), some of which will be nominated at least for featured article status. That *is* a rigorous test; this is far from being an easy option of an assignment just because it takes place on that much reviled beast of a website, Wikipedia. If anything, quite the reverse.

And I am still far from starry-eyed about Wikipedia. Again, imagine an encyclopedia in which only a small fraction of one per cent of the entries are what even its own editors categorize as "good." Other of Wikipedia's weaknesses are also more apparent than ever, and even to some extent replicated within this project: the tendency for what is already moribund to remain that way; and the reliance upon weak sources, often plagiarized.

But in favour of Wikipedia, I should say that I had not previously realized how high its own standards are, how rigorously they are applied, as well as how well its synergistic processes can work... if you are prepared

to contribute your own activity and, above all, do the requisite research to add properly sourced content. Again, I should also mention that we have been very fortunate with the particular individuals that we have come across; though I suspect that that fortune is likely to be encountered by others, too.

As for the assignment, which is again far from over... I'd like to think that it is teaching the students research skills and writing skills in what is very much a real world environment. They were set a medium- to long-term goal at the beginning of the semester, and were required to work collaboratively both within their own groups and with strangers in the public domain to plan how to achieve and deliver that goal. And their final product is to be a professional piece of work that will be viewed by many thousands of people, a resource that is in most cases the first port of call for future researchers, whether students like themselves or any of the many millions from all over the world who visit Wikipedia. Most of these articles are, after all, the top hit (or very close to it) in any internet search of the topic.

By comparison, the usual essays and exams that we assign our students really are rather pointless busywork.

Pointless? No argument

The one skill that this project does *not* teach the students is how to construct an argument. And of course, argumentation, the development of a coherent series of points, the production and defence of a cogent thesis, is indeed at the core of the academic enterprise. I value that skill very highly.

But one could argue that for most of the occupations that most of these students will be entering after they finish their time in academia, argumentation is not in fact so important as it is in the academy itself. Information gathering, presentation, meticulousness, teamwork, and the ability to negotiate with the public sphere are (I hesitate perhaps to admit) much more useful to them.

Moreover, writing wikipedia does instill critical thinking, if not of the variety that is usually most explicitly addressed at university--though perhaps it should be. Wikipedia's editors are endlessly encouraged to think critically about the information that they come across, and also about their own writing and self-presentation.

I worry a little that I have praised this assignment too much. I would do it differently if (when) I do it again. I should certainly admit that I have often felt that it's been something of a high-wire act, in which anything might go wrong at any minute. It still may do so. In which case, I can always go back and edit this text...

Oh, and in the meantime please feel free to help out at Murder, Madness, and Mayhem!

(First draft, March 18, 2008)

Notes

1. **^** On April 10, El Señor Presidente became Wikipedia's 2000th Featured Article. This article will be on Wikipedia's main page on May 5. And by the end of the project, the students had brought two further articles up to Featured standard (Mario Vargas Llosa and The General in His Labyrinth, plus another eight to Good Article standard. The

only other Latin American literary topics at this standard are Mário de Andrade and Jorge Luis Borges (though probably neither of these would make the grade now; it's notable that in fact Wikipedia's standards are steadily rising over time). So we have effected an exponential increase in the number of quality articles about Latin American culture.
   2. ^ See the clarification here.

Retrieved from "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/User:Jbmurray/Madness"
Categories: User essays

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Reflection on Case Study 1

Case Study 2

E Photoshop Spring 08   4/30/08 4:31 PM

CDE Photoshop Spring 08

Center for Distance Education • University of Alaska Fairbanks • Microcomputer Graphics: Photoshop (CIOS F255)

Welcome!

Welcome to the Microcomputer Graphics: Photoshop CS3 Class Blog!

Instructor

Barbara Philleo

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March (73)
February (134)
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Monday, February 25, 2008

Assignment 5 - Mmm, Capitalism.

Why else would the boss pay you?

Given that the objective was to create a composite image using three or more of the five images provided to create something illustrating the old adage "Time is Money," I began with looking at the available images. Inspiration told me that I wanted to use the wall clock and the coins -- keep the circular shape of the clock but have the clock face be half actual clock face and half coins. I needed to use a third image as well, so I decided to add the bill in, since it'd be easy to put that in with the coins on the money half of the image. Having decided this, I got to work.

1) I opened the three images in photoshop. The clock was to be the base of my image. Since the picture of the twenty dollar bill is wider than the picture of the clock and I wanted to be able to have the bill fully visible while I fiddled with things, I used Image > Canvas Size to expand the image without modifying what was present.

1b) When I used Canvas Size to expand the image, I accidentally had a dark green for the added area's color. I undid and changed it to white.

[arbitrary rotation to make 12 o'clock rest where it's generally] the clock.

[ght-clock-on-a-bigger-background to a new layer to play]

[age.]

[ld be prettier if they stood out from the white background a] [ors. (I did this before moving it into the clock image as a] [to worry about applying something to the wrong layer.)]

[pply auto color.]

[ol to saturate the colors and brighten them up -- especially] [bennies. :D]

[dified coinage to the clock picture. (And I'm glad I have the] [dollar bill to play with, too -- the coin picture isn't tall enough to cover all of the clock, and turning it sideways wouldn't work too well 'cause the coins have, in general, an up-down orientation correlating to the up-down orientation of the original picture.)
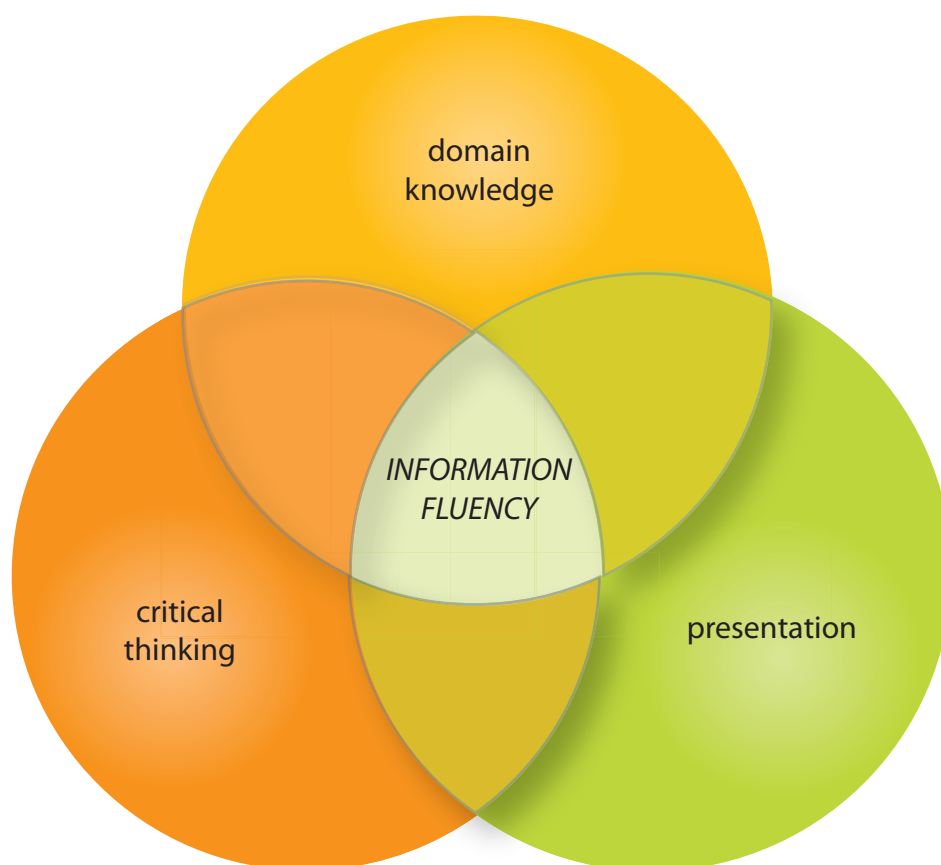
7) The dollar bill also needed a bit of color-fixing, so I did that.

7b) I adjusted the levels so that the details could really be seen.

7c) I tried to use the magic eraser to erase the white areas around the dollar bill, but

Blogger: CDE Photos...8 – Post a Comment

1 Comment   Jump to comment form   Close this window

🅱 **alaskajjc** said...

This is a nice montage and and the pieces used were blended together nicely. It was kept simple compared to some of the others, but get the point across time is money well.

March 2, 2008 7:11 PM

Leave your comment

Reflection on Case Study 1

Digital Fluency Diagram

domain
knowledge

critical
thinking

*INFORMATION
FLUENCY*

presentation

Learning & Assessment Cycle

public

private

locate

explore

think

present

contribute

create (original work)

domain knowledge

critical thinking

presentation w/ feedback

reevaluate

public

private

contribute

presentation
w/ feedback

domain
knowledge

reevaluate

create (original product)

explore

critical
thinking

Agree or Disagree?

"Doing something correctly proves that you understand what you are doing."

1-Minute Response

What is Understanding?

The Six Facets of Understanding

Facet 1—EXPLANATION

Sophisticated and apt explanations and theories that provide knowledgeable and justified accounts of events, actions, and ideas. Why is that so? What explains such events? What accounts for such action? How can we prove it? To what is the action connected? How does this work?

Facet 2—INTERPRETATION

Narratives, translations, metaphors, images, and artistry that provide meaning. What does it mean? Why does it matter? What of it? What does it illustrate or illuminate in human experience? How does it relate to me? What makes sense?

Facet 3—APPLICATION

Ability to use knowledge effectively in new situations and diverse contexts. How and where can we apply this knowledge, skill, process? How should my thinking and action be modified to meet the demands of this particular situation?

Facet 4—PERSPECTIVE

Critical and insightful points of view. From whose point of view? From which vantage point? What is assumed or tacit that needs to be made explicit and considered? What is justified or warranted? Is there adequate evidence? Is it reasonable? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the idea? Is it plausible? What are its limits? What is a novel way to look at this?

Facet 5—EMPATHY

The ability to get inside another person's feelings and worldview. How does it seem to you? What do they see that I don't? What do I need to experience if I am to understand? What was the author, artist or performer feeling, seeing, and trying to make me feel and see?

Facet 6—SELF-KNOWLEDGE

The wisdom to know one's ignorance and how one's patterns of thought and action inform as well as prejudice understanding. How does who I am shape my views? What are the limits of my understanding? What are my blind spots? What am I prone to misunderstand because of prejudice, habit, and style? How do I learn best? What strategies work for me?

Performance Task Ideas Based on the Six Facets of Understanding
Samples by Subject

Topic	Explain	Interpret	Apply	Perspective	Empathy	Self-Knowledge
Social Studies: Pioneer Life	Write letters home describing what pioneer life is *really* like vs. what you expected.	Read and interpret real-life journals and stories of pioneers (e.g., *Sarah Plain and Tall*) to infer from vocabulary and images what life was really like.	Create a museum exhibit in which photos and facsimile artifacts tell the story of the hardships of pioneer life.	Stage a debate between settlers and Native Americans on the effects of western settlement.	Write a letter to relatives "back east" describing the death of pioneer neighbors.	"Why Leave Home?" Write on how you have felt or would feel if you had to leave your home.
Friendship	"Who are your true friends? Who are your fair-weather friends?"	Interpret "Spring" in *Frog and Toad are Friends*. What does this episode reveal about friendship?	Place an order for a "true friend" from an imaginary mail-order friendship store.	How do others view me as a friend?	Write an essay or journal entry on why some kids always get picked on and what it feels like to be those kids.	Respond to writing prompts: "Do I know who my true friends are?"
History: U.S. Revolutionary War	Write a newspaper editorial for a 1777 newspaper: Was the break with England inevitable?	"What really happened at Lexington?" Analyze the texts and information available to make sense of the war's opening (facts vs. opinions).		Read Canadian and French accounts of the Revolutionary War era. Defend or oppose their use as teaching resources at a simulated school board meeting.	Write a series of simulated letters back and forth between relatives in United States and England during the pre-Revolutionary War, war, and postwar eras.	Journal writing: "What would I fight for?"
Mathematics: Conic Sections	Explain how slicing a cone produces all conic sections and justifies their algebraic formulae.	Analyze various data sets to determine the "best-fit" conic section curve.	Design a "whisper chamber" for a science museum under various logistical constraints, using your knowledge of conic sections.	Conduct experiments with flashlights, conic section cut-outs, and shadows to explore how comic sections are formed and how their shapes vary.		
Physics: Electricity	Develop a troubleshooting guide for an electric circuit system.	Assume the role of an electrical subcontractor: Interpret and analyze the wiring drawings for building a house.	Build a working set of switches for a model railroad layout.	AC or DC? Argue the merits of each type of current for various users.	Create an imaginary diary entry: "A day in the life of an electron."	
French	Explain the difference between the various forms of past tense and when they should be and should not be used.	Compare French vs. English versions of *Le Petit Prince* to determine if and how language influences the meaning.	Role-play a conversation over the phone (e.g., planning weekend activities for French visitors to your town).		Develop a guide containing lists of colloquialisms and their translations to help French visitors avoid misunderstandings.	Keep a log of your reactions to French customs.

Performance Task Ideas Based on the Six Facets of Understanding (continued)
Samples by Subject

Topic	Explain	Interpret	Apply	Perspective	Empathy	Self-Knowledge
History and Social Studies	Provide conceptual clarification (e.g., freedom compared to license; meaning of the term "third world").	Develop an oral history on the significance of the 1960s using primary sources, and write a historical biography.	Design a museum exhibit on the causes and effects of early 20th century immigration.	Compare your textbook account to British and French textbook accounts of the Revolutionary War.	Role-play a meeting of the minds (e.g., Truman deciding to drop the atomic bomb).	Self-assess your involvement in class discussions and performances, and explain your patterns of participation.
Mathematics	Study a common phenomenon (e.g., weather data). Reveal subtle and easily overlooked patterns in the data.	Do a trend analysis of a finite data set.	Develop a new statistic for evaluating the value of a baseball player in key situations.	Examine the differences when using various measures (e.g., mean, median) for calculating grades.	Read *Flatland* and a set of letters between mathematicians explaining why they fear publishing their findings; write a reflective essay on the difficulty of explaining new ideas, even abstract ones.	Develop a mathematical resume with a brief description of your intellectual strengths and weaknesses.
English and Language Arts	Describe why a particular rhetorical technique is effective in a speech.	"What's wrong with Holden?" Make sense of the main character in *Catcher in the Rye.*	What makes a great book? Make an audiotape review of a favorite book for the school library.	Read and discuss *The Real Story of the Three Little Pigs* by A. Wolf.	Work in a soup kitchen, and write an essay on the experiences of the homeless after reading Charles Dickens.	Attach a self-assessment to each paper you write reflecting on your writing process.
Arts	Explain the role of silence in music.	Represent fear and hope in a visual collage or dance.	Write and perform a one-act play on a school issue.	Critique three different versions of the same Shakespeare play (focus on a key scene).	Imagine you are Juliet from *Romeo and Juliet,* and consider your terrible, final act. What are you thinking and feeling?	Keep a log of the drama class exercises that demand the most from you emotionally.
Science	Link everyday actions and facts to the laws of physics, concentrating on easily misunderstood aspects (e.g., mass compared to weight).	Take readings of pond water to determine whether the algae problem is serious.	Perform a chemical analysis of local stream water to monitor EPA compliance, and present findings.	Conduct thought experiments (e.g., Einstein's—What would the world be like if I were traveling on a beam of light?	Read and discuss premodern or discredited scientific writings to identify plausible or "logical" theories (given the information available at the time).	Propose solutions to an ineffective cooperative learning activity based on what didn't work in your group.

Case Study 3: DEVM F060

Lesson 1 Assignment:

All problems are Set II exercises. Please complete these problems along with the additional questions on separate paper and submit with a lesson cover sheet. Also submit your Personal Information Sheet with this assignment.

Section 1.1: 4, 10, 14, 18, 22

Section 1.2: 6, 12, 18, 20, 24

Section 1.3: 8, 22, 28, 38, 48

Section 1.4: 10, 16, 30, 42, 46

Section 1.5: 14, 20, 26, 32, 38

Section 1.6: 4, 12, 18, 26, 42

Additional Questions:

1. What concepts, if any, seemed new to you?

2. What concepts were most difficult in this lesson?

3. Which problems would you have liked to have seen more of?

Assessment Map: Brainstorming

Assessment Type	Instructor Effort	Student Effort

Assessment Map:
Your Course

Big Ideas	Assessment Type	Public/Private
Important to Know and Do	**Assessment Type**	**Public/Private**
Worth Being Familiar With	**Assessment Type**	**Public/Private**

Blackboard

Add Assignment Feature

One way to create an assessment is to use the Add Assignment feature in Blackboard Using this features gives the student an easy way to submit assessments that doesn't involve accessing the digital dropbox or relying on an instructor's email. Instructors pose a problem (and attach additional files if necessary) and then gives the student the opportunity to complete the assignment and attached a separate file and send it back to the instructor. There is space available for comments for both instructor and student. An entry in the gradebook is automatically created. Instructors will then grade the assignment from within the gradebook and be able to post a grade and provide feedback all in one place.

1.   Within your Course Content area, select "Assignment" from the Select drop-down menu (right side of window).

    a.   Name the assignment: This is the name that will also appear in the grade center

    b.   Enter the points possible for the item: this will appear in the grade center

    c.   Enter the due date. This will appear in the student's view of the gradebook.

    d.   Enter any instructions for completing the assignment.

    e.   Select available options

    f.   Attach additional files, if necessary. You might be able to give enough information in the instructions area without having to attach additional files.
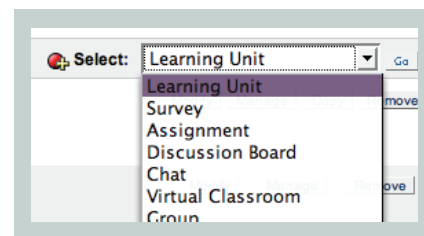
2.   When your students go to submit their assignment, they can make comments about the assignment and then attach their file(s) to complete the assignment. Students are also given the option to save the assignment or submit the assignment. The submit button must be selected in order to send the assignment to the instructor. Once an assignment is submitted it can not be resubmitted unless the instructor clears the attempt (through the gradebook).

