



Teaching in the Digital Age: Building Connection through Technology

SPEAKERS

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Tierney King 00:01

This is the Faculty Focus Live podcast sponsored by the Teaching Professor. I'm your host, Tierney King, and I'm here to bring you inspiration, energy, and creative strategies that you can utilize in your everyday teaching. Recently, Magna Publications had our Teaching Professor Online Conference, and I found myself surrounded by questions about student engagement. How do you engage your students with your content? How much extra work is it to gamify your courses? What specific tools have you used to help engage your students and is it working? As educators, you understand the need to captivate your students' attention. So today, we're going to explore specific technology tools that can help reinvigorate your teaching methods - if you're having fun with the content and technology, so are your students. To start, Emily Faulconer will explain how H5P tools can engage students in the content and help you check for understanding, from a self-reflection piece to interactive instructions. She explains how there are numerous ways you can begin integrating H5P tools in your own course.

Emily Faulconer 01:09

So personalizing the learning experience is a really important aspect. And you can do that through interactivity and it can help promote learning in those online classroom environments. One way that you can achieve this is through edtech tools that will increase interactivity and H5P is one such tool that can help your students learn and retain course content. In short, you can create the HTML5 content through H5P using existing platforms like your LMS with the ability to edit with instant updates and share your work with other faculty across your own institution and beyond. All you need to do this is a web browser and a website with an H5P plugin like WordPress, Moodle, or Canvas. So H5P is a powerful yet simple tool to use. There are over 50 options for creating interactive materials. And you can still present your own content including text, video, audio images and hyperlinks while also embedding interactivity. So the next idea for using H5P is to create some engaging instructions for activities that also check for understanding. So in my environmental science class, I have this activity that's called a wanderer. And while I love this activity, it requires the students to do a self-reflection piece. And that's just not a skill that most of my students come into my classroom already having. And so I learned that the hard way. And so I started working on my instructions in each class. Each semester, I would revisit my instructions and try to make them more clear and more supportive to try to promote stronger self-reflection from my students. And so then I came up with the idea of creating instructions that check for understanding to kind of walk the students through what self-reflection looks and feels like so that they

can do self-reflection the right way, the first time. Now this wander activity is a repeating activity, they do it at the end of the week, each week. And so before I started using H5P, it was usually around week three or four that most of my students really got it, and were submitting high quality self-reflections. But what I found was that by adding these interactive and engaging instructions that check for understanding, more and more of my students are actually performing strong self-reflection in modules one and two. So they're getting better grades on this activity earlier in the class. And I think that has a lot to do with just making sure that they understand it. So the way I do the engagement instructions, is I set it up very similar to assertion-evidence slide, but I present, first of all, I give the big picture of the activity, what they're supposed to be doing, why they're doing it, and then I break it down task by task. So I'll have task one on one slide, move on to the next task and the next task. And then I have several multiple choice questions within to make sure that they understand. And then I have a couple of true/false questions at the end. I'm not trying to give them something hard at the end. I'm just trying to make sure do they understand the instructions as they've been presented. And I do that with just a couple true/false questions at the end to make sure. So that is another idea for using H5P in your own class. Now, the idea that I'd like to present is exploring content through a timeline. So if your course has something that has chronology or sequence to it, using a timeline can be a really engaging way to allow students to explore that. So in my chemistry class, I use that to help the students explore how the model of the atom changed over time, because it truly is fun and fascinating to see how scientists progressively understood more and more and more about what the atom looked like and how these particles interacted and where they were located in space. The idea of these electrons, having these clearly defined orbits morphed into the model where we've got these electron clouds. And so it really helps the students understand how that model progressed through time. And when you're doing timelines, I think one aspect that's really cool is it's not just text, you can use images in your timeline. And you can even use assets from platforms like YouTube and Google Maps to support your timeline. So it's really really cool way to present these types of chronological or sequential concepts to your students.

Tierney King 05:50

H5P tools aren't your only option for tech tools. In this program, Leni Caldwell dives into a few other options. She starts with a digital foldable, which uses Google Slides as a basis that you can use for guided notes, a flip book or a take home study guide. Additionally, she explains how Mentimeter can preassess what students know on a topic so that you're allocating your time and attention to the topics that need it most.

Eleni Caldwell 06:14

We're all familiar with PowerPoint and Google Slides. This is easiest in Google Slides, because it can be shared with students with a forced copy. For example, I want to create a digital foldable for today's information that will be given during class. This could be information given during readings, maybe I'm having them preview an article or a lecture or all the above. So students will have this digital foldable pulled up on their laptop, so they can take guided notes throughout it. We know a highly effective learning practice for students is to have guided notes, that means that I'm providing them the basis of what is needed to get out of that lecture or out of that article. For example, I could give them fill in the blanks, I could give them prompts, very specific prompts. So then they know what they will be assessed on. This is building that student understanding. It's also scaffolding that student understanding,

