Magna 20 Minute Mentor

Transcript

What Are 5 Easy-to-use Technologies That Have a Big Impact on Learning in the Online Classroom?

Presented by:

B. Jean Mandernach, PhD

Executive Director, Center for Innovation in Research and Teaching, Grand Canyon University

B. Jean Mandernach is an active presenter and consultant in the field of online education. She explores strategies for integrating efficient online instruction in a manner that maximizes student learning, satisfaction, and engagement. In addition, she has interests in the development of effective faculty evaluation models, perception of online degrees, data analytics, and faculty workload considerations.

Editor's Note:
This is a written transcript of an audio recording. Our policy is to edit only the occasional unintelligible phrase. Everything else appears as it was spoken.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

I'm Jean Mandernach, Executive Director of the Center for Innovation and Research and Teaching at Grand Canyon University. When teaching online, it's only natural to think about the role of supplemental technology for enhancing the learning experience. And the research backs this up. There are so many benefits available through the effective and appropriate integration of technology.

It can enhance student learning. It can foster student satisfaction. It promotes students engagement within the online course, their engagement with the content, with each other, with you as the instructor. And because of all of these benefits, we've seen a rapid increase in the number of technologies available.

The good news is, there's a technology for just about anything you can possibly imagine. The bad news is, there are so many technologies available. So, many that it can be overwhelming. If you did an internet search and just typed in technologies for higher education or apps for the online classroom, you're going to be flooded with results. And the challenge with having so many technologies available to us is it can be hard to know when to start.

But rather than getting really invested in learning all the technologies or understanding all the options available for you, it can be helpful to just start to develop a toolbox, a handful of tried and true known technologies that have value in the online classroom. So, that's what I'm going to share with you today, are five tools for my own technology toolbox that I found valuable in the online classroom.

The first one is EdPuzzle. And EdPuzzle is a Web 2.0 technology that allows you to annotate and customize videos that are online. To use EdPuzzle, you simply go to the EdPuzzle website, create your own account. And then it will ask you, what is the link to your video that you'd like to use? You can use YouTube videos, TED Talks, any video that's available online. If you want to annotate one of your own videos, you can even create your own video, upload it to a video hosting service, and annotate your own video.

Then once that video is in there, it allows you to go in and as you're watching the video, you can stop it. And you can insert comments. You can put questions in that students need to answer to be able to move forward. You can direct their attention, whatever it is you want to do. And when you get done annotating that video, you can save it. And it gives you a unique link.

You then share that link with students, and they can now watch the link. And as they're watching this video, it will stop, and it will give them your comments. It will show them what you had to say. If you embedded questions in there, it's going to force them to answer that question before they move on.

What I love about EdPuzzle is it doesn't require me to create all the videos. So, I can take advantage of all the really good videos already available on the internet, and it lets me really guide students' attention. If we think about the face-to-face classroom, when students watch a video, we're right there with them. So, we know that they're watching the video. We know that they saw the whole thing. And when the video is done, we can ask them questions. We can talk about it. We can have a discussion. Heck, we can even stop the video right in the middle and point things out to them and guide their engagement with that video.

EdPuzzle simply allows us to do that online. So, now rather than us having to all watch the video together, I can annotate the video, give them the link to EdPuzzle, and students can get in there and answer the questions. I know that they've understood it. I know that they've watched it. I know that they've actually watched the whole thing, depending on where I embed those questions at. And then I can even go back into the EdPuzzle program to see students' responses to those questions.

In addition to me annotating videos, I also like EdPuzzle because it allows me to let students annotate the videos they give to me. So, sometimes for assignments I'll actually say, I want you to go get a video. And I want you to annotate it. And I want you to go in and point out the most important parts. And I want you to give me your thoughts, and your comments, and your reflections.

And so now rather than having students simply write a paper about their reactions to the video, I can actually see their reactions right there in the embedded video. So, if you like to use videos in your online teaching, check out EdPuzzle and give it a try.

Another tool in my toolbox is Loom. And like EdPuzzle, Loom is focusing on videos. The difference is, Loom is a video recorder. Not only does it record videos, but it records screencasts. So, Loom will allow you to, using 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, but students 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 is statistics. And 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 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 right 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 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 informative assessments, asking students to respond to questions to check their understanding, to provide insights on do you believe this is true, true or false. So, you can even get some of those reflective questions. It even allows you to embed some short answer 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 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 a 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.

Another program to get students really hands-on and doing something is Hypothes.is. And as I was telling you with EdPuzzle, it's for annotating videos. Hypothes.is is for annotating pretty much anything else you're going to find online that's not a video. So, it might be a website. It might be a journal article posted as a PDF. Any sort of an online document that is not an animation, or a video, or something with interactivity-- so it has to be a static document of some sort-- you can now have students go in and directly write their comments, their questions, their thoughts, their reactions.

And it's not just an after the fact paper, but you can actually have them pinpoint those things directly on the document. The other nice part about Hypothes.is is it doesn't have to be just one way between you and a student. It can be an entire class or a group working on the same document together.

I've really embraced Hypothes.is for information literacy exercises. I can now tell students, I want you to go to this website, or I want you to look at this journal article. And in Hypothes.is, you would just take that link, and you would upload it to your Hypothes.is account. It creates now a new link for you, because that's going to be your Hypothes.is link that shows all those annotations.

And now the student user takes your link, and they go to that spot. And any time they click in that document, they can make comments. They can highlight. They can ask questions. And other people can now go into the same document. They can see those comments. They can see the highlights. They can see the questions. And they can respond to them. They can add to them. They can disagree with them.

I used this in my research methods class, where I had students go and look at a journal article write-up of a research study. And I asked them, I want you to be critical consumers of this information. What troubles you about this research study? And that's all I said. And as a class, they could all go in there and they could see the same document.