3.   Its always a good idea to provide some explanation for your students about how to use the assignment feature for those who may not have used it before. Something like:

> *Complete this assignment by creating a document using [enter software of your choice, i.e., microsoft word or some other word processing program or program related to your course] and be sure to save your file as [.rtf, .doc, or whatever your preference is]. It would also be helpful to me if you include your last name in the file name so*

I don't get the files mixed up. When you have completed the assign-ment and you're ready to submit it, click on the View/Complete link below. Use the "Browse" button to look on your computer for your document and upload it to this online assignment. Share any com-ments you have for me in the "Comments" field. Finally click on the "Submit" button to complete the assignment. The "Save" button will only save it so that you can come back to it at a later time.

4.   Since Add Assignment is tied into the instructor's grade center, the instructor can see when a student submits the assignment when an exclamation point (!) appears in the student's column in the grade center. The instructor can then download the file(s), grade it and send it back with additional feedback to the student. There is also a place to add comments that will only be seen by the instructor or TA and are not seen by the student that stay in the gradebook.

5.   You can review student's assignments one at a time or in a mass download by going to the grade center and by clicking on double-down arrows by the Assignment column header. Then select Assignment File Download and select which files you want to review. What will happen now is that Blackboard will create a zipped file (from all the separate student files) that you'll download to your desktop. The original files will always re-main on the Blackboard server. Save this zipped file to your desktop and then double-click on it to open it. It will create a new folder with all the separated files listed inside of it. (Comments made by the student will also appear in this folder as separate text files). When the assignment has been graded, the student can go back into the As-signment, review the assigned grade and see the Instructor's feedback or access the feedback through their gradebook.
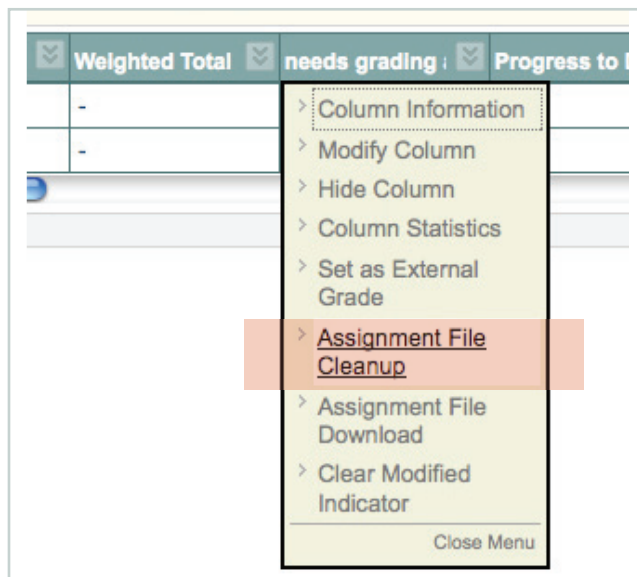
Creating Tests / Quizzes / Surveys

There are two types of assessments to create in Blackboard:

Survey: The survey option creates assessments that record answers anonymously. Use this when you want to perform opinion polls or course evaluations. Survey results are non-graded and anonymous.

Quiz/Test: In the quiz/test option, you can assign point values to each question. Student answers can be submitted for grading, and the results are recorded under each student entry in the gradebook.

1. Log into Blackboard.

2. Go to your course area.

3. Go to your Control Panel.

4. Click Test Manager or Survey Manger under Assessments. For this example we'll select Test Manager. Notice that you are able to click on the yellow triangles on the columns to have alternative sorting options.

5. You will see Add Test on the left side Click here and you will be presented with the a new test screen.

6. Enter a name and description for your assessment. Note that the description is what will show up in both the content area and when a student enters the assessment. The Instructions will only show when a student enters the assessment.

7. Click the Submit button.

8. The next screen asks you about the type of question you wish to ask your student. Click the down arrow in the text box to see what question types are available.

9. The link called Creation Settings gives you options for your test questions. Things like including images, files or external links to questions or answers, specifying random ordering of answers, and specifying partial credit for answers are examples.

10. Choose your question type and Click the Go button. Questions types include:

   - Calculated Formula Questions

   A Calculated Formula question contains a formula, the variables of which can be set to change for each user. The variable range is created by specifying a minimum value and a maximum value for each variable. Answer sets are randomly generated. The correct answer can be a specific value or a range of values. Partial credit may be granted for answers falling in a range.

   - Calculated Numeric Response Questions

   This question resembles a fill-in-the-blank question. The user enters a number to complete a statement. The correct answer can be a specific number or within a range of numbers.

- File response questions

Users upload a file as the answer to the question. This type of question is graded manually.

- Hot spot questions

Users indicate the answer by marking a specific point on an image. A range of pixel coordinates is used to define the correct answer. Hot Spot refers to the area of an image that, when selected, yields a correct answer.

- Fill in Multiple Blank Questions

This question type builds on fill-in-the-blank questions with multiple fill in the blank responses that can be inserted into a sentence or paragraph. Separate sets of answers are defined for each blank.

- Jumbled Sentence Questions

Users are shown a sentence with a few parts of the sentence as variables. The user selects the proper answer for each variable from drop-down lists to assemble the sentence. Only one set of answers is used for all of the drop-down lists.

- Opinion Scale / Likert Questions

Question type based on a rating scale designed to measure attitudes or reactions. Users indicate the multiple choice answer that represents their attitude or reaction. When the instructor creates an opinion scale question, six answer fields are pre-populated with the following answers: Strongly Agree/Agree/Neither Agree nor Disagree/Disagree/Strongly Disagree/Not Applicable

- Short Answer Questions

Short Answer questions are similar to essay questions. The length of the answer can be limited to a specified number of rows in the text box. The number of rows is meant as a guideline when entering an answer, it does not impose an absolute limit on answer length

- Either/Or questions

Users are presented with a statement and asked to respond using a selection of pre-defined two-choice answers, such as: Yes/No, Agree/Disagree, or Right/Wrong

- Quiz Bowl Questions

The user is shown the answer and responds by entering the correct question into a text box. An answer must include a phrase and a question word, such as

who, what, or where, to be marked as correct. Partial credit may be given if the question word is not included in the answer.

11. The type of text boxes you get next will depend on your question type.

12. Enter the information for your question.

13. In the response boxes, you can enter information that will be displayed after the student submits his/her answers, such as on which page of the text to find the correct answer or other feedback information.

14. Use Add New Question to add another question to your assessment or Click on OK to complete the assessment.

15. When you are ready to place the assessment within your content area, click on the Add Test link in the Blackboard menu bar. This gives you the opportunity to either create a new assessment or to make a selection from the assessments that you have already created. Click OK

16. You then have the option to Modify the Test or to Modify the Test Options. If you need to make changes to test questions, select the first option. If you're ready to make the test available for students then select Modify the Test Options. Here you will be presented with the opportunity to determine how many attempts at the test the students will have, you can set a timer or a password for security purposes, and you'll be able to define how feedback will be shown. Other options include making the quiz available, dates of availability, whether you want to make an announcement (so it will show up in the Announcements list when students log on), where to place the link, and various other options.

17. Make your selections.

18. Click the Submit button.

Creating Assessment Questions for

Instructors may import files containing questions into an Assessment or question pool.

Files for Test Manager

Follow the instructions below for uploading questions into Tests. The formatting for importing into Question Pools is different. The questions in the uploaded file must match the file structure explained below. The file may include Essay, Ordering, Matching, Fill in the Blank, Multiple Choice, Multiple Answer, and True/False questions. There is also an online Test Generator available at http://www.byui.edu/onlinelearning/employees/testgen/index.htm that you might find much easier to use.

Note

Many textbook publishers create test banks that are ready for uploading to blackboard. This might be an excellent resource for you and save you time. But please remember to review the file for bad questions and other errors.

The following information is important to note when importing Assessment questions:

- Once uploaded, questions can be manipulated like other questions created within the Assessment.

- If there is an error in a question within a file, only the question with an error will fail to upload. Questions without errors will upload successfully.

- The system does not check for duplicate questions. It is up to the Instructor to manage this aspect of the Assessment questions.

- You need to have your formatted questions ready to go before importing them.

All files must be saved as .txt (text) or .rtf (rich-text) file. Do not save as a MS-Word (.doc) or WordPerfect (.wpd) document. You may find that using excel to create your file works well too.

Test Manager

Create a new assessment or survey. Give it a title and enter the description and instructions in the appropriate boxes. From the Add dropdown box, select upload questions and then select GO.

Browse to the file containing questions to import. All of the correctly formatted questions in this file will be added to the Assessment.

Select a point value for each question. When questions are imported they automatically default to the point value set in Creation Settings. If a default value has not been chosen in Creation Settings questions will automatically have a point value of 'o' and Instructors must then enter a point value for each question.

File Structure for Uploading Questions

Questions in the file must conform to a specific structure to be uploaded to an Assessment successfully. Each field in the file is separated by a tab. Each row is a separate question.

Multiple Choice Questions are Structured as Follows:

'MC' TAB question text (TAB answer text TAB 'correct' or 'incorrect')

- Text within () may be repeated for each of the answers that are part of the Multiple Choice question. The maximum number of answers is 20.

Multiple Answer Questions are Structured as Follows:

'MA' TAB question text (TAB answer text TAB 'correct' or 'incorrect')

- Text within () may be repeated for each of the answers that are part of the Multiple Answer question. The maximum number of answers is 20.

True/False Questions are Structured as Follows:

'TF' TAB question text TAB 'true' or 'false'

Essay Questions are Structured as Follows:

◇	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	ESS	Write a response of no more than 500 words, using what you have learned in class.				
2						
3						

'ESS' TAB question text TAB [example]

Text within [] is optional. The Instructor may choose to add a sample essay question or leave this blank.

Ordering Questions are Structured as Follows:

◇	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	ORD	Put the following famous battles in order of occurance.	Battle of Hastings	Battle of Yorktown	Gettysburg	Battle of the Somme	D-Day
2							
3							

'ORD' TAB question text (TAB answer text)

- Text within () may be repeated for each of the answers that are part of the Ordering question. The maximum number of answers is 20.
- The order entered in the file is the correct order. The system will randomly order the answers.
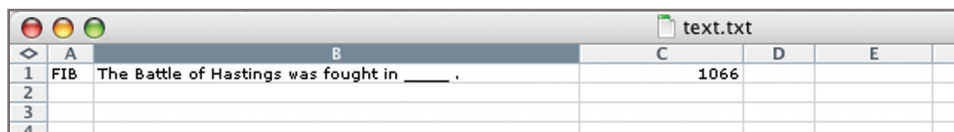
Matching Questions are Structured as Follows:

◇	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	MAT	Match the famous battles and the year they were fought.	Battle of Hastings	1066	Gettysburg	1863	Battle of the Somme	1917
2								
3								
4								

'MAT' TAB question text (TAB answer text TAB matching text)

- Text within () may be repeated for each of the answers that are part of the Matching question. The maximum number of answers is 20.
- The system will randomly order the answers and their question.
- When uploading a matching question, there must be a one-to-one relationship between questions and answers. If not, correct answers may be marked incorrect if more than one answer has the same value.

Fill in the Blank Questions are Structured as Follows:

	A	B	C	D	E
			text.txt		
1	FIB	The Battle of Hastings was fought in _____ .	1066		
2					
3					
4					

'FIB' TAB question text (TAB answer text)

Text within () may be repeated for each of the answers that are part of the Fill in the Blank question. The maximum number of answers is 20.

Files for Question Pools

The formatting for importing questions into a Question Pool is different from formatting for uploading into a test. A special packaging format is required. The easiest way to create a file is to use an online generator like http://www.csi.edu/blackboard/bbquiz/ or software like Respondus (http://www.respondus.com/). As for tests, publishers may have packaged pool questions ready for importing.

Creating An Assessment From

A test is a series of questions an instructor presents to students. The purpose of the test can be to evaluate concepts, provide drill, or practice exercises. Student answers can be submitted for grading, and the results are recorded under each student entry in the gradebook.

Step 1: Click on the Test Manager link in Assessment area of Control Panel.

Assessment	
Test Manager	Gradebook
Survey Manager	Gradebook Views
Pool Manager	Course Statistics

Step 2: Click the **Add** [Add Test] **Test** icon.

Step 3: Type the Name of the Test and a description. When finished click submit

Name:

Enter the name of the Test This title should be as clear as possible

Description:

Enter the description of the test.
The students will see the description under the link to the quiz after you make the quiz available.

Step 4: Type in the instructions. When finished click submit

Instructions:

The instructions should be **concise and clear**. This is what the **student will see** when they take the test

Step 5: Choose either random block (Step 6A) or From a question pool or Assessment (Step 6B) and click go

Add Question: Multiple Choice GO

Multiple Choice
True/False
Multiple Answer
Ordering
Matching
Fill in the Blank
Essay
Random Block
From a Question Pool or Assessment

Step 6A: Random Block

    Step A: Choose Test/Pool

Search the pools and assessments below:

x (10)
x (10)
rsp_exam_3f5f2085 (15)

    Step B: Choose type of questions

Search the pools below:

☑ ALL   ☐ True/False
☐ Multiple Choice   ☐ Matching
☐ Multiple Answer   ☐ Ordering
☐ Fill in the Blank   ☐ Essay

    Step C: Enter number of questions to use

Step D: Enter the point per question

Number of questions to import: 1

Step E: Click Import

Points per question: 0

Step 6B: From a Question Pool or Assessment

Step A: Choose Test/Pool

Search the pools and assessments below:
x (10)
x (10)
rsp_exam_3f5f2085 (15)

Step B: Choose type of questions

Step C: Click Search

Step D: **Check the questions you want to use

☑ Multiple Choice   Who do you phon

Step E: Click Submit

Step F: Repeat steps 1-6 for each pool/test and/or page.

Note: Instructors may select 20 questions at a time from a pool or another assessment to add to a test. If more the 20 questions are found during the search (multiple pages), instructors may only select and submit questions from one page at a time.

Lesson # _____   Topic _____

Introduction	*key off your unit questions on the UBD tree worksheet*
Objectives	*summary of "evidence" on your UBD tree worksheet*
Reading Assignment	
Lecture Material or Course Content	
Learning Activity	*transfer from your UBD tree worksheet*
Self-Assessment	
Additional Resources	
Reflection/Journaling	
Assignment *(submitted for grading and feedback)*	*transfer from your UBD tree worksheet*

Announcements

- Pending deadlines, current event notifications, FAQ of the week, etc.

Syllabus (or Course Information)

1. Syllabus
2. Welcome letter
3. Administrative Policies
4. Academic Integrity Policy

Staff Information

- Contact information
- Response time
- Office hours
- Personal bio, if you wish

Assignments (or Materials)

- Module 1 (or Lesson 1)
  - Brief overview of the lesson
  - Lesson objectives
  - Reading assignment
  - Lecture material or course content
  - Learning activity
  - Self-Assessment
  - Additional resources/Debrief Statement
  - Reflection/Journaling
  - Assignment (for assessment of module completion)
- Exams

Gradebook (My Grades)

- Direct link for student access to their gradebook

Books (optional—could be included in Syllabus area)

Discussion Board

- Weekly topics
  - Threads started by instructor
- Student questions
  - Allow new threads
  - Consider allowing anonymous posts
- Archived FAQ
- Student Lounge
  - Allow new threads
  - Informal, un-moderated area

Elive!

- If you have Elive! sessions schedule add a direct link, if applicable

External Links

- Web addresses with additional, relevant information
- Plug-ins needed in the course

The following two areas come as default links in Blackboard and should be reviewed for applicable uses in your class.

Communication

- Disable those features you won't be using

Tools

- Disable those features you won't be using
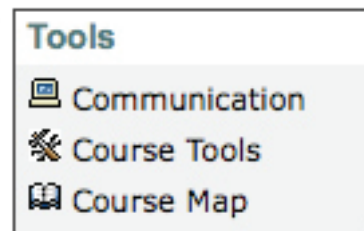
Blackboard Suggestions

CDE is developing a suite of recommendations regarding structure of Blackboard classes and materials intended to provide a positive and consistent student experience. Following are some of the core principles.

1. Disable/hide sections and tools that are not being used in your class.

2. Use the Course Information section for "meta" information about the course: syllabus, schedule, course policies

3. Include the Instructor Information section and provide full contact information

4. Images for Instructor area should be limited to 150 x 150 pixels in the jpg format and optimized for web delivery.

5. Course banner may be added to further customize course site. Banners should be no larger than 200 x 600 pixels and optimized for web delivery.

6. Course information should include an overall course "map" that lays out learning units and due dates (or suggested dates for completion)

7. Gather learning units and assessments in one section, commonly Course Materials, though this might be customized and named Assignments or Materials, etc.

8. Course materials should be "chunked" into Learning Modules or Lessons using a nested folder structure rather than a flat listing, and unit folders should be arranged chronologically (or reverse)

9. Individual Learning Units should include as many of the following as applicable/reasonable (avoid "Read the text, take a test" style units):

    a. Unit Objectives

    b. Reading Assignment

    c. Lecture Material (class notes, etc.)

    d. Activity

    e. Reflection

    f. Self-Assessment

10. Lecture materials should include short (1-250 words) materials "in-line" on the page rather than all links to external documents (think about students downloading!)

11. If possible, linked documents should be in a commonly accessible format: HTML, PDF, RTF, GIF, JPG, SWF always keeping bandwidth limitations in mind

12. Use of other formats (DOC, DOCX, PPT, MOV, MP3) should be supported with clear instructions on obtaining proper viewing software.

13. Instructors are encouraged to take advantage of publicly provided Learning Objects and external links and resources to enrich course materials.

14. External links and resources should be logically associated with discrete curriculum and/or categorized and given context with a clear direction to get student's back to the blackboard site. Its a good idea to have links show up in a new window (or tab) of the browsers.

Web Materials That Work

The Right Format

The right format for any document will be that which can be read by all of your students while still presenting the information accurately. Plain text is perhaps the most widely accessible, but you often lose important formatting and layout. Following are points discussing the most useful document types for web education.

