

e-Learning: Higher Ed in a Web 2.0 World

Today's students bring new expectations to the classroom. They expect a higher level of classroom interaction. They take it for granted that lectures will include multimedia and will incorporate hands-on problem solving and inquiry based activities.

Blogs, clickers, listservs, online portfolios, podcasts, simulations, social networking, video storytelling, and wikis—how can new instructional technologies transform teaching?

Web 1.0

e-Learning has evolved through a series of overlapping stages. Stage 1 consisted of communication and course management tools, from web page to, course management systems, PowerPoint, email, bulletin boards, and chat rooms.

Web 1.0 definitely improved the learning experience. It facilitated student-faculty and student-to-student communication. It gave students access to a broad range of databases and research resources. It made it much easier for students to conduct searches. It broadened the range of resources we brought into our classes, including audio and visual resources. And it allowed us to reinforce student learning by presenting material visually.

But too often, Web 1.0 involved an impoverished definition of interactivity. Too many instructors use PowerPoint as if it were a teleprompter—and find it difficult to adjust to student questions and confusions. Chat rooms were, too often, devoid of serious and engaged conversation.

Course Management Systems

CourseWorks, BlackBoard, Moodle, Sakai

Listservs and Chat Rooms

H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences Online
<http://h-net.msu.edu>

Online Quizzes

Online Assessment

Web 1.0 Tools

WebPage Editors

Google Sites <http://sites.google.com/>



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To arrange a one-on-one consultation, contact:

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Web 2.0

e-Learning's second stage emphasizes active learning, collaboration, and enhanced interaction. Wikis, blogs, mash-ups, podcasts, tags, and social networking are the buzz words. These technological innovations offer opportunities to students to engage in inquiry and to share resources and create collaborative projects.

Web 2.0 is informed by a "constructivist" understanding of learning in which students devise their own conceptual models for understanding.

Blogging

<http://www.blogger.com>
<http://www.glogster.com>
<http://www.ning.com>

Collaboration

Google Docs <http://docs.google.com>

Possible collaborative projects:

A virtual museum
A virtual encyclopedia
Student-annotated texts

Digital Research Tools

Databases

<http://wwwapp.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/app/rti/index.jsp>

E-journals

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/eresources/ejournals/index.html>

E-books

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/eresources/ebooks/index.html>

E-images

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/eresources/eimages/index.html>

E-music

<http://wwwapp.cc.columbia.edu/ldpd/app/rti/results?hl=1&ps=1&sb=1&ss=1&qt=6&q=&hpp=10000&hk=-1&rt=sr>

Data Sets

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/dssc/eds/index.html>

Subject Guides

<http://www.columbia.edu/cgi-bin/cul/resolve?lweb0102>

Digital Storytelling

PhotoStory3

<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/digitalphotography/PhotoStory/default.mspx>

Live Chat

Adobe Connect

Photo Sharing and Tagging

Podcasts and Video Podcasts

Audacity

<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>

Social Networking

Innovative ways to interact with your students.

<http://www.facebook.com>

How to teach with FaceBook

Twitter

Twitter allows you to send very “news flashes” to your students, helping you to build a sense of community. Examples include:

- Microblogging
- Twitter Summaries: Summarizing a complex argument in 140 characters requires a lot of academic discipline.
- Twitter Links: Share a Hyperlink
- Twitter Stalking: Follow a topic
- Micro Meeting
- Micro Writing: Have students contribute to a story

Video

YouTube

<http://www.youtube.com>

Saving YouTube videos

www.keepvid.com

www.savetube.com

Virtual Reality Environments

The most famous is Second Life.

Wikis

<http://www.wikispaces.com>

- In a freshmen literature seminar, the instructor used the wiki as a place for students to more deeply analyze course texts. Individual passages from the texts were posted on the wiki. The students would then highlight a word or phrase from those passages and interpret it. Students read their colleagues' interpretations and responded to them, creating a dialogue out of class that further enriched the in-class discussions.
- The professor of a German language class used the wiki for composition projects. The students would practice the vocabulary and grammar of that unit as they collaboratively created and edited a larger text on the subject.
- An English professor posted weekly assignments for students to answer on the wiki. The students created new pages for each assignment and, using Wikispaces' tagging feature, the professor was able to easily gather and list all the assignments based on that particular tag, making for easy organization of a large wiki.
- A professor used her wiki to create a fluid curriculum for her course. After giving the students some background, she had them create the course syllabus, sign up to moderate particular sessions, and determine the plans for each class meeting. The collaboration at the beginning of the course and the moderation responsibilities throughout the course enriched the class discussions and increased her students' engagement.

Online Teaching

Online Teaching

Effective online teaching requires many of the same pedagogical principles as successful face to face instruction: a course with clear learning objectives, a high level of student engagement, creation of a learning community involving numerous opportunities for interaction, activities that promote active learning and that are aligned with your learning objectives, and frequent feedback.

Yet without careful preparation, online teaching can quickly become overwhelming. Many instructors find it hard to keep up with posts and replies. Many find it difficult to communicate with students when they can't see a face. Some find the lack of “real-time” communication maddening. And many find it difficult to develop certain kinds of skills, such as writing skills, in an online environment.

What, then, can you do?

1. Make sure your expectations, course policies, and course timeline are clear
2. Create a sense of community
 - have students introduce themselves and have them respond to student introductions
 - use “icebreaker” activities to acquaint students with one another
3. Generate substantive discussions
 - prompt students to expand on relevant points
 - play “devil’s advocate”
4. Address multiple learning styles by taking advantage of the multimedia capabilities of the Internet
 - use video clips, sound files, and visuals to prompt discussion
 - teach research skills with an online “scavenger hunt”
5. Create activities to develop students’ critical thinking and problem solving skills

These might include:

 - case studies
 - debates
 - critiques of classmates’ assignments
 - compare and contrast activities
 - role playing exercises
 - have students subscribe to a scholarly listserv
6. Incorporate frequent assessments so that students can monitor their own learning
 - study questions
 - sample answers to illustrate the instructor’s expectations
 - rubrics to identify assessment guidelines
 - “authentic” assessments using real world examples
 - multiple assessment strategies in addition to quizzes, papers, and exams.
 - self-assessments and peer feedback
7. Use multiple technologies

These might include:

 - discussion boards
 - teleconferencing
 - collaboration tools
8. Best practices
 - introduce students to e-citizenry, proper online etiquette
 - Create guides for your students (e.g. how to read a text critically or how to write a research paper)
 - Solicit “formative” feedback from your students so you can make mid-course adjustments
 - Encourage students to share resources with their fellow students; incorporate the highest quality resources into your courses
 - Communicate to the entire class when possible rather than to individual students

Hybrid or Blended Courses

Hybrid courses seek to bridge the divide between distance ed and face-to-face classes by replacing some portions of the classroom experience online, for example, lectures. This, then, allows you to use the face-to-face time in creative ways or to emphasize one on one, team, and small group interaction.

Instructional Resources

General Sites

Merlot

<http://taste.merlot.org/repository.html>

Virtual Resource Site for Teaching with Technology

<http://www.umuc.edu/virtualteaching/techs.html>

History

Digital History

<http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu>

History Matters

<http://www.historymatters.gmu.edu>