And so students would go in, and they would start pointing out things like, oh my gosh, I just noticed they only used 32 participants. Is that really enough? And then another student would come in and say, well, this was just an interview. 32 seems like a lot for an interview. And then another one would come in and say, well, if you had an experiment and you had different groups, I think you need this many. But under this condition, I think it's OK.

And they would all start to get in and actually debate the merits of the study. And they weren't debating it in this kind of abstract place. They were debating it right there, right in the study.

The same is true for asking students to go in and look at the legitimacy of any given website. So, I'll say, I want you to go to this website. And I want you to look for indicators that this would be a good resource to use. What tells you that this is academically valuable? And then I have other students go in and say, do you agree? Do you disagree?

So, not only can you use it for classroom activities, but you can also use this for student assessments where you say, I want you to dig in and I want you to demonstrate your knowledge. I want you to walk through this document and highlight the different things that I've pointed out.

I've often used this also with journal articles where I'll tell students, I want you to go in and find the research question. You need to find the hypothesis. You need to find the participants. You need to find the design. You need to find the statistics. And rather than just having them answer it, because first of all, just answering it becomes a really easy assignment for people to cheat, I have them go in and identify it. Find it. Point at it. Because I don't care about the answer as much as I care about the skill.

I want to see them do the work. I want to be able to redirect them if they point at the wrong area. So, it's not just about the answer, it's about the process of learning and really being to dig into that document and be able to identify and highlight what it is that we're actually talking about.

The last technology that I want to put in your toolbox is FlipGrid. And FlipGrid is a video discussion platform. So, typically when we think about discussions in the online classroom, we think of a threaded discussion, where every student just puts in a typed written response to the question, and then they have the opportunity to reply to each other and interact in that way.

Nothing wrong with regular discussions. In fact, regular discussions offer a lot of value. But sometimes, we want more. We want to hear their voice. We want to hear how they pronounce things. We want them to engage. We want them to interact. We want it to feel human, and to feel real, and to feel personal.

And so FlipGrid takes that traditional threaded discussion and it adds video. So, now rather than students all just typing in their response-- they still could type in FlipGrid-- but it allows them to upload their videos. And you can start responding via video and watching the videos.

I found FlipGrid particularly valuable in two areas. One, when I want to foster a sense of community, when the focus of my learning activity is not so much on cognitive understanding but actually on that psychosocial aspect of the learning experience, when I want students to really see and connect and understand their classmates.

So, I use this a lot for introduction activities, where I'm trying to build a community and get people to know each other. So, rather than doing the traditional bio where we say, tell us something about yourself or tell me three things we might not know about you. I now say, upload a video and I want you to tell me about your summer or how things have been going, or tell us what led you on this educational adventure. How did you end up at this university? Tell us about your family or your personal life, or whatever it is you feel comfortable sharing.

And what's interesting is not only the content of what they're sharing, but it's their voice. It's their face. It's their laugh. It's their nervousness. It's all those non-verbal things that make it a really interesting, engaging experience. It's being able to put a little bit of personality to each one of those students in the classroom.

I also like using FlipGrid when any of the learning objectives have to do with their actual ability to present, to articulate, to speak, oral communication. So, it's really helpful in foreign language classes. I've also used it just when I want them to be able to pronounce things correctly.

I mean, in any given discipline, we have a certain vernacular. And if you want to be an effective student in that discipline, it's important that you actually know how words are pronounced and you're able to communicate and share within that discipline. So, I've even used it when we're talking about things like, who's your favorite theorist in theories of personality? Because I want to make sure we can say the names right, and we can pronounce their theories correctly, and we can say their concepts.

And so I'll tell students that. The learning objective here is not just to share your information, but it's also to streamline your thoughts, to focus in on the most important information, and to make sure you can talk like, in my discipline, a psychologist. And in your discipline, it's going to be a different language and a different set of words. But to be able to communicate effectively in the discipline is a really important part of being a student. So, FlipGrid allows us to just make those discussions a little more lively.

Now I will give you a word of warning with FlipGrid. Students are absolutely intrigued with FlipGrid. And they are entertained by the idea of doing some video discussions. But if every discussion becomes a video discussion, they very quickly become overwhelmed with that. The reality is, for most students when they're learning online, they're juggling

a lot of things in their life. And so,, they're not always camera ready. Their house is not always clean. They don't always have a decent background.

And so, the idea of every discussion being on video can sometimes really limit the quality of the discussion because students aren't able to really react and respond and discuss right in that moment. But if you use it for some of the discussions and pick out specific aspects where it's really important to have that personal connection, FlipGrid can add a lot to your classroom.

The other thing you can do FlipGrid for is just some of the really quick, informal things. I moved to me providing videos as my responses to some of the questions in my frequently asked question area, just because it was easier for me to just rattle off and talk and communicate with them as if they were right there in front of me as opposed to making a really formal video.

And because I could host that video right on FlipGrid, I would put the video up and then I would say, and if you have other questions, post them here so other people can benefit from that. And we would just, again, foster that learning community, but it was outside the realm of something that was going to be a graded discussion or a graded activity.

As I already mentioned, these are just five of literally thousands of possible educational technologies. The key is not to get so wrapped up in the technology. You're looking for reasons to use it. The key is to get a toolbox of technologies that allow you to meet your objectives. So, knowing what you want to do and what you're trying to accomplish and then going out and getting a technology that will help you accomplish that can make the world of difference in your online classroom.

You're not trying to become a technology guru. You're just trying to equip your toolbox with enough technologies that you can effectively reach your students and foster a good learning community.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Please take our survey: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5-technologies-online-learning