HTML/Web Documents

HTML documents will naturally be accessible to all students. You don't have to be a web developer or know HTML to create HTML documents! Just use the Save As or Save for the Web functions in your software.

PDF Documents

The Adobe PDF format is a widely used and accessible format. As members of the UAF community, you have access to the full Adobe Acrobat program[1], which lets you create PDF files from applications, web pages, or by scanning existing print documents. PDF documents can be single-page, multi-page[2], or even an aggregate of various files[3] already in PDF format. The important points are to try to keep the file sizes reasonable[4] and make sure you provide students with a link to the free Acrobat Viewer[5] in case they don't yet have it.

Office Documents

Distributing Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Excel files can be a useful means of exchange as long as your students can view them! Students are not part of the UAF site license for Office. They must understand they will need to own the software, use a lab, or install the appropriate viewer[6], using links you can provide.

Standard Graphics Files

If you use Photoshop, Corel Draw, or other graphics programs to create materials, be sure to provide the material in an accessible file format. By far, the most accessible will be GIF or JPEG images. If you are targeting other graphics software users, TIFF or PNG are the standards. Try to avoid the less standard BMP, WMF, and PICT platform-specific types. Windows XP, VISTA, and Mac OS X have built-in viewers that can handle most file types, otherwise there are free webtools that can open almost any graphic file.

Presenting Sequential Materials in Blackboard

Multiple Individually Linked Documents

The most common model used in Blackboard courses is to upload a series of documents one at a time into the selected course area. While this method is perhaps the most straightforward, it is also the least usable for students because it demands a lot of navigation from content to index and back, making your material appear disconnected.

Multiple Linked Documents

A more compact method is to load the first document, then modify that entry and continue adding further pages to it. However, this really only helps cosmetically— making the index of a folder of documents more compact and making it clear that a series of documents are linked together—but does little to improve the student experience.

Linked Module

An under used feature of Blackboard is the ability to import an entire "module" of linked documents at one time. If you are handy with constructing web pages or other documents that have their own internal navigation, you can put the whole series into a folder, compress them into a ZIP file, and then load them in as a single Blackboard unit. Blackboard will give you the option to choose which document the students should start with. This is a particularly useful feature if you are using similar materials in another context, and it greatly improves the student experience by making the material more cohesive. However, you will have to create some kind of navigation within your documents themselves, which can be time consuming.

Blackboard Learning Unit

Blackboard has its own facility for creating a sequential series of instruction called a Learning Unit. By creating a learning unit and then adding a series of documents, links, and files, you can create a structured curriculum path without having to create the internal navigation yourself. In this model, you can control whether the student must access the material sequentially (as we have in the sample) or if they can jump around using the Contents button available in the learning unit.

A Blackboard Scavenger Hunt

The Blackboard Learning system can be a valuable addition to any class, but to be effective students must know how to use it! Take some of the drudgery out of the process by allowing students to discover by doing—in this case by utilizing a simple, but effective, Blackboard Scavenger Hunt.

Learning Objectives

Students familiarize themselves with the following primary Blackboard tools/areas:

- Announcements
- Course Information area and Course Documents (content) area
- Discussion Boards
- Assessments

Students demonstrate their mastery by completing a brief Blackboard assessment.

Format/Process

1.   Place "items" in appropriate locations in your Blackboard course in various formats (items should be similar format to regular class materials) for example:

- in a Blackboard Announcement
- in a document in the Course Information area
- in a folder within the course documents section
- in the class syllabus
- in a discussion board posting
- in a document passed to the student using the Digital Drop Box

2.   Create a short, point-bearing Blackboard quiz asking for the items they found

3.   Create a handout (paper, Word, or PDFext) outlining the Scavenger Hunt items, tips on locations, and a place to note answers. Don't forget to indicate where they go in your course to take the quiz. Provide the handout to students as early as possible, preferably before asking students to use Blackboard to access course curriculum.

4.   Finally, students will complete the quiz using the items they have found.

More Resources

For more information on using scavenger hunts on Blackboard refer to this article: http://jolt.merlot.org/Vol2_No2_Jones.htm.

Blackboard Resources

Getting Help

Blackboard Support

UAF: http://www.alaska.edu/oit/training/blackboard/index.xml

http://www.alaska.edu/oit/training/Documentation.xml#blackboard

helpdesk@alaska.edu or call 907-450-8300 or Toll Free (800) 478-8226

CDE Student Tutorials
http://distance.uaf.edu/archives/students/substudents/getting-help-1.php

External Resources

Blackboard Support Center
https://behind.blackboard.com/s/faculty/

Blackboard and Course Cartridges
http://cartridgecatalog.blackboard.com

Blackboard Faculty Users Listser
http://www6.miami.edu/bb/bbfs/

BYU-Idaho Blackboard Test Generator (Tests)
http://www.byui.edu/onlinelearning/employees/testgen/index.htm

College of Southern Idaho Blackboard Quiz Generator (Pools)
http://www.csi.edu/blackboard/bbquiz/

Getting Started with Blackboard and other Quick Guides
http://www.itd.depaul.edu/website/documentation

Online Course Quality

Quality Matters

In 2003, a consortium of Maryland colleges and universities (MarylandOnline) received a FIPSE grant to study the features that indicate quality in an online course. They initiated a peer-evaluation process, and ultimately developed a set of criteria based in research literature. They adopted the name "Quality Matters" for their project and the resulting documentation.

The three-year grant ended in Fall 2006. The Quality Matters program continued and expanded beyond the scope of the original grant. Quality Matters now offers institutional subscriptions as well as a variety of fee-based services. The institutional subscription allows partnering universities and colleges to become part of their network, attend training opportunities, and participate in the peer review of courses.

The original materials authored under grant funding are in public domain. They may be accessed from the Quality Matters web site:

http://www.qualitymatters.org/FIPSE.htm

With their permission, we've included a copy of the Research Matrix here in your binder. This document provides an excellent research base for many of the course design elements we recommend in our checklist.

Course Design Rubric

Our own, internal rubric was developed as a team effort among local instructional designers and consultants. It is available on the CDE web site:

http://distance.uaf.edu/archives/research/subresearch/course-quality.php

Course Development Checklist

More recently, we developed a checklist of course design elements. We use this checklist as a communication tool between instructional designers and course developers. In the creation of this tool, we reviewed similar documents from other post-secondary institutions. We borrowed ideas from many places, but most heavily from St. Petersburg College in Florida: http://www.spjc.edu/

A copy of the CDE Course Development Checklist is included in the following pages.

CENTER FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS ● COLLEGE OF RURAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

2175 University Avenue Suite 200 ┃ PO Box 756700 ┃ Fairbanks, AK 99775-6700
p. 907.479.3444 or 800.277.8060 ┃ f. 907.479.3443 ┃ distance@uaf.edu ┃ distance.uaf.edu

COURSE DEVELOPMENT or REVISION

Course Information
Developer Name:
Contract Fee to be Paid for Development:
Course Title:
Course Number/Credit Hours:
Number of Graded Elements in the Course:
Design Meeting Date:

COURSE DESIGN	Initials of Instructor	Initials of Designer
I. Welcome		
Instructor welcomes students to the course. ___**in announcement** ___**in welcome letter** ___**other location:** * Letter includes contact info, explanation of making contact exercise and required first assignment, expected deadlines, explanation of early withdrawal, pre-req check.		
Instructor provides clear directions for getting started. ___**in announcement** ___**in welcome letter** ___**other location:** _____		
A mechanism is in place for instructor to check pre-requisites if not done automatically by banner.		
II. Syllabus		

Syllabus includes required elements specified by UAF policy:
___**course title, number, credits, prerequisites**
___**instructor name, office hours, telephone, e-mail**
___**complete list of course materials**
___**course description**
___**course goals and student learning outcomes**
___**description of instructional methods**
___**course schedule and/or pacing expectations**
___**course policies, including participation, late work**
___**address plagiarism and academic integrity for course**
___**grading policies**
   ___**Explanation of NB policy, Incomplete requirements (semester-based only) and Instructor withdrawal policy**
   ___**response time on returning lessons**
___**information on support services**
___**information on disability services**		

Syllabus includes a list of technical requirements (e.g., connection speed, hardware, software) and a list of expected technical competencies (e.g., e-mail or word processing).		
◆ Regularly scheduled office hours (by phone, audio conference, elive, IM, etc.	*(recommended)*	
◆ Instructor provides brief biographical information and photo.	*(recommended)*	
III. Course Content		
Each lesson or module provides: __learning objectives __introduction to the material __clear directions __learning activities __instructor insights (e.g., lecture notes) __clearly defined assignments		
Making Contact Assignment (due within first two weeks) (online only)		
First Content Assignment (due within first three weeks) (onine only)		
Lecture Notes are sequenced and "chunked" to improve usability.		
All links are currently functioning. Date evaluated:		
Material has been checked for spelling and grammar. Date evaluated:		
Learning activities are varied and target multiple learning styles. Please list examples:		
Textbooks and required materials are listed. Where are they listed? Have the adopted titles been provided to the Bookstore?		
Course abides by copyright and fair use laws. Have reprint requests been submitted to the Bookstore?		
◆ Additional resources are provided for students who want more information.	*(recommended)*	

IV. Interaction and Collaboration		
Expected student participation levels are clearly defined. What are they and where are they listed?		
Instructor response time is clearly defined for the students. What is it and where is it listed? Through what channel will assignment feedback be given?		
Identify the Communication/Collaboration/Interaction tools used in this course: Discussion Elluminate Chat Email Student Presentations Blog Peer Evaluations Wiki Role Playing Other (Please specify) **Explicit instructions for using communication tools are explained?**		
◆ **Group projects/activities are assigned to students.**	*(recommended)*	
◆ **Students are introduced to the professional community of practice.**	*(recommended)*	

V. Assessment		
Assignments encourage students to work at higher level of Bloom's Taxonomy or target multiple Facets of Understanding. Please cite examples:		
Assignments include a variety of performance types. Please provide examples:		
Assignments are clearly communicated with expectations, including deliverables, due dates, and instructions for submitting. Where are they listed?		
Rubrics or examples are provided to clarify expectations and to explain grading criteria.		
Students are encouraged to reflect on their learning. Please explain:		
A mechanism is in place for instructor to provide specific, detailed feedback to students on each lesson. Please explain:		
Exams correspond with the stated learning objectives for the course. (Not all courses use exams for assessment. If exams will be used, they must match course content and goals.)		
◆ **Students are encouraged to utilize self-assessment materials.**	*(recommended)*	

Please explain:	

VI. Learner Support		
Appropriate instructor contact information is provided. (Providing an e-mail address is strongly suggested.)		
Graded lesson (and exam if different) turnaround time is explicit.		
Access to OIT Helpdesk and/or CDE Student Services is clearly defined.		
Access to UAF resources is clearly defined (e.g., library, tutoring services, labs).		
Required tools such as plug-ins and players are clearly defined and links are provided for acquiring those tools. **Please list required tools and location of information:**		
For online courses, a gradebook is available for students to check their progress.		
A mechanism is in place for instructor to contact students who are falling behind. **Please explain:**		
Role of CDE Student Services is clearly defined. **Please list (e.g., mail welcome letter, proctor exams):**		

VII. Additional Comments

Step Two of the review process is to list deficiencies and make a plan for correcting them.

ACTION ITEMS	Initials of Instructor	Initials of Designer
I. Critical Revisions **(Course will not be opened for enrollment until these items are addressed)**		
List all necessary corrections. **Note who will make each revision (instructor or instructional designer) and the deadline for completion.**		
II. Non-Critical Revisions **(These items are strongly recommended, but will not delay course opening)**		
List recommended course enhancements and give a target date for implementing the improvements.		

III. Follow-up		
The date of our next meeting is:		

Signatures of the Design/Development Team:

_____   _____
Instructional Designer/Date   Instructor/Developer/Date

Reviewed by:

_____
Course Manager/Date

Learning Activities

Comparative Essay

"For this assignment you need to read Joseph Marshall's The Journey of Crazy Horse: A Lokota History and watch the 1993 film Geronimo directed by Walter Hill. Write a three to four page essay (typed and double-spaced) that compares and contrasts the main themes presented in both. What questions or issues do the author and director raise in their works? What purposes do you think they had for either writing the book or making the film respectively? Are these purposes achieved? Are there flaws or weaknesses in either of these works? Finally, can film serve as an effective medium for historical discourse?"

[Writing an essay is an assignment which can be assessed, but watching the video and reading the book are activities… which demonstrates the integration of activities and assessments]

Peer Critique
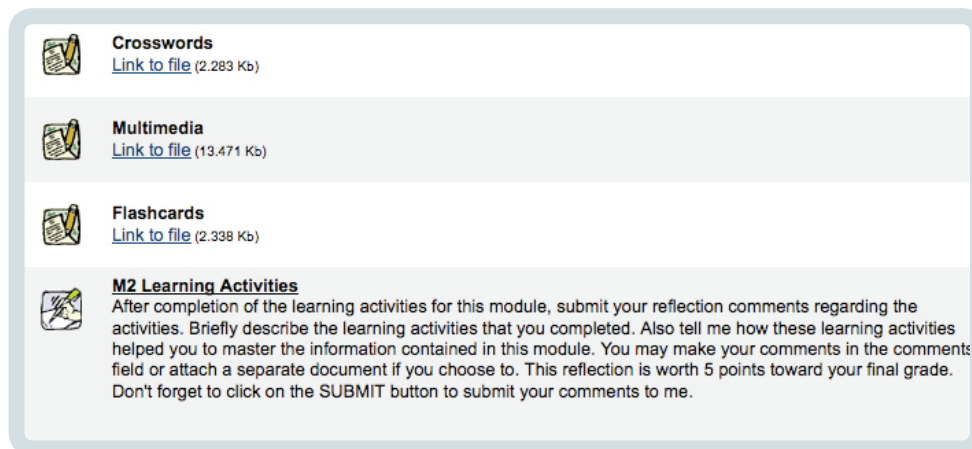
In this course, 30% of the course grade is based on student participation in an online photo sharing site (Flickr). Students are required to take a minimum of 25–50 photos per week. Of those photos, they select an average of fifteen to post on Flickr. Of the fifteen, they select 2-3 of their BEST shots for the week and add them to the class pool on Flickr. This consolidates the class' self-determined best work into one location and makes it convenient for class members to view the work of their peers.

As an integral part of the Flickr participation grade, students post constructive comments for their classmates. This method of public participation and peer review accomplishes several purposes:

- It requires the student to self-assess and select their own best work

- It raises the bar for performance quality by displaying student work to a larger audience (beyond the classroom)

- It gives opportunity for students to draw inspiration from classmates' photos

- Flickr displays camera settings (shutter speed, aperature, ISO), which helps answer the question "how did they do that?"

- It requires students to think critically about the work of others, and to articu-

late what they like or dislike about the work

- It increases the quantity of feedback the student receives. Students receive feedback from other students and from the general public, as well as from the instructor.

Reflection Activities

A variety of publisher created activities are made available for students to use as study aids. In this activity the student gets to choose between these activities or try them all. A written reflective response is submitted to the instructor. The instructor is looking to see how the student used the activity and if the student felt it was helpful.

Examples of student responses:

"I completed the crossword and the flashcards, both of which I felt helped me. I cheated a little bit on the crossword but it was still fun learning which I really enjoy. The flash cards were straight up and they helped me because I have a hard time with memory. I really enjoyed both of those activities and will probably go back and do the other just for the fun of it. Thank you."

"Hello, I completed the crossword puzzle. It was difficult but fun at the same time. This method of learning is great. Doing this crossword was challenging in the definitions of the text, but I picked up more than if I had just read the definitions and answered questions about them. I enjoy doing different assignments like these, they make the information stick in your brain a little better."

"As an audio learner, the Flash Cards are my favorite tool of the three on this section. One has the benefit on downloading the MP3 for continuing study away from this PC. This is great as I'm still chewing on the material."

Sample Reflection Questions for other types of Reflection

- After completing this lesson, what questions do you have or want to investigate further?

- Are you experiencing any challenges with key course activities: (discussion board, group work, etc.)

- How difficult did you find this lesson material in relation to the other lessons?

- Which concept caused the most difficulty for you in this lesson?

- Which concept did you find the easiest?

- Which topic did you find the most interesting?

- Which topic do you think applies the most to your life? (Which are you most likely to use?)

- It would be helpful to me if there were more example problems about:

- Please let me know if you feel you are "on track" for finishing the course on schedule. If you would like reminders, example problems, or additional assistance, this is your chance to ask for guidance. Let me know how I can help you succeed in the course!

- Write a one-sentence summary of this week's most important topic.

- What was this lesson's "muddiest moment" for you?

- Describe an experience you have had relating to (the topic of the lesson)

- Explain how (the topic of the lesson) will play a part in your life ten years from now.

- What is interfering with your learning right now?

- How will you use the information you've learned from this lesson?

- Based on the concepts developed in this lesson, describe one real-world application for this theory (process, principle, or whatever it is etc.)

References

About.com: http://712educators.about.com/cs/writingresources/l/bljrnlacademic.htm

The Online Learning Idea Book, Shank, Patti, Editor, 2007, John Wiley, & Sons, Inc. Pfeiffer, Adapted Classroom Assessment Techniques, pages 31-32, submitted by Joanna C. Dunlap, assistant professor, School of Education and Human Development, University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences, Denver Colorado, USA; page 178-179, submitted by Terry Morris, associate professor, William Rainey Harper College, Palatine Illinois, USA.

Concept Quilt

Concept Quilt How-To Guide:

Title of reading	Quilt pieces	Common thread that binds
"Title of Article," by Author Name		

Summarize the main points of the article by describing <u>all of the core concepts</u>. Accuracy counts. Do NOT quote; paraphrase instead. Do not plagiarize. <u>Be comprehensive and concise</u>. Use bullet points, not complete sentences. Keep your opinions out of your CQs, and focus on demonstrating your understanding of the readings. Spell terms correctly.

