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TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING REVIEW

TEACHING, LEARNING AND TECHNOLOGY'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

DESIGNING WITH ACCESSIBILITY IN MIND, PART 1: THE THEORY

by Amy Ostrom

We have reached that glorious time of year when students are starting to plan for the future (i.e. - register for Fall semester). As we wrap up the current academic year, you may start thinking about the future yourself. What courses will I be teaching next year? How will I do that? What assessments am I going to use? What am I going to change up? Wouldn't it be cool if {insert innovative idea here}? While TLT is here to help you with all of your planning needs this summer, there are a few things to keep in mind while you make plans for your future courses, especially in terms of meeting the needs of all learners.

College of Charleston currently has approximately 900 students with various disabilities on campus who are registered with the Center for Disability Services. [1] Some of you may have already worked with students with disabilities in your courses and have a working knowledge of accommodations. For others, this concept may be new and foreign to you. In any case, as you look to prepare your courses for future semesters, here are some overall tips that will help you to design with accessibility in mind:

- Think about the whole process more as Accessibility rather than Compliance. When you hear someone bring up the topic of working with students with disabilities, you often hear it referred to as ADA Compliance. Just that phrase can conjure up images of lawsuits, courtrooms, and "early retirement"...but it doesn't have to be that way! True, there are federal requirements that are outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act, reauthorized in 2010. What it all boils down to is making sure that each student in your course has equitable access to the information and participation. When you think about it, that just makes sense! Why would a student be in our courses? To learn. How can we help them learn? By giving them the



CLEARING A PATH FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS CLEARS THE PATH FOR EVERYONE!

opportunity to do so. To learn more about what this means, check out this video on Web Accessibility as it pertains to College of Charleston: <https://youtu.be/vhovdDxCaS4>

- It is much easier and less time consuming to design a course to be accessible from the ground up than to try and retrofit it later. Sometimes, you'll hear a faculty member say "I'll worry about that IF I have a student who needs a disability in my class". However, as one professor who recently had a student with visual impairments in her class put it, "I realized at that point it was too late. I had to struggle to get all of my material together and put into a format that the

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student could use. Add that on top of not knowing what that meant or looked like and all of the responsibilities of the semester. I was stressed out, the student was falling behind, and it wasn't really their fault! I just hadn't thought about it." Many of us will be teaching courses that we've taught before, so how can we start looking at accessibility issues and fitting in pieces that fit? Which leads us to...

- Consider using Universal Design for Learning principles as you redesign parts of your course. "Universal design for learning (UDL) is a framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn," (CAST 2015) [2]. Structured to help all learners in your courses, not just students with disabilities, this framework for curriculum design is based off of three primary principles:
 - Multiple Means of Representation: Present information in different ways so that all learners can access the information. Look for flexible ways to present what you teach and what you want the students to learn. Consider using visual and auditory elements, experiential learning, and kinesthetic opportunities to engage with content.

- Multiple Means of Expression: Provide ways for students to show what they know and what they can do using multiple modalities. Project Based Learning is a great way to do this by giving students a forced choice menu of final product options and adding in a reflection piece.
- Multiple Means of Engagement: Consider using different "hooks" or "activators" to capture your students' attention to the content and hold it. Remember, relevance is key!

Universal Design for Learning is a vast and useful framework for reaching all learners and to individualize the learning process to meet their needs and your course goals. If you are interested in learning more about the theory, I would suggest checking out some of the additional resources found at <http://goo.gl/jiq1OT>, and by watching the following video: <https://youtu.be/bDvKnY0g6e4>.

To learn more about HOW to do this, including examples from current faculty, stay tuned for Designing with Accessibility in Mind, Part 2: The Practice (Coming in May... debuting just in time for your summer course planning!)

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING CLUBS

by Mendi Benigni

- C** Concentrate on empirically-grounded instructional strategies.
- L** Learn new strategies interdependently through discussion, group reflection, & group processing.
- U** Use new strategies in the classroom then bring results back to the group for evaluation.
- B** Bring student work back to the group for evaluation.
- S** Self-assess throughout the process to determine changes and next steps.

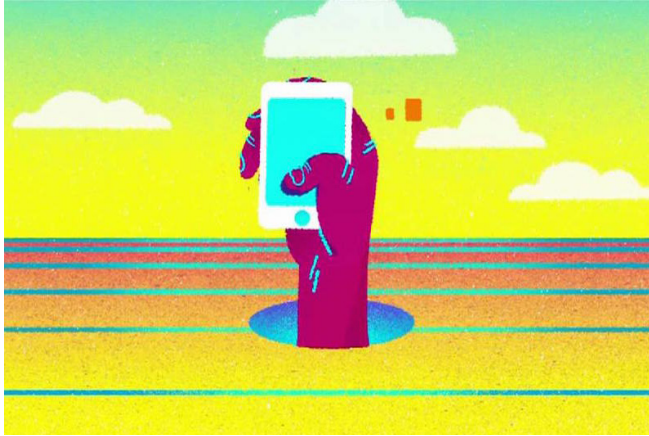
Last month, TLT held an informational session on the upcoming Professional Learning Clubs, PLC, a collaborative and supportive opportunity for faculty and teaching staff at CofC. The PLCs generated a positive response and the participants were excited about the opportunity to participate. We, in TLT, believe that the PLCs will provide teachers the opportunity to try something new in their teaching while being backed by the support of their peers.