especially for exceptional learners. Using Google slides to create these digital foldables is really fun and easy. For example, I will show you one that looks like a flip book, so that when students go back to view their notes to study, they can put it in presentation mode on Google Slides, and actually click through it. And as they're clicking, they will be able to go back to home and go to their next slide. Now, the sounds like well, how did they do that? You're just linking images or words to guide them through it. You will see an example of one that I give students when they look at an article. It's actually a book excerpt on the Triple E Framework for learning technologies. Since I can link pictures or words, I'm going to link words here, just highlight, link, and remember you're going with in the presentation. I can then go back and make everything very pretty. So when students view their slideshow after they have filled in everything they need to fill in. So you have a take home study guide based on your classroom notes. The last tool that we're going to talk about is Mentimeter. Hopefully, you've had the opportunity to use Mentimeter. Mentimeter can make learning dynamic. And that is what we're here to do. We're here to make it active. We want students to be an active participant in their learning. So with Mentimeter, students will join with a code, they can also, Mentimeter now provides a QR code that they could actually scan in presentation mode, or you can share a link with them. Mentimeter is sort of like, let's say slides, you can create multiple slides. Or let's say you just want one, you can just create one in Mentimeter. One of my favorite things to do is at the beginning of a lesson, I want to know how much students understand on this topic already. I want to preassess their schema going in. So I may throw up a question. For example, What is active learning? And I'm going to use the word cloud function on Mentimeter to create a slide where students can add three words or phrases. Now students will see the QR code, or I'll share the link with them on Canvas or whatever LMS you use, or they will go to menti.com and put in the numerical code. Now, students can type in those words and as they're typing in those words to answer my question, What is active learning?, they will be populating on the screen that I'm projecting. So then I have this word cloud, to be able to say, "Wow, my students already knew this much about this topic, maybe I'm going to spend less time on it." That makes me the reflective instructional designer at that point to be able to move forward. There's also other ways that I've used this tool. I have used it to provide students an article to read. And during this article, they were actually in partners. They read the article and with their partners, they joined the Mentimeter, and then they had questions to answer so you can add polls, multiple choice. One of my favorite ones is like a waterfall. So then it just scrolls and students can see on the board from their open ended responses what other groups are also saying about this article.

Tierney King 11:16

Lastly, Jean Mandernach explains how she uses Loom to record screencasts and videos, communicate back and forth with her students, and how PearDeck can add interactivity and assessment to your slides.

Jean Mandernach 11:29

Another tool in my toolbox is Loom. Loom is a video recorder. Not only does it record videos, but it records screencasts. So Loom will allow you to use your webcam or whatever you're using attached to your computer, just turn it on and be able to quickly and easily record just a video, you can record just a screencast. Or you can actually have a screencast with your video embedded right in it. Now what makes Loom a little bit different than other video and screencast recorders is that Loom is an extension to the Chrome toolbar. So rather than it being a separate program, once you've installed

Loom on your computer, you'll just have a little icon up in the corner on your toolbar of Chrome. And when you're ready to record a video, you can just click that button, it will pop up, it will ask you what you'd like to record. And you can just tell it, I want a video, I want a screencast I want a screencast with video, you record it, if you want to edit it, you can you don't have to. But it has editing tools built right in. And the minute you tell it you're done, it automatically has copied that link. So now all you need to do is paste the link. You don't have to upload or download anything, you don't have to wait for the video to process, you don't have to go from your recorder into a different program, it's just immediately ready to use. The other thing I like about Loom is I can now go into my Loom account, and I can look at those videos and I can see how many views they've had. It gives options for students to create videos. So it's not only my ability to create videos and screencasts, the students have the ability to do so as well. I like to use it not only to ensure that I'm giving students content and content delivery, but it's great for doing screencasts of feedback. It allows students to create videos for me and engage with those videos. You can go back and forth sending each other quick and easy videos that are sometimes easier than just trying to explain it. One of the courses I teach, statistics, I found that I can really quickly just turn on Loom do a screencast with my video, and they hear my voice, we personalize the experience they see me talking, they can see what I'm clicking on the screen. And I can really quickly demonstrate for them what I need them to be able to do. Likewise, I can have them do that if they're struggling to do one of the statistics problems or to utilize our statistics program. And I'll say, well just turn on your Loom, record a video for me and send it to me real quick. And now I can actually watch their process to know where things were going wrong. So not only can you use Loom to create the formal videos that you might use as part of your teaching, but you can also use it for the really informal back and forth between students to make it a much more human, personalized, intimate kind of learning experience. So they don't feel like they're always trying to learn just using text. Another program to really engage students in that learning is PearDeck. And PearDeck was originally designed for kind of a K-12 audience. So at first sight, it might be something you want to dismiss because it seems like it's a little maybe immature for our college students. But the reality is the functionality of PearDeck goes across all ages. What PearDeck is, is a presentation program that allows you to take slides, whether that's Google Slides or a PowerPoint slide, and it allows you to embed interactivity right in it. So you can take existing presentations that you might have and you can go through those presentations, and you can add in formative assessments, asking students to respond to questions to check their understanding, to provide insights on you know, do you believe this is true or false? So you can even get some of those reflective questions. It even allows you to embed some short answer kinds of questions in there. The key here is to move a presentation from being a one directional presentation from you to the student to a back and forth. You start to create an interactive dynamic. Not only does that allow you to ensure that students are using the instructional resources that you provide for them, but it allows them a really quick and easy way to check their understanding. Did I understand what the instructor was saying? Did I actually grasp the key points of this presentation? I find the most valuable use of PearDeck for me is to just have students do small formative classroom assessment type techniques while I'm presenting the information. So I can take my slides, I go into those slides, and every about five slides or so I'll embed something for the students to do. And now when they're watching the presentation, it doesn't turn into them just being passive recipients of my information. They can actually respond and reply, and they can gauge their understanding. And you can build right in the feedback. So if they're getting a question wrong, it tells them what they needed for that correct information. It makes students much more of an active part of that teaching and learning dynamic.

Tierney King 16:38

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