Type in the Enduring Understanding for this section. (Hint: found at the top of the Assignment in Blackboard.)

Student is given a variety of articles to read for the assignment. This worksheet asks students to summarize the core concepts and to describe the common thread or understanding between the readings.

Visual Digital Quilt (a variation)

A visual digital quilt is used as an introduction activity to get students thinking about themselves and how they would want to introduce themselves to the class. This is accompanied by a written introduction and explanation of why the images were chosen.

Dr. Kayt's Quilt – Guide to the Symbols

- The paw prints in the top left square represent the beloved 4 leggeds (2 dogs and 6 cats) that fill our household with joy and love.
- The top right square is a visual and textual representation of my job at the Women's Center, my teaching of Women's Studies Courses, Women's History Month and International Women's Day, which keep me busy the month of March, and the women's symbols, spirals, and rainbow colors which keep my life revolving around what really matters.
- The bottom right square is filled with images representing my professional field of education and instructional technology. The connections to the world through the computer screen and the world at our fingertips through the computer keyboard are images that virtually jump from the pages of my award winning dissertation. The books, the Teacher blocks, and the puzzle pieces connecting my professional life and interests together provide another pivot point around which my life revolves.
- Finally, my quilt wouldn't be complete without the log building, working with wood, solar panels (for renewable energy) and the sun, which powers all life, and certainly my life. Here in Alaska I'm learning new ways to relate to and rejoice in the sun (and the woods).

A final activity gives the students an opportunity to provide a visual picture of what they have explored, experiences, and learned throughout the course. This is also accompanied by a written reflection piece.

Images are submitted and shared with the other students.

What's In Your Closet?

2009

Introduction to Women's Studies

[WHAT IS IN MY CLOSET]

Everyday musings on clothes, big business, loan sharking, starfish and maybe even hope.

I am thankful to say that some of the items in my closet were conscious and informed choices. For a very long time I have had a pervasive HATE relationship with clothes. I am not sure where this originated from, maybe my own personal rebellion. I just don't know! By the grace of God we live on a sailboat and everything I own has to fit into a 2'x2 ½'x2' closet shelf. I am content and much more at ease. Awareness is based on education and I am one of the fortunate to have been born in a country where education is accessible and even exhorted. I grew up in what I think would be considered extreme poverty; I knew what it was to be hungry. I feel the same way as Claudette Williams so succinctly put it in her article "Gal...You Come from Foreign": "The material poverty of my childhood has taught me many lessons: the value of having plenty (relatively) and the gift of sharing emotionally and physically. These contradict the deprivation theories which would have us believe that the brutality of poverty renders us emotionally bankrupt and noncreative. In fact, it is from these years that I draw much of my motivation and creativity. My childhood experiences provided me with the tools to overcome pain and develop as a whole person." It is not a bad thing being who you are! No child EVER goes hungry in my sphere, and unbeknownst a sense of community develops, discerning eyes are honed and yes, the gift of sharing emotionally and physically is developed.

"For this assignment you will make connections between the readings for this course, and the Making Connections Map 4 you created with the clothing tags from your closet. In this paper, reflect on the politics of food and clothing, their production, distribution, and consumption around the world, and ho the themes we've explored in this course: the interactions of science and culture, national and international politics and economics, marketing and advertizing, travel and migration, the interaction of race, class, and gender impact the clothing in your closet. Refer to readings from the course to demonstrate the connections you are making from the global to the local to the personal of what is in your closet and what you wear on your body. Save the completed file as ClosetMapPaperYourName and use the assignment submission procedures to submit this assignment for grading before 11:59 pm Alaska Time on due date.

There is no "page number" requirement or limit on this assignment. Use as many or as few pages as you need (one will do if you can make these reflections in one page, or more if you need more)."

[Courtesy of Kayt Sunwood]

Visualization

 Tools are emerging which make it easy for teachers and students to visualize differ-
ent kinds of information without the need for complex technical skills. ManyEyes
(http://manyeyes.alphaworks.ibm.com/manyeyes/) is shown above, visualizing data
that was simply cut and pasted from a spreadsheet.

Visualizations aren't limited to numeric data either! Word clouds, such as the follow-

ing are easy with tools like Wordle (http://wordle.net/):

Wiki Collaboration

A wiki provides a place for simple collaboration between students… you can think of it as a shared notebook where students collaboratively create and revise stories, articles, definitions, etc. Because wikis are available asynchronously and handle multiple edits (including retaining a history of changes and reversion ability) they are more efficient than circulating shared documents. And because students are collaborating directly on the same source file, the wiki is more productive than exchanging information via a discussion forum or email… particularly when more than two students are involved.

Student Blogging

Blogs allow students to publish and engage in a sphere beyond the classroom. Student or class blogs are sometimes presented as an alternative to discussion boards… and while this is sometimes functionally true, they have very different dynamic. Unlike discussion boards, blogs provide foundational features for learning community because they are:

- Widely available
- Mature
- Relatively interoperable
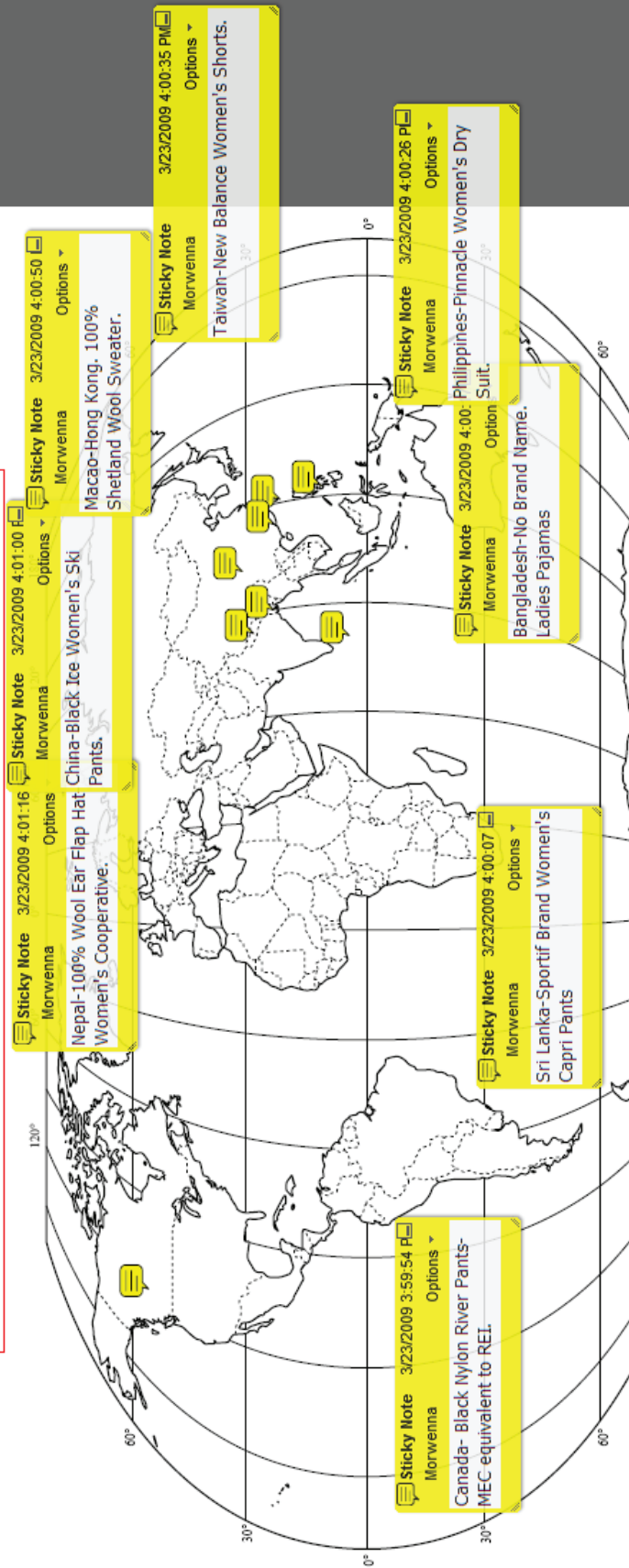- Available personally, externally, and institutionally

Blogs provide the tools necessary for the basic community activities that will be undertaken by the learner, including: Presentation, Commentary, Conversation, Collection, Collaboration, and History and Artifacts

Making Connections Map

"This Making Connections Map is different than the previous maps, as this time you don't just fill in the blanks to identify countries from the readings. This time you will map what's in your closet (or wherever you keep your clothes) by examining the tags on your clothing that indicate where each item is made. You will pick 8 items from your closet (each one must come from a different country - thus you will have 8 different countries identified on your world map). If you don't have clothing with tags from 8 different countries you can use the clothing of family, or friends, or housemates, or co-workers, anyone who will let you look at the tags on their clothing. What you will do is place sticky note icons on the map over each of the countries where each item was made, then in the sticky note text box, you will put the name of the item, and the country where that item is made (which, of course, should be the country under the appropriate sticky note icon!)."

[Courtesy of Kayt Sunwood]

Making Connections Map 4
What's In Your Closet?
Mapping where your clothes come from
Reflecting on the local/global connections

Sticky Note 3/23/2009 4:01:16   Options ▾
Morwenna
Nepal-100% Wool Ear Flap Hat Women's Cooperative.

Sticky Note 3/23/2009 4:01:00   Options ▾
Morwenna
China-Black Ice Women's Ski Pants.

Sticky Note 3/23/2009 4:00:50   Options ▾
Morwenna
Macao-Hong Kong. 100% Shetland Wool Sweater.

3/23/2009 4:00:35 PM   Options ▾
Taiwan-New Balance Women's Shorts.

3/23/2009 4:00:26 P   Options ▾
Philippines-Pinnacle Women's Dry Suit.

Sticky Note 3/23/2009 4:00:   Option ▾
Morwenna
Bangladesh-No Brand Name. Ladies Pajamas

Sticky Note 3/23/2009 4:00:07   Options ▾
Morwenna
Sri Lanka-Sportif Brand Women's Capri Pants

Sticky Note 3/23/2009 3:59:54 P   Options ▾
Morwenna
Canada- Black Nylon River Pants- MEC equivalent to REI.

Use the Tools Menu bar and then the Comment and Mark-up item, then click on the Sticky Note icon to add sticky notes to this map. Click on the map in the correct place to place your sticky note, plus you can click on and drag each sticky note icon to move the sticky notes around to place each sticky note over the correct country where each of your items of clothing were made. Make sure to move the box where you type in the information for each sticky note close enough to the sticky note so that you aren't running sticky note connectors across each other thus making a confusing array. In each sticky note notepad, list the item of clothing from your closet, and the country where the item was made (which you found on the clothing tag). Remember to place the little sticky note icon over the country where each of your items of clothing were made. You must list and identify items from at least 8 different countries. If you don't have items from 8 countries in your own closet, you can utilize family, friends, or others tags to come up with 8. If you are using clothing of others, identify whose clothing it is you are using as well as the item of clothing and the country.
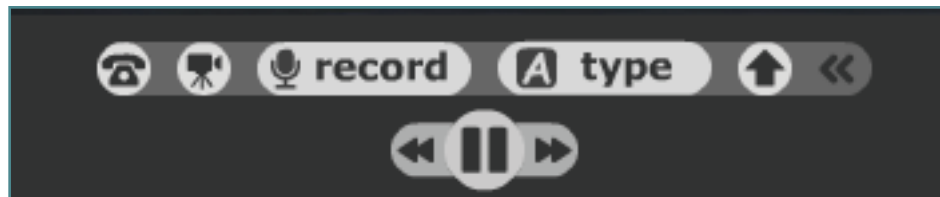
Asynchronous Presentation

VoiceThread

http://voicethread.com

Voicethread is a media photo album that can use all types of media: images, videos, audio (microphone or phone) text, annotation. Plus it allows for group interaction on an asynchronous basis

Commentngs tools include:

- calling in by phone
- adding video
- recording audio
- typing a comment
- drawing with a pen tool (in different colors)

and somtimes doing more than one at the same time!

Spanish Grammar Class

goal: evaluate student oral performance

- Series of slides for a student to work through the semester

- Instructor gives her instructions in Spanish

- Student answers her questions (using perfect Spanish grammar)
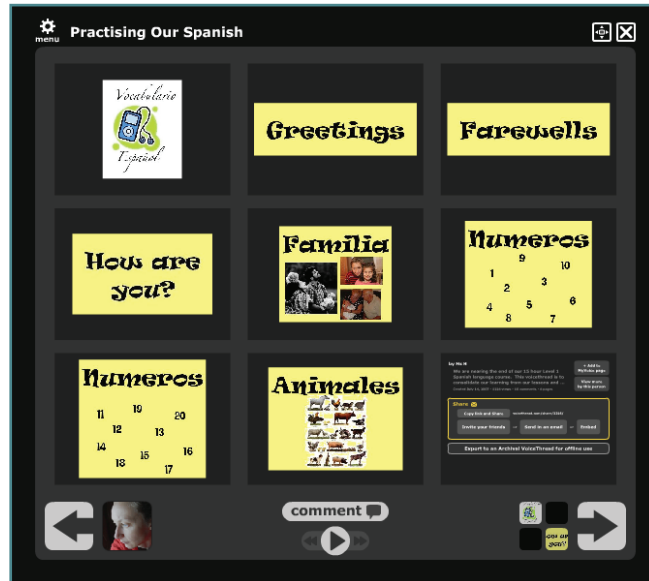
Instructor speaking

Student speaking:

Math Example:

http://voicethread.com/#q+math.b8149.i60081

goal: have student explain how to solve problem

- instructor provides equation
- student talks through the process as they write on the board
- students and teacher can evaluate or comment

Other VoiceThread Examples:

- http://voicethread.com/?#u4289.b3352.i28616- visual art history class – able to identify and describe

- http://voicethread.com/#q+art.b81021.i420528 - sign language class with video

- http://voicethread.com/#q.b48359.i253692 - visual interpretation, story telling
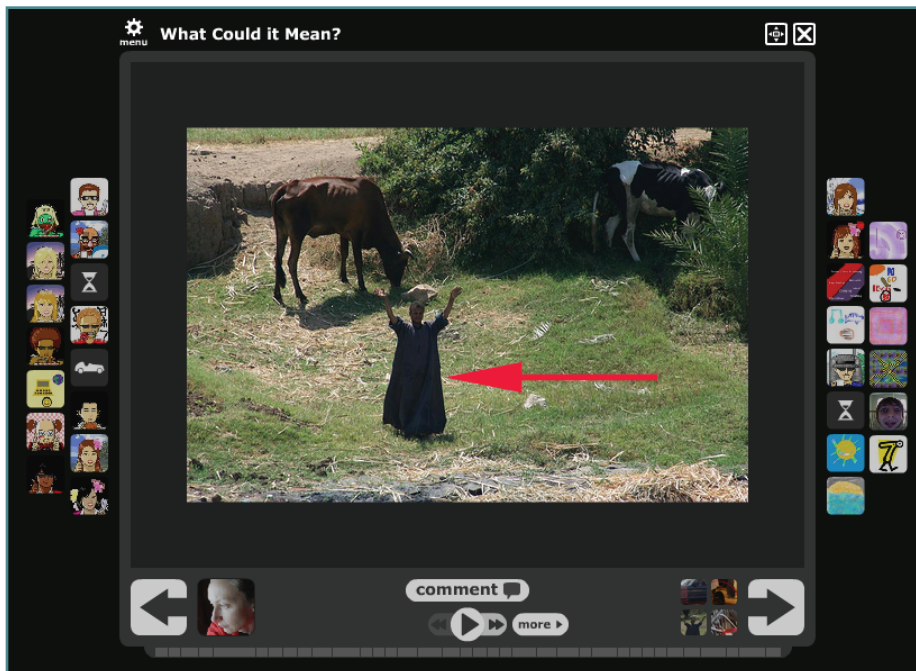
- http://www.slideshare.net/suziea/voicethread-examples-in-education-presentation
- http://voicethread.com/#u449599.b21651.i122786 - video doodling feature

What others are saying:

Discussion Board Alternative, Visual and Oral Assessments, Instructor Presentation, Student Presentations, Tutorials, Assignment/Syllabus Overview, Digital Portfolios, audio Feedback for individual Students, lab reports, math process

Account Information:

Free: - unlimited commenting, 3 voicethreads, 75 MG free storage space

- Single user unlimited number of voicethreads, 10 G storage space, phone commenting, archival movie exports, create and manage groups
- Higher Ed Manager create accounts for students and colleagues

Resources:

http://www.education-world.com/a_tech/columnists/dyck/dyck023.shtml

http://voicethread4education.wikispaces.com/College

http://www.slideshare.net/brocansky/voicethreads-interactive-visual-and-collaborative-learning-spaces

http://thinkingmachine.pbwiki.com/Think-VoiceThreads

http://www.edutopia.org/voicethread-interactive-multimedia-albums

Discussion Board Rubric Example

http://www.udel.edu/janet/MARC2006/rubric.html
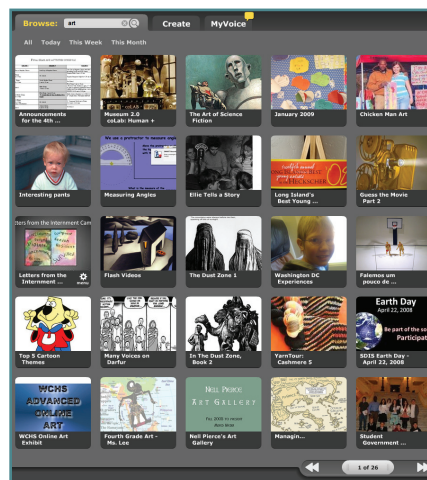
Rubric for Asynchronous Discussion Participation

Name_____

Asynchronous discussion enhances learning as you share your ideas, perspectives, and experiences with the class. You develop and refine your thoughts through the writing process, plus broaden your classmates' understanding of the course content. Use the following feedback to improve the quality of your discussion contributions.

