

Teaching with New Media

"When people talk to me about the digital divide, I think of it not so much about who has access to what technology as about who knows how to create and express themselves in the new language of the screen. If students aren't taught the language of sound and images, shouldn't they be considered as illiterate as if they left college without being able to read and write?" - George Lucas, filmmaker

For some instructors, incorporating new media, namely audio, video, and web resources, into traditional text-heavy curriculum/assignments can appear overwhelming. Where do you start? What tools should be used? How will the assignment unfold? Will students learn what they need to learn? Below are five basic guiding principles for getting started with teaching with new media.

1) **Begin at the End:** Start with student learning outcomes and work backwards. What is the ultimate concept, skill, or behavior you'd like your students to learn through the new media assignment? For example, if you want students to develop visual literacy, you might consider assigning a photo essay or a short video project.

2) **Adapt:** Instead of overhauling the curriculum, identify a part that can benefit from new media. Is there a component of a class or an assignment that can benefit from the use of images, audio, or videos? For example, photo analysis, audio reflections, and video essays are common new media assignments.

3) **Choose Easy Tools:** The number of new media tools available today is just staggering (see link below for the most popular ones). The best strategy is to choose low-barrier tools — the ones that require minimal technical skills and resources to employ. For example, Animoto and Stupeflix are web-based video creation tools that require no technical knowledge whatsoever, but the results are pretty awesome.

4) **Iterate Often:** As with any new approach to teaching, the key is to gather feedback, make adjustments, and redeploy. An easy way to do this is to ask your students to provide feedback before, during, and after the new media assignment, and use the feedback to make adjustments for the next round.

5) **Cultivate, Not Control:** Teaching with new media requires instructors to let go of some control of the learning process. Digital students are often more savvy and knowledgeable with new media, so the key is to channel their energy towards learning. For example, instead of restricting how students approach the assignment, focus instead on helping them achieve the learning outcome for that assignment.

Resources:

Centre for Learning and Performance Technologies (2012, October 1). Top 100 Tools for Learning 2012. Retrieved from <http://c4lpt.co.uk/top100tools/> on July 5, 2013.

Dunn, Jeff (2012, November 15). The 100 Best Learning Tools of 2012 As Chosen by You. Edudemic. Retrieved from <http://www.edudemic.com/2012/11/best-learning-tools-2012/> on July 5, 2013.

Wesch, M. (2009, January 7). From knowledgable to knowledge-able: Learning in new media environments. Academic Commons. Retrieved from <http://www.academiccommons.org/commons/essay/knowledgable-knowledge-able> on July 5, 2013.

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