Are You Ready To Join? Just complete our online application (at the bottom of this page: <http://goo.gl/2CUCpb>)

Not Sure Or Have Questions? Read the info available at <http://goo.gl/P52owv> and at <http://goo.gl/2CUCpb>.

TEACHING DIGITAL NATIVES

by Chelsey Ratcliff



Did you know that the average college student spends 8 to 10 hours per day on a mobile phone? Whether texting, using social media applications, or browsing the internet, we can all agree that students are more connected than ever. But what does this mean for our teaching?

Since these trends aren't likely to reverse anytime soon, it may be necessary to embrace the change and adapt our teaching accordingly.

Here are some things that you can do to take advantage of the amount of time your students spend on their phones:

- Communicate with your students via text using mobile apps such as Celly or Remind.
- Create flipped video lectures for students to review on their own time.
- Create a class hashtag for Twitter to allow students to communicate and ask questions during or outside of class. Visit <http://goo.gl/SB9Z9> for ideas and tips.
- Have students complete assignments using familiar social media, such as Vine. Visit <http://goo.gl/LndS2R> for a few assignment ideas.
- Deliver lectures through a presentation creation tool like Nearpod. Students can view the presentation and interact with content using their mobile devices.

These are just a few ideas, and there's always room for more creativity. If you'd like to discuss other ways to connect with your students, contact your Instructional Technologist.

ASSESS STUDENT PRESENTATIONS WITH ACCLAIM

by Jessica Smith

Acclaim is a web platform which facilitates asynchronous discussion around video content. Students and instructors can add time-stamped comments that link to moments in each video. Each comment is clickable, and once clicked, the video will jump to the relevant moment in the video. Students can see and respond to comments at any time.

Users add videos to Acclaim in one of three different ways:

- By embedding YouTube or Vimeo videos;
- By uploading video files stored on a hard drive or mobile device; and

- By using the built-in webcam feature to create and upload a video in real time.

How could I use Acclaim?

- Assessing student presentations.
- Peer evaluations of presentations.
- Self-evaluations of presentations.
- In flipped classrooms during which students watch video lectures outside of class.

Acclaim would be an ideal tool in courses that involve any type of oral presentations, demonstrations, or performances.

Why should I use Acclaim?

Watching one's own recorded presentation and reading evaluations from peers and instructors can be an excellent way to identify strengths and weaknesses, and thus improve one's future performances. Self-assessment encourages critical reflection, increased awareness of skills, and goal setting while peer-assessment develops empathy and encourages students to reflect on their own work while evaluating others.

Acclaim provides a free and simple platform that facilitates such self, peer, and instructor assessment.

GUEST POST – INCORPORATING STUDENT INTERACTION AND PEER INSTRUCTION IN MATH COURSES

by Stephane Lafortune (MATH)

I participated in the 2014 Summer FTI. My goal was to become more familiar and comfortable with the technology that can be incorporated in my work as a teacher. Below, I will first talk about my general experience as a participant and then focus on one aspect of the workshop that I used in class.

The commitment of participating in an FTI involves being there eight hours a day for a week. This is quite a commitment from both you and the organizers who have to come up with activities and material to entertain all these professors (we were about 25 people). Well, let me tell you that the staff of TLT filled this week with so many workshops, activities, and games where we could win stuff (I did win a TLT umbrella) that really there were no dull moments. In addition to that, the people at TLT truly were enthusiastic about the FTI and really cared about the participants. As a direct consequence of that, there was really a good spirit of camaraderie among the participants. As a human experience, I have a fond memory of the week I spent with the TLT people.

My primary goal was to learn about technology. However, I had not noticed that there was going to be a section of the FTI devoted to the topic of “interactive teaching.” For that section, we were using the guide entitled “The Interactive Lecture” written by Silver and Perini. As part of our activities, we had a block of time (about 2 hours) when we had to come up with a specific way to implement the strategies outlined in the guide. To do so, we were guided in a very specific way as the steps we had to follow were written in a Google document. Our “job” was to write our plan by following each step carefully. Admittedly, I was not initially very enthusiastic about the idea but, given that I was sitting there with nothing else to do, I went to work and decided to apply this technique to my Math 103 course.

One of the topics that most of the students have difficulty to grasp in Math 103 concerns the analysis of arguments (this is part of the mathematical theory of logic). During that session, I created activities where the students would be forced to collaborate with a neighbor to come up with their own arguments and then share their ideas as to how the argument can be analyzed. I did use those ideas in my summer Math103 course right after the FTI. To do so, I shortened the time spent on lecturing by going over less examples on the board. The idea was to have the students make their own examples and have them explain to each other how to apply the concepts to their cases. It went magnificently as the students enthusiastically exchanged ideas once I had told them to start. As a direct consequence of that, the students had a better understanding of the topic and their exam scores on that particular topic were much higher than usual. In addition, being “forced” to work on interactive lectures gave me other ideas of activities, which I also incorporated in that summer Math 103 course.

To conclude, this FTI was a wonderful experience on a personal level as it was very pleasant and enabled me to get to know some of my colleagues. In addition, I was pleasantly surprised by the impact what I learned had on my teaching style.