Criteria	Unacceptable 0 Points	Acceptable 1 Point	Good 2 Points	Excellent 3 Points
Frequency	Participates not at all.	Participates 1-2 times on the same day.	Participates 3-4 times but postings not distributed throughout week.	Participates 4-5 times throughout the week.
Initial Assignment Posting	Posts no assignment.	Posts adequate assignment with superficial thought and preparation; doesn't address all aspects of the task.	Posts well developed assignment that addresses all aspects of the task; lacks full development of concepts.	Posts well developed assignment that fully addresses and develops all aspects of the task.
Follow-Up Postings	Posts no follow-up responses to others.	Posts shallow contribution to discussion (e.g., agrees or disagrees); does not enrich discussion.	Elaborates on an existing posting with further comment or observation.	Demonstrates analysis of others' posts; extends meaningful discussion by building on previous posts.
Content Contribution	Posts information that is off-topic, incorrect, or irrelevant to discussion.	Repeats but does not add substantive information to the discussion.	Posts information that is factually correct; lacks full development of concept or thought.	Posts factually correct, reflective and substantive contribution; advances discussion.
References & Support	Includes no references or supporting experience.	Uses personal experience, but no references to readings or research.	Incorporates some references from literature and personal experience.	Uses references to literature, readings, or personal experience to support comments.
Clarity & Mechanics	Posts long, unorganized or rude content that may contain	Communicates in friendly, courteous and helpful manner	Contributes valuable information to discussion with	Contributes to discussion with clear, concise comments formatted in an easy to
	multiple errors or may be inappropriate.	with some errors in clarity or mechanics.	minor clarity or mechanics errors.	read style that is free of grammatical or spelling errors.

Examples of postings that demonstrate higher levels of thinking:
- "Some common themes I see between your experiences and our textbook are...." (analysis)
- "These newer trends are significant if we consider the relationship between ...." (synthesis)
- "The body of literature should be assessed by these standards ...." (evaluation)

For more information, contact Barbara Frey at baf30@pitt.edu

Discussion Board Rubric Example

http://www.txdla.org/Conference/2008/program/presenterresources/299_Discussion-BoardRubrics.pdf

Sample 1
Discussion Board Assignment

Class participation is an important expectation of this course. Students are expected to offer comments, questions, and replies to the discussion question that have been posted for each module as well as to classmate postings. Students are expected to actively participate in EACH module's discussion EACH week throughout the semester. The faculty role is as an observer and facilitator. I will be reading all messages and I will participate in the discussion as appropriate. Students may work ahead on the discussion boards but posting on past week's boards will not allow for stimulating discussions with your classmates.

Evaluation of Assignment:
Postings will be evaluated on the quality of the postings and the degree that the postings promote discussion with classmates. Participation on 15 boards is required (13 modules, Breaking the Ice and Web Sites) and postings will be evaluated per board on the below scale. Students can earn the 5 additional points by showing good effort to engage classmates in discussion comparing activities done on other graded assignments. The discussion assignment will be worth a total of 50 points.

1 Point	2 points	3 points
Minimal response to the module question	Posting responds to the question but does not stimulate further class discussion.	Posting fully addresses the module question and stimulates at least one substantial follow-up posting

Sample 2
Discussion Board Rubric
The following points are what is looked for in your original postings to the Discussion Board and your replies to others postings (Total of 10 points for each Discussion Board assignment).

Original Posting (7 points)
1. Mentions at least 2 specific points from the article or reading. (1 point)
2. Relation of new information to old information learned in the course to date. (1 point)
3. Relation of information in article or reading to personal experience. (1 point)
4. Discussion at a critical level, not just recitation of facts from the article. (3 points)
5. Length of posting approximately 1 word processing page. (1 point)

Reply to Other's Postings (3 points)
1. Discuss one point you like/agree with, and one point you dislike/disagree with and explain why.
2. Length should be about ¼ page in length.

Sample 3
Discussion Board Rubric

Criteria	A (90-100) Outstanding	B (80-89) Proficient	C (70-79) Basic	D/F (0-69) Below Expectations
Critical Thinking	• rich in content • full of thought, insight, and analysis	• substantial information • thought, insight, and analysis has taken place	• generally competent • information is thin and commonplace	• rudimentary and superficial • no analysis or insight is displayed
Connections	Clear connections to previous or current and/or to real-life situations	• new ideas or connections • lack depth and/or detail	• limited, if any connections • vague generalities	• no connections are made • off topic
Uniqueness	• new ideas • new connections • made with depth and detail	• new ideas or connections • lack depth and/or detail	• few, if any new ideas or connections • rehash or summarize other postings	• no new ideas • "I agree with…" statements
Timeliness	• All required postings • Early into the discussion • Throughout the discussion	• All required postings • Some not in time for others to read and respond	• All required postings • Most at the last minute without allowing for response time	• Some, or all, required postings missing
Stylistics	• Few grammatical or stylistic errors	• Several grammatical or stylistic errors	• Obvious grammatical or stylistic errors • Errors interfere with content	• Obvious grammatical or stylistic errors • Makes understanding impossible

Sample 4
Discussion Board Rubric

Criteria	Good/Very Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Content	Discussed thoughtfully and with insight; Key issues from the prompt are identified and answered; Clear discussion with no digressions.	Discussed at surface level: Key issues from the prompt are identified but not all are answered; Clear discussion most of the time.	Difficult to follow; Key issues from the prompt are not identified or answered.
Context	Posted by the assigned due date; Few or no stylistic errors; Organized with direct & clear communication.	Posted by the assigned due date; Several stylistic errors; Weak organization, not always direct & clear communication.	Posted by the assigned due date (or late); Many stylistic errors; Not organized, no direct & clear communication.
Resources to Extend the Discussion	Resources that extend the discussion are added; Link included; Website title and 2 sentence annotation clearly explaining the content included.	Resources that extends the discussion are added; Link included; Website title and annotation added.	No Resource added
Community Responses	Two peer responses Indicating understanding of the other author's comments.	1 peer response indicating understanding of the other author's comments.	No peer response

Sample 5
Discussion Board Rubric

Category	1	2	3	4
Promptness and Initiative	Does not respond to most postings; rarely participates freely	Responds to most postings several days after initial discussion; limited initiative	Responds to most postings within a 24 hour period; requires occasional prompting to post	Consistently responds to postings in less than 24 hours; demonstrates good self-initiative
Delivery of Post	Utilizes poor spelling and grammar in most posts; posts appear "hasty"	Errors in spelling and grammar evidenced in several posts	Few grammatical or spelling errors are noted in posts	Consistently uses grammatically correct posts with rare misspellings
Relevance of Post	Posts topics which do not relate to the discussion content; makes short or irrelevant remarks	Occasionally posts off topic; most posts are short in length and offer no further insight into the topic	Frequently posts topics that are related to discussion content; prompts further discussion of topic	Consistently posts topics related to discussion topic; cites additional references related to topic.
Expression within the post	Does not express opinions or ideas clearly; no connection to topic	Unclear connection to topic evidenced in minimal express of opinions or ideas	Opinions and ideas are stated clearly with occasional lack of connection to topic.	Expresses opinions and ideas in a clear and concise manner with obvious connection to topic
Contribution to the Learning Community	Does not make effort to participate in learning community as it develops; seems indifferent	Occasionally makes meaningful reflection on group's efforts; marginal effort to become involved with group	Frequently attempts to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration by group; interacts freely	Aware of needs of community; frequently attempts to motivate the group discussion; presents creative approaches to topic

Video:
YouTube and other Video/Film Resources

Created for education, the edu site was created specifically for college and unversities to act as a filter.

- http://www.youtube.com and http://www.youtube.com/edu

"The best free cultual and Education media on the web." This site hosts links to audio, podcast, and video presentations. One link called Intelligent YouTube has gathered 80 "smart" video collections.

- http://www.openculture.com/

A
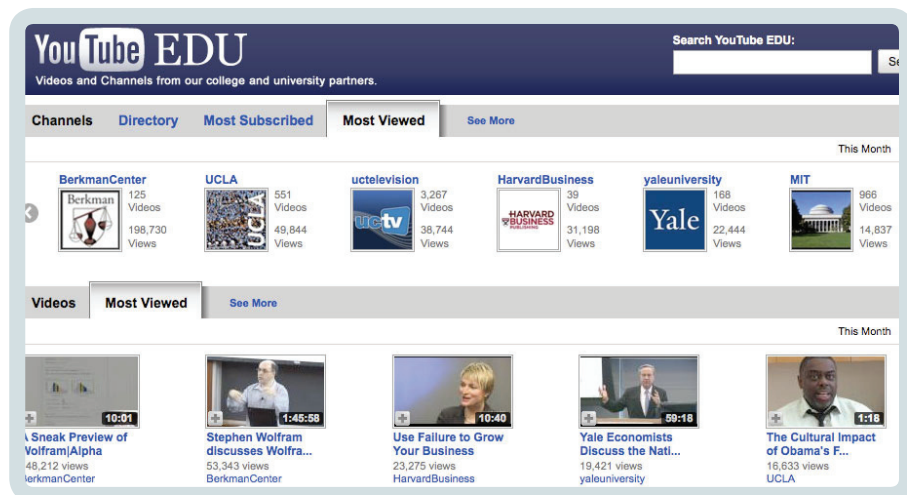
YouTube Channel of videos presentations of "thinkers"

- http://www.youtube.com/bigthink

A collection of places to find documentary films

- http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/the-best-places-to-watch-documentary-movies-online/

The periodic table of video - all the elements explained.

- http://www.periodicvideos.com/
- A site created specifcally for instructional videos

- http://www.teachertube.com/

Merlot: Multimedia Educational Resource for Learing and Online Teaching. A collection of peer reviewed higher education, online learning materials. Collection contains video, audio, reuseable learning objections

http://www.merlot.org/merlot/index.htm

Audio: Podcasting and other Audio Resources

Collections of recordings:

- http://odeo.com/
- http://epnweb.org/index.php

Foreign Language (including english as a second language and business english)

- http://www.opalenculture.com/2006/10/foreign_languag.html

iTunes University - specifically for college and universities:

- iTunesU
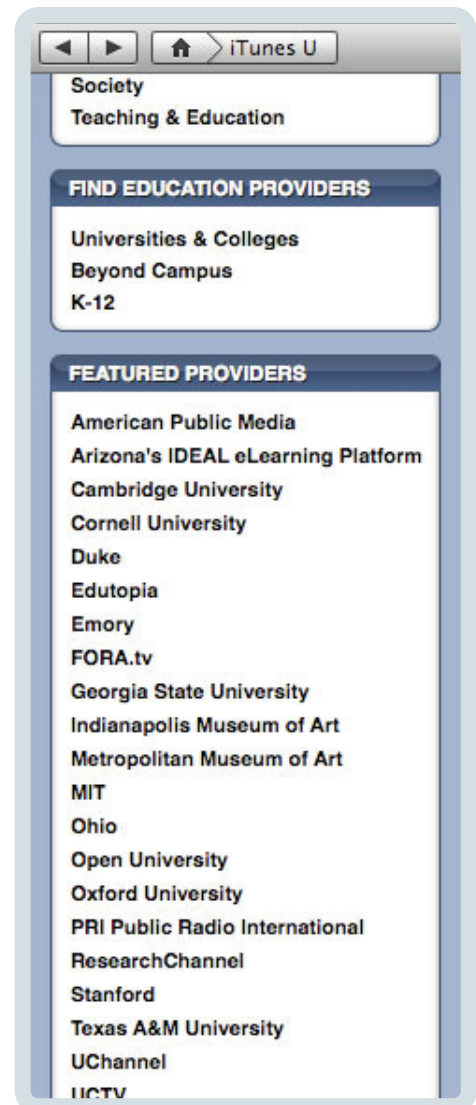
Powerpoint

How to avoid a bad Powerpoint presentation.

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cagxPlVqrtM

Adding Audio Narration to a Powerpoint

- http://www.slideshare.net/delhionlineeducation/adding-audio-narration-to-powerpoint

Slideware: a place to store and share your presentations:

- http://www.slideshare.net

Suggestions on Creating Powerpoint for Elive

1. Compress all images before putting them in the presentation itself.

2. Use a simple slide template with few colors

3. Use legible fonts with large enough font size

The ELIVE Presentation Wizards is also a helpful resource to be familiar with:

http://www.elluminate.com/support/tools/presentation_wizard.jsp

Elluminate Live

Abstract

Elluminate is a virtual, synchronous learning environment made specifically for distance education and collaboration in academia. Use Elluminate to add live discussion and dynamic interaction to your asynchronous distance learning. Elluminate lets you extend the physical boundaries of your traditional classroom. The result—engaged students, enhanced learning, and improved comprehension.

WHAT YOU"LL FIND IN THIS SECTION:

- Abstract
- Minimum System Requirements
- Introduction
- In-Session Management
- Communications
- Presentation and Collaboration
- Advanced Content
- Features of Elluminate
- The Toolbar
- Polling
- Polling: Best Practices
- Breakout Rooms
- Breakout Rooms: Best Practices
- Direct Messaging
- Direct Messaging: Best Practices
- Audio
- Audio: Best Practices
- The Whiteboard
- Whiteboard: Best Practices
- File Transfer
- User Profiles
- Application Sharing
- Application Sharing: Best Practices
- Web Tours
- Web Tour: Best Practices
- Elluminate Best Practices
- Some other suggestions for making the best use of an Elluminate session:
- Getting Help

Minimum System Requirements

A computer must have the following minimum system requirements in order to use Elluminate Live:

All computers require:

- Java versions 1.5 or 1.6
- 20 MB free disk space
- Soundcard with speakers and microphone or headset (or telephone for Telephony users)
- 28.8 Kbps Internet connection

Windows:

- Windows 2000/XP/Vista
- Pentium III 1 GHz processor
- 256 MB RAM

Macintosh Client:

- Mac OS X 10.4 and 10.5
- G4, G5 of Intel processor
- 256 MB RAM

Solaris Client:

- Solaris 10
- UltraSPARC 500 MHz
- 256 MB RAM

Linux Client:

- Red Hat Linux (RHEL4), Novell SUSE 10
- Pentium III 1 GHz processor
- 256 MB RAM

Introduction

Both students and instructors can access Elluminate from anywhere in the world, using any platform, and any bandwidth (as low as 28.8). Even users with vision or hearing disabilities can participate fully in Elluminate sessions.

Elluminate allows for essential social networking. A strong online social network allows for a community of geographically distributed users to enhance collective knowledge which is a driving force for effective learning. Elluminate reinforces social networking through interactive recordings, user profiles, and other features.

There are two key components to Elluminate: an easy to learn and use interface and universal access.

The interface is easy to use and learn allowing users to quickly forget about the technology and fully participate in the session. All users are in sync at all times because the Elluminate data stream is specifically designed to adapt to the connection speed of each individual user.

Universal access means any user on any platform (Windows, Mac, and Linux), using almost any bandwidth can participate in an Elluminate session. Moreover, Elluminate supports the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and is compliant with section 508 of the rehabilitation act. Accessibility features include multiple streams of closed captioning, enlarged video windows, and auditory event notifications.

In-Session Management

A moderator (often an instructor) is the person hosting or controlling an Elluminate session, while a participant (usually a student) has little to no control, although they can still interact in the environment fully. During an Elluminate session the moderator has granular control over the environment, meaning they can see and influence everything that's going on.

Looking at the screenshot provided you can see who is logged in as moderator (bolded) and who is logged in as participants (not bolded). You can also see the permissions each participant has. Permissions are shown by the icons next to each person's name. As a moderator you can add and take away
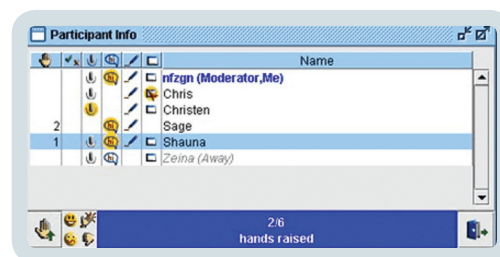
a participant's abilities to use the whiteboard, audio, direct messaging, or application sharing just by clicking the associated icon next to a person's name.

You'll notice also there is a raised hand column next to each person's name that shows when a participant has raised their hand, which will allow you to ask them questions in real time. When a hand is raised the area below their names will flash. If multiple participants raise their hands simultaneously the moderator will be able to see in what order they raised their hands by the associated and sequential number that will appear in the hand-raised column next to the participant's names.

"Extra Sensory Perception"

The Internet is an unpredictable medium so Elluminate wants to make this as little of a nuisance as possible. Built into Elluminate is a feature called Moderator ESP that detects if users are experiencing any kind of internet delays, adjusts their presentation accordingly, and tells the moderator if anyone has fallen behind.
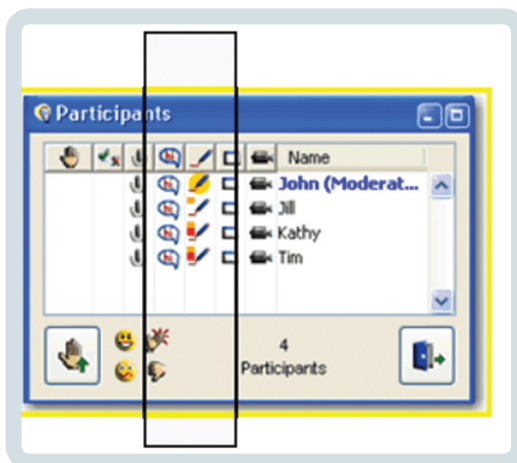
A yellow indicator light tells the moderator a student is about 3-5 seconds behind. While a red indicator says a student is 5-8 seconds behind. The second the indicator light goes off the moderator knows the student can see everything on the screen.

The audio stream is also constantly being buffered while it is coming in. So for example if you have an internet delay of 10 seconds you wont hear anyone speaking during that time but when the sound comes back it will speed up and be just a little bit higher pitched for about 10-20 seconds because you are catching every single syllable of what was missed while you had your outage so nothing is missed!

Communications

Elluminate gives you 5 communication channels: audio, direct messaging, live video, closed captioning, and user profiles.

2-way audio is always full duplex, crystal clear, and allows up to 4 people to communicate at once.

Direct messaging allows private and public text messaging. Moderators can choose to see all private or public conversations. Emoticons – such as laughter, confusion, or disapproval - can also be used in the direct messaging window.

Live Video can be used by one user at a time. You can select image quality from a coarse gray to a fine color. Therefore students with different degrees of bandwidth don't have to sacrifice their overall experience. You can also increase video size for those with disabilities or for presenting in a classroom. Many types of video are supported including DirectX, compressed video, Fire wire, camcorders, and web cameras.

There is a utility to allow all audio content to be closed captioning for the hearing impaired. You can have students captioning in English and other languages as well.

User profiles allow users to create profiles including their name, address, email, phone number, picture, and so forth. You can then email students directly from a live session or from the recording.

Presentation and Collaboration

The dynamic, object-oriented whiteboard allows you to draw lots of objects such as circles and rectangles. You can also color and move these objects around. You can give students the permission to use the whiteboard allowing them to move objects around as well.

ou can use application sharing to share any application on your desktop. You can also request desktop control of another user's computer.

Breakout Rooms allow you to have separate, simultaneous sessions allowing you to break larger groups into smaller groups. You can have as many rooms or as many people in each room as you want. The moderator can go into any room at any time and can always respond to any questions anyone has no matter what room they are in.

You can also use polling to get answers to yes/no questions, multiple choice questions, or any other type of question you might want to ask your audience. You can even customize quizzes if you have more complex needs.

Advanced Content

You can use the File Transfer feature to give files to students, and they can share files with you in return. Any files you upload this way transfer during the recording as well, if you make one. File transfer is a great asset for students who missed the class or lost the file.

Web tours allow you to open the student's web browser and take them to a website. Once there you could have them interact with the site in some way such as by having them fill out a survey or form. Or you could just take them to a website so they could see what's available.

Multimedia files can be loaded into Elluminate Live – although this is discouraged for bandwidth considerations.

There is a graphing calculator you can share with students or have them use on their own.

Finally, you can record all interactions - except private messaging - that occur during a session. Users who missed the session or who want to review the material can go back and watch the presentation at their convenience.

Features of Elluminate

The Toolbar

Use the toolbar to do any of the following:

- Change the windows layout.

- Access polling in class (Yes/No, Multiple Choice with three, four or five answers, Class Pace "Slow Down/Speed up" and whether to show or hide the polling responses).

- Access Application Sharing, where the moderator or any student will be able to share any application, a specific region of their desktop, or their entire desktop with others.

- Transfer files by loading a file or URL, to view the list of shared files, or to save and delete the shared files.

- Broadcast Video in your session.

- Activate the timer for timed assignments.

- Print what you see on screen.

- Take personal notes about the session.

Polling

Tools > Polling > [select type]

Polling is used to get quick answers for either verbal or written questions. By default, when you first join a session, the polling tool is set to capture yes or no answers from students. However, you can change it to accept multiple choice answers.

Polling results can be viewed by the moderator and students. Be default however only the moderator may see the poll results. To see poll results, select the following:

Tools -> Polling -> Show Statistics

Polling: Best Practices

- Since it is helpful to get real-time feedback while you are lecturing it is some-times useful to put the polling setting on class pace so that audience members will have the option of telling you to speed up or slow down at any time.

- Consider making the first few slides of a presentation questions that audi-ence members can respond to with polling. You can use these questions to test student's understanding of the previous session's material or of the reading. This is a great way to test student progress!

- You should use polling occasionally during a presentation as a way to wake up the audience or just for interactive "fun", especially when you suspect audi-ence members are getting sleep or restless based on a long presentation. If you didn't prepare questions in advance you can always give students a 5-10 minute break while you think of questions to engage them with.

Breakout Rooms

Tools > Breakout Rooms > Create Breakout Room...

Breakout rooms can be used for collaboration and group activities or even for indi-vidual work assignments. If collaborative, breakout rooms can be used for students to introduce each other, work on homework problems or projects, conduct research or brainstorming assignments, or work on other small group activities. When done you can have the groups present their work to the rest of the audience.

Breakout rooms can also be used for individual student assignments. For example, if you wanted students to work on a drawing or visualization exercise individual break-out rooms would be a great way to do this. You could then bring the students back

into the main room when done and have them share their work, or merely save the slides for your own viewing later on.

The moderator determines how many groups to create, which students are put in specific groups, and all activities related to that room. Breakout rooms are similar to real physical rooms. Students in one breakout room have access to all the features of Elluminate but do not hear, nor know what is happening outside the room. A moderator outside the room has to go in the room in order to assist students; although students in breakout rooms can still private message the moderator or raise their hand for help.

Breakout Rooms: Best Practices

- Use the timer to let students know when individual or group assignments are to be completed.
- Use breakout rooms to have students prepare for upcoming events or competitions collaboratively.

Discussions among students in the breakout rooms will motivate them toward further learning in the subject and develop their problem solving or thinking skills. It will also give them time to construct their own meanings.

Direct Messaging

Direct Messaging is a text-based communication tool that provides real time delivery. Messages can be public or private and are color-coded according to the following criteria:

- Black messages are public (sent to everyone in the session)
- Blue messages are private (a privately sent or received message)
- Red messages are private (a student sends a private message to another student)

Direct Messages can be saved and printed, resized, filtered (moderator may wish to view only certain messages), and tracked when messages were sent by clicking on the Display date and time icon. Even if a student has no permissions to use the direct messaging tool, they can still send a private message to the moderator(s).
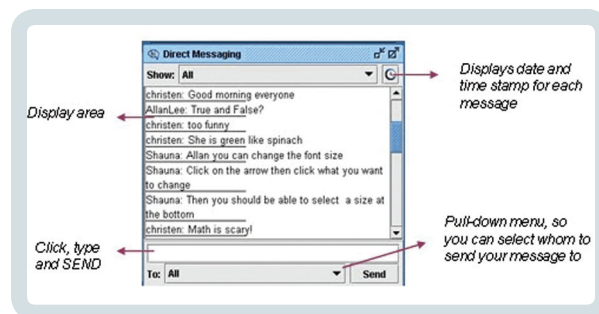
Direct Messaging: Best Practices

1.   The Direct Messaging window is:

   a.   A safe area for students, where they can feel at ease and write freely, especially when they feel intimidated by the new technology or the other people in the class

   b.   The most important area for the moderator to be consistently aware of throughout a session. Through practice, a moderator will learn to keep an eye on the Direct Messaging window in order to keep track of the responses, questions, inquiries, interactions, and reactions of the students at all times while still using the other features of Elluminate effectively

2.   Direct Messages may be used for introductions or brainstorming activities

3.   Group work can be effectively accomplished with direct messaging in order to help foster a community, social interactions, or collaboration. Similar to breakout rooms, direct messaging can be used for collaboration and group activities in in-troductions, brainstorming, open-ended questions, and other activities. In order to achieve this purpose, group students by pairs or small groups and tell them to chat privately. The moderator may view small group conversations by using the Direct Messaging filter. Then all students can share their findings and discussions with the rest of the class.

Audio

Take a look at the screenshot to the right. This is a screenshot taken from an actual Elluminate class in session. There are a few important things to notice here including the yellow halo around the microphone icon next to the moderator's name and the grayed-out Talk button (at the bottom).

You can see a yellow halo behind the microphone permission indicator in the student window, next to the moderator's name (nfzgn), which means that the mod-erator is currently talking.

In the audio window, a student can click on the TALK button, and is then able to participate in conversations during the session. Elluminate is now full-duplex and up to four people can talk simultaneously. To use the audio feature, your computer must have a sound card, micro-phone and speakers. Headsets are strongly recommend-ed for all participants.

Before your FIRST Elluminate Session: use the 'Audio Set up Wizard' to configure your Audio.

Tools > Audio > Audio Setup Wizard…

Alternatively, you or your students can use a preconfigured Elluminate room to set up audio: https://sas.elluminate.com/site/external/jwsdetect/meeting. jnlp?sid=345&password=M.AD379BCB0A40D3D8C33C6B16A84C0B&username=Test. This room is always available.

During a session you may use the audio window panel in the following ways:

- Click on the TALK button or use the hotkeys (Ctrl+F2) in order to enable or disable the talk feature.
- Adjust your microphone and speaker levels manually.
- Audio: Best Practices

    - At the beginning of each session it is often helpful to have each student introduce themselves. It is a test for their audio set up and also helps creates community.

    - While using other features of Elluminate, like Application Sharing or the Web Tour, you can still control the Audio feature by using the hot keys: Ctrl+F2 to enable or disable the talk feature.

The Whiteboard

The whiteboard is where any content will appear. In the example here you see that the phrase "Good morning" has been written in different languages on the whiteboard. In some cases the text was typed in using the text tool, and in other cases it was written in free hand using the pen tool (in various colors). Clip Art (the coffee mug and the smiley face) have been inserted using the Screen Capture tool in the Whiteboard Toolbar.
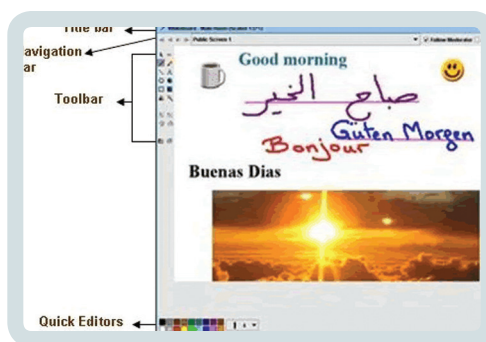
You can insert various images and slides, including PowerPoint slides, as well as type, write using the pen tool, highlight, or even draw simple shapes such as circles and rectangles on the whiteboard.

The whiteboard is the main presentation window in Elluminate. It is used either as a presentation tool or as a work area where students can write, draw, type, import files, images, or clip art. The moderator manages and controls the screens, the screen content and the student's access to these screens.

The Whiteboard offers great opportunity for interactions, especially in small groups. So be creative, courageous, and spontaneous! Open new blank screens and improvise! Do not be afraid to try new ideas when using the whiteboard collaboratively with your students.

Whiteboard: Best Practices

- Use it as you would a regular whiteboard, chalk board, or flip chart in a face-to-face class. Write, draw, or type on the board, and encourage students to do so as well. Try solving problems together, discussing solutions, brainstorming, visualizing, collecting responses, and sharing ideas. Remember that all objects on the whiteboard can be edited!

- Use a tablet pc to make writing and drawing on the whiteboard even easier (especially useful for math or science courses where formula are commonplace).

- Allow multiple people to write or type on the whiteboard simultaneously by manipulating your student's permissions.

- Take screen captures of images or applications on your computer and paste them to the whiteboard for all students to see or draw on.

   - Use games and simulations on the whiteboard as part of your 'Active Learning' strategy.

   - As a presentation tool, ideas can be recorded and student interactions can be saved. The PowerPoint presentation is static, so try to think of some creative ways to change that. For example:

   - Highlight content on PowerPoint slides.

   - Annotate your presentation.

   - Create a 'white box' to cover some of the material and move it around as you proceed through the content to make the presentations more dynamic and focused on the parts you are actually talking about at any given moment and to create suspense for other points still to come.

   - Customize your clip art and share it with your students.

   - Use the 'Explore Screens' tool (Tools -> Whiteboard ->Explore Screens) to control your whiteboard screens.

   - Save and print your whiteboard screens for later use.

   - Use the 'Explore Objects' tool to see which students have contributed to each screen (Tools - Whiteboard - Explore Objects).

- Take a screen capture of the entire Elluminate interface for your first session to show students how Elluminate works.
- Share polling results with students by pasting them to the whiteboard.

File Transfer

Use the 'File Transfer' tool to share files with students in an Elluminate session. These files will also be transferable in a recorded Elluminate session.

User Profiles

Set up your own user profile including name, title, e-mail address, address, phone number, and picture and encourage students to do the same. By rolling their mouse cursors over each other's names in the Participant's Info box in Elluminate students (and you) can see each others profiles.

Application Sharing

Tools, Application Sharing, Host Applications...

Application Sharing allows participants to share any application, a specific region of their desktop, or their entire desktop with others in the conference. A participant can even give control of their shared application or desktop to another participant!

Application Sharing is great for showing students how to use software applications such as Microsoft Word or Excel. It is also useful for taking control of a student's desktop in order to troubleshoot problems with their operating system. There are a few drawbacks to using Application Sharing however, the main drawback being that it requires higher bandwidth than most Elluminate features. So be careful about using Application Sharing extensively when your students have slower connection speeds than yourself.

Application Sharing: Best Practices

1. Share the Elluminate application itself in order to show students how to use it (requires a second instance of Elluminate).

2. Share your web browser with Blackboard loaded in order to go over the course syllabus, or other features of Blackboard you want your students to be comfortable with.

3.   Share your web browser when logged into sites that require a username and password. This is the only way you can share password-protected web sites with your students.

Web Tours

Tools, Web Tour, Start Web Tour…

The web tour tool allows you to take students to a website or series of websites using an embedded browser. When you start a web tour each participant's default browser will load on their computer and go to the site you have directed them to automatically. Once they are there they can surf the web independently, but will always be brought back to the page you want them to see when the page you are looking at in your browser changes state.

Web Tour: Best Practices

Use the web tour tool to take students to a website that has some sort of content you want them to see or become familiar with (such as an art gallery, some prose or poetry, or an animation of some kind). Give them some time to become familiar with the content, and then have them work in small groups on an assignment based on that content, or just have them share their impressions with the group.

Elluminate Best Practices

It's always a good idea to prepare materials for a class and Elluminate is no different. If anything it's even more important to prepare materials before an Elluminate session. The best way to accomplish this is to load all your presentation files (Power-Point slides, images, text, and other materials) into Elluminate, organize your slides, and then save your Elluminate presentation as a whiteboard file.

File -> Save -> Whiteboard…

Here are some other suggestions for making the best use of an Elluminate session:

- •   Do an initial poll with students to see what they want out of the session.
- •   When using breakout rooms make sure you let students know what is happening before putting them in the room or they made get confused by the immediate absence of audio; also be sure to tell them what to do in those rooms before sending them there.

- Build quizzes ahead of time using the quiz manager.

- Don't use images that are too big for the whiteboard.

- Don't talk too long without interruption or your students will lose interest.

- Use text chat filters.

- Prioritize communication channels

- Disable student use of tools at the beginning of the session and only enable them when necessary.

- Create PowerPoint slides that invite interaction.

- Make students take the floor occasionally to get them involved.

- Make one student a moderator in each breakout room.

- Don't talk alone in a room!

Getting Help

How to get the Java plug-in and Java Web Start on your Computer:

This software is needed to run Elluminate on your computer.
http://www.elluminate.com/support/softwaredownload.jsp

PDF/PowerPoint/Open Office/Star Office Converter:
Converts files from all of the aforementioned programs into Elluminate whiteboard slides.
http://www.elluminate.com/support/tools/presentation_wizard.jsp

Get a FREE vRoom:
Elluminate is now offering free rooms where you can try out Elluminate Live. You just need to fill out a short form on the following page.
http://www.elluminate.com/vroom/register.go

Elluminate Support

Includes a configuration room for getting yourself and your audience configured for a scheduled session beforehand (includes audio setup for speakers and microphone). Also includes a Java Web Start check to make sure the student has the correct software to run Elluminate. Finally, there are online orientation recordings that can be watched as well as downloadable manuals that show you how to use Elluminate.
http://www.elluminate.com/support/

Elluminate Training:

Includes recorded trainings and downloadable manuals for both moderators and students.

http://www.elluminate.com/support/training/

UAF Office of Information Technology for Elluminate Support: 1.800.478.8226

Aggregation & Feeds

Aggregation & Feeds

With so much information available online it is now too time consuming to visit all of the web sites you want to follow, especially if your students all have their own blogs. Aggregation is an efficient way to gather all the news/information/content you want into one place, saving you time.

RSS Feeds

RSS stands for "Really Simple Syndication" or "Rich Site Summary", depending on who you talk to. RSS feeds make it possible for people to make content available online for anyone to "pull" down whenever they want it.

Sites that employ feeds enable others to access their content through their own set of preferred tools. Feeds are written according to a machine-readable standard that allows content to be portable. This means that a web site that publishes a feed can be read by anything that understands the standard. In turn, the feed can read by a person who might remix the content with their own and in turn, reuse that content.

How Do I Find A Feed?

Subscribing to an RSS feed of a web site you want to follow allows you to access the site content without actually going to the web site. To sub-scribe, look for an orange icon like the one to the right. There are a few other icons that also indicate a feed is available. Depending on the web browser you use you can find available feeds:
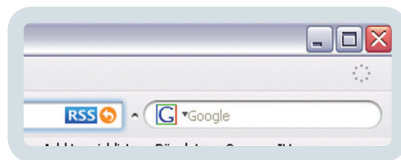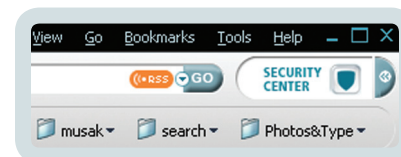
Firefox feed icon
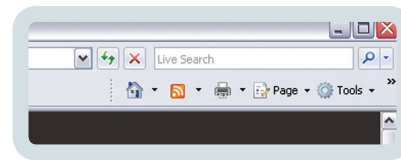
Internet Explorer feed icon
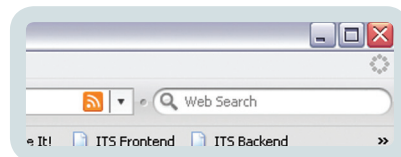
Flock feed icon

Netscape feed icon

Feed readers, sometimes called news aggregators, are software clients that collect the feeds you want to "subscribe" to. The reader then gathers all the latest news and posts from the sites you are subscribed to and allows you to read them all in one place. This is the part that saves you time because you don't have to go to each site and search to find the latest news. The reader searches for you and "pulls" the new content for you to read.

There are numerous readers available to use for free:

Web-based

- Google Reader - http://www.google.com/reader
- BlogLines - http://www.bloglines.com
- PageFlakes - http://www.pageflakes.com
- NetVibes - http://www.netvibes.com

Client Software

- BlogBridge - http://blogbridge.com/
- More clients can be found at the Open Directory Project:
  http://dmoz.org/Computers/Software/Internet/Clients/WWW/Feed_Readers/

Hybrid

- Firefox Extensions (web browser) - http://www.getfirefox.com
  Sage - https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/77
  BlogRovr - https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/4689
  Wizz RSS NEws Reader - https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/424
- Feedly - https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/8538

Google has an online feed reader called Google Reader. To get started with Reader, go to the URL and sign in with your Google account (the same account we used to sign up for Blogger).
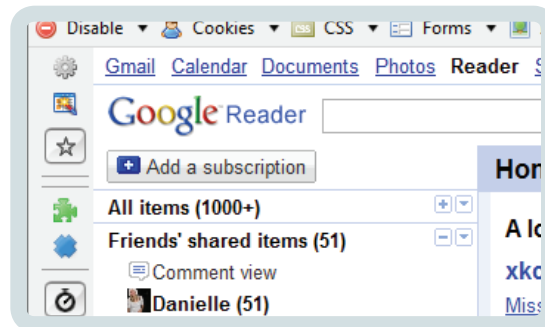
After logging in you will see the Reader interface. If this is your first time in Reader you will not see any feeds in your left sidebar.

Subscribing to a Feed

1. Copy the feed URL from the web site you want to subscribe to

2. In Google Reader, paste the feed URL in the text box and press Enter

3. You feed is added
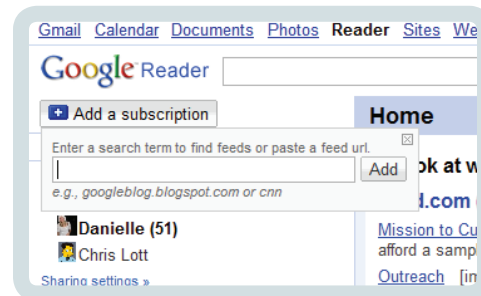
Managing Feeds

After subscribing to a few sites you may benefit from organizing the feeds you're subscribed to. To manage your feeds in Google Reader use the MANAGE SUBSCRIPTIONS link at the bottom of the left sidebar.
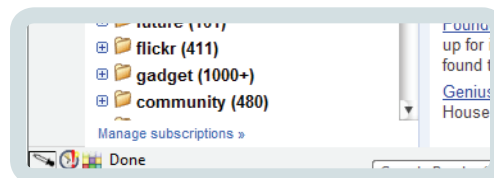
Subscriptions are assigned tags so that they are easier to find and so that feeds with similar content can be sorted together. Use the drop-down box to add a new tag if the tag you want to use is not already there. Select that tag and assign it to a subscription.
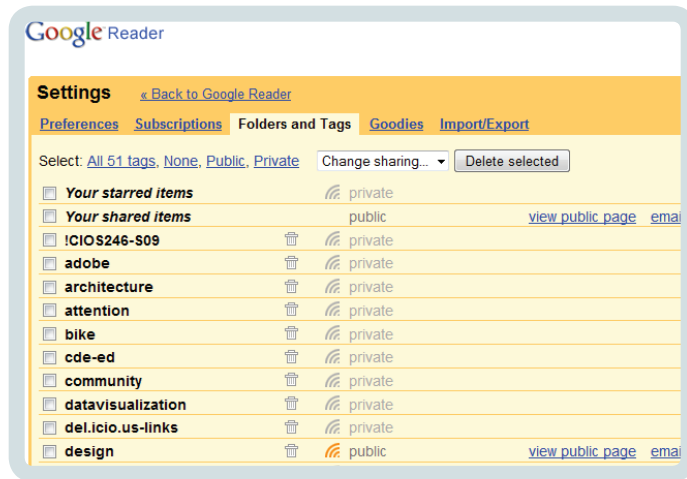
Subscriptions can also be sorted by folders. The drop-down box on the right of each subscription entry allows you to select a folder, or folders to assign. You can also add a new folder from here.
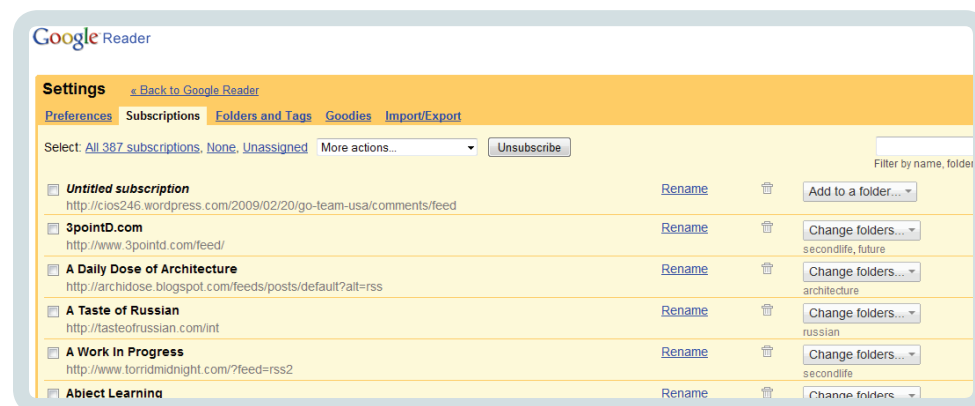
When you are finished managing your subscriptions use the BACK TO GOOGLE READER link.

Reading Subscriptions

Your subscriptions are all displayed (or are sorted) in the left sidebar of the Google Reader interface. To read them you can either click on a subscription to see all unread content in the feed, or click on a folder to see all of the unread content in the entire folder.
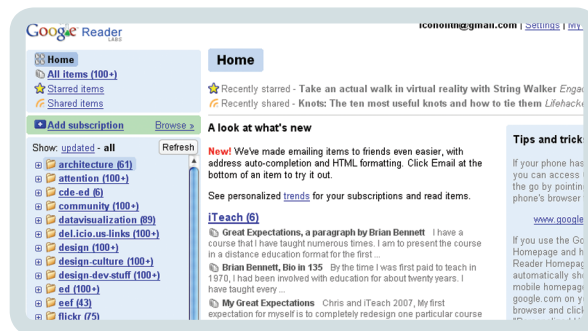
Clicking on the title of a post or the gray arrow beside it takes you to the original source of the article. This is particularly useful if a feed displays only part of the article.
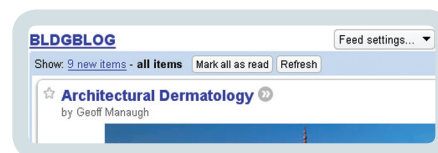
As you read through your feeds items they can be marked as being read. In list view, items are marked as read when you click on them. In expanded view, items are marked as read when you scroll past them. Un-check the mark-as-read box to leave the item unread.
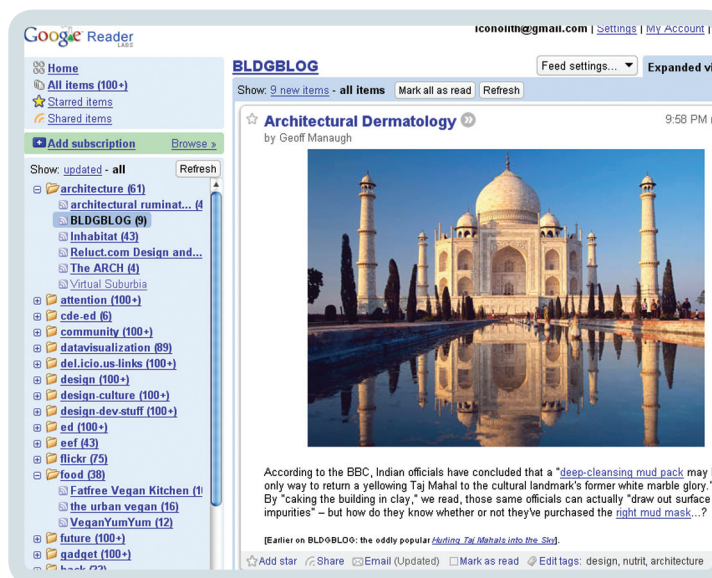
Sharing

There are three ways to share what you are reading in Reader - The Share button, the Shate with Note button, and Email. Use the Share button to add an item to your public (SHared Items) page. Your public page is an easy way to share items of interest with your friends and family. The Share with Notes button allows you to add a comment to the article you are sharing. The Email button allows you to email the item to a specific person.

Classroom Management

Classroom Communication and Management

Technology Readiness

When teaching online you must be ready to serve as the first level of technical support for your students. Primarily this means realizing that each level of technology that is needed places demands on your time, particularly at the beginning of a semester or the start of a new class.

If you are using Blackboard, have an assignment that helps the students learn the system before they start trying to learn and perform. We recommend a method that has proven successful in the past: the Blackboard Scavenger Hunt (see Teaching Tip: A Blackboard Scavenger Hunt).

If you are using a synchronous tool for class sessions or office hours, make at least the first session mandatory and plan to spend that session helping students get into and learn to use the basic functionality of the tool.

If you are requiring particular software tools and techniques (Word revision tracking, equation editing, VoiceThreads) link your students to existing resources for help and provide some documentation to help them get started.

Each new tool you introduce (discussion board, mailing list, blog) will create some amount of initial time to implement and some management time and responsibilities to your schedule.

Response Time and Consistency

Regardless of the means of communication that you promote or require your students to utilize, it is critical that you manage expectations of—and provide consistency in—your response times. Each student should know how long they can expect to wait if they send you an email or when they will be able to interact with you during your next session of office hours.

Email

Email is the bedrock communication means in online distance education. It can be enhanced—but never replaced—by a plethora of tools, some of which are discussed here. Using email effectively, as well as dealing with the demands of high-volumes of important email, are important skills for any contemporary instructor.

See the Teaching Tip: Handling Email Overload for specific ideas to make email work for you.

Daily, Weekly, and on Demand

Regular communication between student and instructor is vital to student success. Experience consistently shows that those students with whom an instructor has the earliest contact, and those students with whom there is the most communication, will have the highest rates of course completion. It is easier to just do your part to facilitate this communication than to attempt to solve the chicken-and-egg statistical conundrum inherent in the experience!

Every online instructor should plan time in their schedule for daily contact with selected students, weekly contact with the class, and on-demand responses:

• Daily email includes responses to questions and assignments and, most importantly, proactive communications with students to reassure them that you are there and that you are paying attention to their progress. Sending an email or two (depending on class size) means you will have some contact with even the most reluctant learners every few weeks. There is an added benefit in helping you learn more about—and remember—your individual students without the benefit of regular face-to-face interaction.

• Weekly email should be sent your entire class. If you are teaching a semester-based or cohort class, then this can include information about upcoming material and assignments. If you are teaching a radically asynchronous class, this message should at least include contact information, information about office hours, and a personal message to your students of some kind. Students tend to respond positively to email that includes tips or pointers to events in the news or popular media that relate to the course.

• On-Demand Email is that which is sent in response to student queries and assignment submissions. You will want to set aside a couple of regular weekly time to process this kind of email. Unless you are traveling or otherwise unable to access email for logistical reasons (students should, of course, be made aware of this), email shouldn't sit without response for more than 3-5 days. Your students should be made aware of this response time so they don't have to fret over whether the mail arrived, if they asked a 'stupid' question, if their assignment was lost, if you are ignoring them, etc.

Email Accounts, Clients, Folders and Organization

The Google Mail system now employed at UA happily makes the need for multiple email accounts a thing of the past. The Teaching Tip: Handling Email Overload can help you get started with simple-to-use (and no tech support or setup needed) email

aliases and folders (labels) to facilitate greater ease handling email for multiple classes without dividing your activity across accounts.

Archiving

Keeping an archive of email for past semesters is important in case of disputes that can occur long after a course term has ended. The Google Mail system provides enough space that you can retain mail—stored in folders so it is out for your way-- for years.

Traditional Mailing Lists

A traditional mailing list is a service to which you and your students "subscribe" and then all messages sent to the mailing list address are automatically distributed to the students. Like discussion boards, some students will take well to this medium and others will need more coaxing. The advantage of the mailing list is that it provides another simple means of promoting and creating class community within an interface and application that all students will be familiar with.

UAF does provide mailing list services (http://www.uaf.edu/listowners/listform.html), but you might find that you want more flexibility and services, in which case we have made some suggestions below:

- Yahoo Groups: http://groups.yahoo.com/
- Google Groups: http://groups.google.com/

Office Hours

Office hours are an important time for individual and small-group communication as well as reassuring your students that, even in a distance education setting, you are available to help them outside of regular class sessions. You are likely to discover that office hours are more often used for socialization than assistance, particularly if you provide an open area for group interaction in addition to a private channel to communicate with individual students. This social aspect of the medium is a good thing for sustaining the learning community in your classroom... don't discourage it!

On the class syllabus and web site, list your office hours and time-zone. You should set aside at least two periods per week during which you will be available. Don't be intimidated by the amount of time—like face-to-face office hours you can work on other things while you are waiting for students to take advantage of your availability.

Multiple short blocks of varying times (e.g. one in the afternoon, one in the evening, one on a weekend day) will likely be more effective than a few long sessions. If you are using audioconference, or another metered technology to hold office hours, make your students aware that you will wait on the line for a set amount of time for students to join the conference.

For online classes, there are a variety of low-bandwidth web-based tools that can be used to hold office hours:

- Blackboard Virtual Classroom and Blackboard Chat (http://classes.uaf.edu/) are simple communication and collaboration tools built into Blackboard which can be used to create scheduled live-chats and synchronous sessions which can be used for office hour activities. This Quick Tutorial demonstrates how both tools work: http://www.blackboard.com/quicktutorials/collaboration.swf and this document lists the steps to create either kind of activity space: http://help.unc.edu/5474

- Instant Messenger (IM) is a common, synchronous technology that will already be familiar to many students through personal use. With IM, you can have a real-time text conversation with a student (multiple students can be included in the same conversation or you can have multiple conversation windows open, each with a single student). There are a variety of IM clients that students might already be used to from their personal use of the web. A multi-client tool like Trillian, Miranda, or Fire can be used to allow you to interact with students using different tools. However, these multi-clients do not generally support the more advanced features that might be found in the dedicated IM client, such as file transfers, shared whiteboard, two-way audio, shared web browsing, or basic application sharing.

  - MSN Instant Messenger
    http://messenger.msn.com/

  - Yahoo Instant Messenger
    http://messenger.yahoo.com/

  - Trillian Unified Client for Windows
    http://www.trillian.cc/

  - Miranda Unified Client for Windows
    http://www.miranda-im.org/

  - Fire Unified Client for Mac
    http://fire.sourceforge.net/

- Meebo (http://www.meebo.com/) is a web-based Instant Messenger program that can be used to talk to students using various IM programs without even needing to install a client.

- Skype (http://www.skype.com/) is an increasingly popular service for two-way audio and IM that is unobtrusive and of relatively high quality. As a mechanism for two-way (and small group!) audio it works quite well and it has the advantage of being relatively common in the "real" world.

- Elluminate Live (http://elive.uaf.edu/) is a full-fledged synchronous class session tool which provides facilities for sharing PowerPoint presentations, text chat, two-way Internet audio, polling, shared whiteboard and even application sharing. With these features come increased technology and bandwidth demands. Each user must have a relatively modern computer running the latest version of Java and—if using two-way audio—headphones, microphone, and relatively stable Internet connection. If you are not planning on using features beyond two-way chat and/or simple audio, then would probably be better served with a less demanding application such as some of those mentioned earlier.

Assignments and Deadlines

Assignment Transmission

Handling the flow of assignments, corrections, and revisions can be a surprisingly difficult process. You will need to identify a few functional paths for your students to use and explicitly disallow using other methods except under exceptional, pre-approved circumstances. If you are planning to rely on transmission of files (word processor, PDF, image, application files, etc) rather than just plain text, there is an extra level of management to consider.

For UAF online instructors there will be a few primary mechanisms:

- The Assignment content type in Blackboard is intended to replace the digital drop box for lesson transactions. Assignments have a few important advantages over the drop box as a mechanism for homework and other document intake: items are directly reflected in the grade book for purposes of tracking and grading, and students have pre-defined mechanism for assignment submission that is within the flow of the content organization. This means no more missed assignments, mail lost in translation, attachments that can't be opened, etc.

- The Blackboard Digital Drop Box allows you to transfer files to and from students within Blackboard. This is a convenience, particularly because you can archive a number of files in Blackboard for distribution at any time in the future. However, because Blackboard doesn't notify you (or students) when new material has been transferred, this service is most often used to distribute planned material (accompanied by an announcement) or following a request by a student. If you use the drop box, you must remember to check for new materials at least every few days. Posting to the drop box from slow, remote connections can also be quite slow for large files.

- Mailing Lists and Bb Discussion Boards both allow (assuming local configuration doesn't disallow it) attachments in addition to the plain text, and thus can be used for assignment submission. Obviously, since these are generally public forums, you would only want to do this if you wish the students to share their work with others or as part of a peer review process.

- Email is often a comfortable approach for lesson transmittal, but it is also the one most prone to issues and most open to abuse.

- Paper Mail/Fax are still valid alternatives, particularly if you are doing work in the math/sciences where you need to capture symbols or other work processes that are hard to create using word processors or via plain text. If you are using fax, we highly recommend a fax-email service such as eFax (http://www.efax.com/), which allows you to receive faxes to your email, send faxes from the web, and fax from any application that you can print from.

File Formats

UAF students are not included in the UA licensing for Microsoft Office and other standard applications we might use as educators. If you want to take advantage of Microsoft Word Revision tracking, for example, you will need to ensure that your student population has access to Microsoft Word or is informed about a free alternative such as Open Office (http://www.openoffice.org/). PDF contains great markup and commentary tools but these are only partially accessible to students who have only the free Acrobat Reader product (and they will not be able to create PDF files for you).

Different curriculum has different demands, and there are successful classes that demand Word (or Open Office), Excel, some kind of Equation Editor, etc. but you have to make a conscious choice and understand the implications for your students (not just in obtaining the software, but in learning to use it and the time it might take to do so).

Timing and Deadlines

Distance education has become a popular option for students in part because of its flexibility with regards to time and performance. Online instructors have to seek a personal balance between creating an expectation of time-based performance and providing the flexibility that is needed for their often non-traditional learners to succeed.

Your students need to know what the deadlines are (these may be based on discrete dates or, in the case of open-entry classes, performance periods) and when they can expect grades and evaluative feedback. And of course, you must respect the deadlines too!

Radically asynchronous courses have to be based on performance periods beginning

with a student's entry into the class. Provide duration guidelines (by Week X, by X weeks from enrollment) for these students and, as part of your regular email contacts, help the students assess their performance. Don't let the prospect of managing these details deter you from providing this feedback that might be most critical in ensuring student success. Additionally, make use of online grade books, announcements, and entry points when facilitating online discussions to reiterate expectations and document progress (or lack thereof).

At the same time that you are creating a professional educational environment you want to remain flexible and adaptable to the needs of your students. In addition to all the "normal" hindrances and obstructions faced by students, online learners may encounter unexpected technical difficulties. It can be more difficult to evaluate truthfulness when faced with an excuse proffered by a distance student, and no instructor has time to grade large chunks of course material turned in late and/or at the last minute, so exceptions to deadlines and performance goals should be clearly exceptions in your students' minds rather than an expectation.

Academic Honesty and Assessment Integrity

Cheating happens, and there is research that the rate is rising on college campuses across the country… particularly in the form of plagiarism. The online educational environment is not necessarily worse than the face-to-face classroom, but the lack of proximity and a traditional reliance on conventional, selected response assessment methods has made many educators more aware of the issues than they would be otherwise.

There are a few basic ways to cheat, and for each there are strategies for remediation:

Plagiarism is the most common form of cheating and can be combated in a number of ways:

- Emphasize the art of citation… don't assume that your students already know how to cite properly and integrate external resources into their products, and don't allow them to feel bad if they don't!

- Utilize process writing techniques in which students need to produce multiple drafts

- Utilize reflective exercises where students have to engage in meta-cognitive thought about their performance

- Assignment Sharing entails any number of versions of the age-old "steal a copy of the test" routine that has been happening since the days of Professor Fred Flintstone. Some remediation strategies are to:

- Create new assessments

- Rotate and randomize assessment questions from question pools

- "Reveal" the test for a limited amount of time

- Put time limits on the assessment

- Require a proctored testing environment

- Paper Mills provide a ready resource for plagiarizing entire documents, but you can often detect such papers with additional strategies such as:

  - Careful reading and evaluation of the paper along with citation spot-checking

  - Familiarize yourself with common paper mill web sites and their products

  - Using Google to search for suspicious phrases (those that display an awkward fit, are extraordinarily advanced, have citations pointing to rare material, etc.)

  - Use Blackboard's SafeAssign system (see below)

As an educator you will do well to place an emphasis on more "authentic" assessment techniques involving performance over time, personalization, and current events which are not only often more effective indicators of understanding, but also make cheating more difficult. Look at the possibility of cheating as an opportunity to reconsider your assessment strategy, your use of self-assessment and other formative assessments, and to implement new techniques for communication that are enabled through technology.

Every class syllabus and web site should have a clear institutional statement regarding academic honesty. More importantly, each class you teach should contain a personal statement from you detailing why you care and the fundamental reasons the students should care as well!

Blackboard SafeAssign is a tool built into Blackboard which automatically compares student papers with a large database of papers, articles and reference material, identifying simple plagiarism. SafeAssign can be used in two ways:

- As an automatic process during assignment submission
  http://tinyurl.com/c2za6j

- As an ad-hoc tool to spot check particular papers
  http://tinyurl.com/dlwtck

Also see the Teaching Tip: Assessment Integrity for more information.

Web Research, Knowledge Management, Currency

RSS (web feeds), Google Reader, and del.icio.us are tools for capturing information, keeping current, and sharing with others to try to keep current with trends in online teaching, selected technologies, and your discipline!

See:

- RSS for Educators [word]
  http://www.lo.redjupiter.com/gems/weblogged/RSSFAQ2.doc
- Blogging and RSS for Educators
  http://www.infotoday.com/MMSchools/jan04/richardson.shtml
- Google Feed Reader: http://www.google.com/reader/
- Del.icio.us Social Bookmark Manager: http://del.icio.us/
- Diigo Social Bookmarks and Web Annotation: http://diigo.com/

Copyright Issues

Fair Use principles for the online classroom are not significantly different from those in the face-to-face classroom, but the scrutiny in such situations is often much higher. Common practices that are in the gray areas of the law (or outright contradict it), such as using the same photocopies from a newsmagazine each semester, are more exposed in the online environment, where you must build curriculum materials well ahead of time.

In addition, the authoring environment for online materials and the wealth of resources available on the Web make it ever easier to cut, paste, copy, and duplicate information.

The bottom line is, if you wish to use material created by others, and you want to use more than 10% or 1000 words of a longer article, multiple illustrations or tables, complete short articles, you really should obtain permission to do so.

You do not need permission to link to any publicly available resource, given that you do not frame the content in a misleading way nor copy the material to another server or location.

For more information see the Teaching Tip: Copyright, Fair Use and Educators.

Share and Share Alike

On the flip-side of the copyright issue is that of how to share your material in a protected, productive way. There are many ways to share course materials with your colleagues, from making it available using your UAF Faculty web space to formally packaging material up into a technically correct "learning object." Most learning object repositories accept submissions of all kinds of materials, including Word/PDF documents, image files, multimedia files, HTML pages or links to existing web sites. Contributing in this way helps create a healthy information ecology.

There is a developing school of thought that—thanks to the oversized influence of conglomerate media companies—copyright restrictions and durations have become greatly exaggerated and onerous. After one change in 100 years of service, copyright protection has since been changed many times, extending protection to 98 years and granting automatic registration and extensions. Ironically, the companies that have been most persuasive in their lobbying to extend and enhance copyright protection—such as Disney—would not exist were it not for the public domain which they seek to obliterate.

When making material available to the public, you have the option to use a less restrictive Creative Commons (CC) license (see http://creativecommons.org/) which allows you to select your protections in terms of whether or not you require attribution, whether you allow modification, and whether or not you allow commercial uses of your work. Select your options and you will have a tested, legal license that you can affix to your work. In addition, digital media can be given specific "metadata tags" which can be searched and used by special search engines to create a search facility for CC licensed material, a vital first step towards rehabilitating the public domain that our intellectual foundation rests upon.

See:

- Free Culture by Lawrence Lessig clearly (and entertainingly, believe it or not) lays out the deep problems in our copyright system and the gutting of the public domain on which our artistic and intellectual strengths lie. Freely available in many format at: http://free-culture.org/freecontent/ or purchase a copy at your local bookstore
- "The Progress of Science and Useful Arts: Why Copyright Today Threatens Intellectual Freedom"
  http://www.fepproject.org/policyreports/copyright2dexsum.html
- The Value of the Public Domain
  http://homepages.law.asu.edu/~dkarjala/OpposingCopyrightExtension/publicdomain.html
- Creative Commons: http://creativecommons.org/

The Weekly Routine

Rather than provide a sample schedule, it might be useful to just recap some of the important actions that you may need to accommodate in your weekly online teaching routine (not counting traditional activities):

- Daily email check, responses
- Daily gradebook updating
- Twice weekly automated quiz check
- Twice weekly discussion forum post and check
- Thrice weekly digital drop box check
- Weekly pro-active email
- Weekly (min) synchronous office hours
- Regular announcement postings, updated, content updates

Teaching Tip: Assessment Integrity

Every instructor, whether a distance educator or not, faces the issue of promoting and enforcing standards of academic integrity… a concern only highlighted by the distributed student population in a distance course.

Defining the Problem

Studies indicate that academic dishonesty is on the rise among high-school and college age students. There's no evidence that cheating is more common in distance education. Advances in computing technology and the ubiquity of the Internet have reduced the barrier between the impulse to cheat and the actual practice of doing so.

Coping Strategies

- Develop a clear class policy. Provide a statement to your students explaining the importance of academic integrity and what you expect from them. But don't stop here! Create an atmosphere of support and trust: outline what you expect from yourself as an instructor, provide access to information about how to use outside resources, and give directions for obtaining help.

- Utilize Technology. The Blackboard system allows you to assign password protection and time limits to quizzes and tests which can be automatically created using random selections from large pools of test questions.

- If you suspect plagiarism you can use the SafeAssign feature in Blackboard to scan for plagiarism automatically or on demand. You can also simply search for unique phrases with Google.

- Change-Up Your Curriculum. Assign less common readings and ask different questions. Tie your assignments more closely to your individual class materials and discussions. Change your assignments each term. Add your unique perspective to put a "twist" on assignments. This is likely to be more interesting for both you and your students!

- Focus on Process. By attaching importance and expectation to process, you can spread the weight of a grade out, taking away much of the motivation for cheating. This can take the form of keeping drafts, copying research materials, having students write up the research process, benchmarking, etc.

- Rethink Your Assessment Strategy. Sometimes the "quiz-quiz-test" cycle remains in place out of habit. Take some time to think about exactly what you want your students to learn and what other ways might exist to assess the effectiveness of your instruction. Perhaps portfolios, structured writing assignments, dis-

cussion, games, role-playing or other less traditional tools can be of use, leaving traditional tests and quizzes for reinforcement and self-assessment (or for use in proctored situations).

- Require a Proctor. The Center for Distance Education has a standard process for remote students to access proctors in their community… there's more overhead involved in this approach, but it is undeniably more secure.

Positive Effects

Each of these strategies for dissuading dishonesty is also a potential point for improving the educational experience. While it is important to stand firmly for—and as an example of—academic integrity, the challenge of creating more "cheat resistant" curriculum materials and assessments can help you more clearly identify what is really important to you as an instructor and create a richer and more diverse curriculum for your students.

UAF CDE Teaching Tip: A Blackboard Scavenger Hunt

The Blackboard Learning Management system can be a valuable addition to just about any class, but to be effective students must know how to use it! Take some of the drudgery out of the process by allowing your students to discover by doing—in this case by utilizing a simple, but effective, Blackboard Scavenger Hunt.

Learning Objectives

Students familiarize themselves with the following primary Blackboard tools/areas:

- Announcements
- Syllabus
- Assignments/Course Documents
- Discussion Boards
- External Links

Students demonstrate their mastery by completing a brief Blackboard assessment.

Format/Process

1. Place the "items" in the appropriate locations in your Blackboard course in various formats (items may be part of regular class materials or special items posted just for the Scavenger Hunt) for example:

   - in a Blackboard Announcement
   - in a document in the Course Information area
   - in a folder within the course documents section
   - in the class syllabus
   - in a discussion board posting
   - in a document passed to the student using the Digital Drop Box

2. Create a short, point-bearing Blackboard quiz asking for the items they found and make it available.

3. Create a handout (paper, Word, PDF, or text) outlining the Scavenger Hunt items, tips on locations, and a place to note answers. Don't forget to indicate where they go in your course to take the quiz.

4. Provide the handout to students as early as possible in the semester, preferably before asking students to use Blackboard to access course curriculum. Finally, students will complete a short, graded, point-bearing Blackboard quiz using the items they have found.

Examples

The key to successful Scavenger Hunt is to make the items being sought fun and/or relevant to the curriculum. For example, UAA faculty devised an exercise in which students search for words to complete an amusing limerick. You could similarly have students finding parts of a theorem, the names of authors, quotations, medical terms, chemical scientific names, or other kinds of information might be relevant to your class.

Another approach would be to devise an assignment using parts of the course and syllabus, as you can read about in this paper from Merlot: "Scavenger Hunt Enhances Students' Utilization of Blackboard" (http://jolt.merlot.org/Vol2_No2_Jones.htm)

Teaching Tip:
Copyright, Fair Use and Educators

With a new semester quickly approaching, many instructors find themselves revising old materials and creating new syllabi. Being creators themselves, it behooves instructors to pay attention to copyright law, which protects the rights of those who create materials while ensuring educational access. A quick review of copyright at this point in the process can save a lot of trouble later on!

About Copyright Law

Original materials are automatically protected by copyright upon creation and for at least 50 years beyond the death of the author. The exclusive rights of the copyright holder include:

- Reproduction of the copyrighted work
- Distribution of copies of the work as sales, rentals, lease, or gifts
- Rights to perform or display the work publicly

About Fair Use

"Fair Use" is a concept defined by the Copyright Law of 1976 that defines situations in which copyrighted material may be used without permission. The three primary considerations for determining fair use are: brevity, spontaneity, and the cumulative effect. In other words, selections should be short, included "on the fly", and should not have the effect of limiting sales. The law itself defines the conditions for fair use as:

- The purpose and character of the use must be educational or non profit in nature.
- Copied material must be an excerpt or a portion of the original work without being a critical portion.
- The teacher may not impair the marketability of the work

Educator Guidelines

Current technologies such as the Internet, high-speed copiers, and scanners, make abuse of fair use all too easy. Educators and publishers have come up with an informal set of guidelines that define fair use in education:

- A complete article or story less than 2,500 words; 1,000 words or 10% (whichever is shorter) of a prose work that is excerpted; one illustration, chart, diagram, or picture per book or periodical issue; a short poem of less than 250 words, or an excerpt of a longer poem of not more than 250 words.

- The copying must be for only one course, and no more than one short poem, article, or story or two excerpts can be copied from the works of one author.

- Unauthorized copying may not be used to replace an anthology or compilation.

- Unauthorized copies may not be made of consumable works such as workbooks or standardized tests.

- Unauthorized copying may not substitute for the purchase of books, authorized reprints, or periodicals.

- The same instructor may not copy the same item without permission from term to term.

- Students cannot be charged beyond the actual cost of photocopying.

Multimedia Materials

Fair use generally allows for presentation of video and multimedia materials in the classroom, such as playing a video the class. The same holds true in a distance education context, with the exception that the broadcast of the material to the students must be in a closed circuit (limited to enrolled students only), delivered real-time, and cannot be archived. This is important to remember if you plan to use video materials in a videoconference class!

More Information

For more information, contact us, or peruse the following resources:

- Copyright Law of 1976: http://www.loc.gov/copyright/title17/
- The University of Texas "Rules of Thumb": http://www.utsystem.edu/ogc/intellectualproperty/copypol2.htm
- Intellectual Property and Copyright: http://www.uwex.edu/disted/intprop.html
- The "4 Point Test": http://fairuse.stanford.edu/Copyright_and_Fair_Use_Overview/chapter9/9-b.html
- Questions and Answers on Copyright for the Campus Community: http://www.nacs.org/public/copyright/

Teaching Tip:
Handling Email Overload

Email communication is de rigueur in today's environment, providing a welcome opportunity for interaction in almost any course. But the sometimes massive email traffic associated with a course can also leave one feeling overwhelmed and ill-equipped to respond adequately. In this Teaching Tip we look at some coping strategies.

Learn Your Client

Google Mail is nearly as good as a desktop client (and in some ways better). The storage capacity, search features, and availability from anywhere you can access the web make it imperative that you learn to use it adeptly. As you could with the former UA email system, you can still use a desktop client if you prefer, using the Google Mail web application occasionally if at all… but the same lesson applies here: learn the capabilities of your client to save time and effort.

Getting Organized with Folders and Filters

Organizing your email is a fundamental management strategy. For this task, folders (called "labels" in Google Mail) are your friend. Use folders to separate email into manageable groups that will not get lost in your busy inbox. Typically you should assign a folder for each class you teach.

You could manually sort mail, but it's much more productive to perform this task automatically using aliases and filters.

Aliases are automatically supported by the UA Google Mail system. Simply add a '+' sign followed by the alias you wish to use. For instance, if your email address were hjsimpson@alaska.edu you could add an alias for a class by using the address hjsimpson+engl213@alaska.edu and the mail will still come to your account. No special setup necessary.

Filters are available in Google Mail (and other capable clients) to automatically detect mail sent to a particular alias and file it appropriately. For help setting up filters, see the Google Help document "Using Filters" (http://tinyurl.com/gmfilters)

Expectations and Response Time

Expectation is a powerful and unpredictable force. You must make clear to your students what they can expect from you in terms of response time. They should know that instant responses might sometimes occur serendipitously, but not all the time. A predictable two day turnaround time is more valuable to your students than

an unpredictable time that varies between one-hour at some times and four or more days at others. For this reason, your response time policy should include a minimum and a maximum limit.

When the time comes to answer email, provide an adequate answer! Where possible, include direct reference(s) to the original message. You don't have to be profound, but you should clearly and directly communicate. Be opportunistic and take advantage of this contact to personally engage the student, reassuring them of your presence and willingness to assist them, and providing relevant contact, web address, and other information in your signature.

Copying and Pasting is OK

Sometimes teachers avoid cutting and pasting replies and other email communications to students because it feels like "cheating." But this is untrue… as long as the communication is accurate and timely, the method used to create it doesn't really matter! Many instructors have created methods to enable quick responses to common questions:

- Keep a simple text file or word document to copy and paste from
- Learn to access and copy text from messages in their Sent Mail folder
- Use the BCC (Blind Carbon Copy) feature to send the same message to multiple students without revealing their email address to each other

Address Books and Mailing Lists

All clients provide some way to store contacts and create lists. Taking the time to create a mailing list for your classes will pay dividends in the future because it becomes simple to do more than just respond to inquiries, but to be active and initiate communication.

Be Proactive

If you master your email client and techniques it can be a powerful ally in the fight for your student's attention. Sending an email or two each week—reminding students of assignment due dates, noting something from the news or popular media, providing a quick tip—can have a marked effect on performance and retention. Informal communications are the glue that makes a course "sticky" for the students.

Work Plan for Completing Course Development

Completed this week:	
Remaining tasks:	
Next steps: *(from the list above, what are the next five things you need to accomplish?)*	
Do you have all the knowledge and information you need to complete these tasks? If not, what's missing?	
What decisions do you still need to make about this course?	
Which tasks will be most challenging? When will you tackle those items?	
Sketch a timeline or create a scheduled list of your plans for completion.	