Easy-to-Use Technologies You Can Implement Into Your Course Today

SPEAKERS

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Tierney King 00:01

This is the Faculty Focus Live podcast sponsored by the Teaching Professor Online Conference where you can join us from the comfort of your own home and transform how you teach and how your students learn. 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. Today's episode is all about technology. Now, you may be tired of hearing about all the tools and gadgets you can integrate into your courses. But we'll go through easy to use technologies, including the appropriate application and benefits of each. We also don't expect you to start integrating every single one of these tools, start with just one or maybe two and see how it goes. We'll demonstrate the value of H5P tools and how to use them with your existing platforms, from crossword puzzles to flashcards. We'll touch on Flipgrid, EdPuzzle and more. And then, we'll discuss how you can use backward design to help you identify and implement the best technology tool solution for your course so that there's intention and meaning behind the technology that you use. To start, Emily Faulconer discusses specific H5P tools you can use and how to use them to engage students in content in her 20 Minute Mentor, What are 5 Ways H5P Tools Can Help Students Retain Course Content?

Emily Faulconer 01:25

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. And I'll talk about both of those in more detail as we go on. 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 first suggestion is to chunk your content with interactive videos. This allows you to explore the content in more manageable pieces and help the students build that bigger picture, which also helps them retrieve that information later. So, making these chunked interactive videos is really simple. Step one is to upload the video that you've created in whichever platform you choose. And then use the H5P platform to add interactions at different points. You can add a variety of different types of interactions. Some of the very simple ones would be adding multiple choice questions, fill in the blank. One of my personal favorites is image hotspots, you can even do drag and drop. You can have a

section of text and have them highlight a word. Or you can even do image pairing, and so much more. One way that I've used this in my own classroom is in my chemistry class, I created these demonstration videos, because the lecture on the lab are decoupled, so not all students have to take both the lecture and the lab. And for those students that were only taking the lecture course, I really wanted them to see chemistry in action. The same types of experiments that they would have been experiencing in a lab course, I wanted them to actually see it happen. So, I made these demonstration videos that showed the students specific chemical reactions, talk them through the concepts. And that was great, but it was just a static video for them to watch. So, what I did is I used H5P to add interactivity to check along the way and make sure that they really understand what they're seeing. So, when that color changes, I can ask them, does this mean that the iron is in the plus 2 or the plus 3 oxidation state? And make sure that they really understand what they just saw with that reaction. The second suggestion for using H5P is to avoid death by PowerPoint through interactive presentations. So, this is very similar to the videos. But essentially, it's just a slide deck without narration. I use a modified version of something called the Assertion-Evidence Style, and once I found this type of presentation style, it changed everything for me. So, essentially, you start the title of each slide with an assertion. It's a complete sentence that is the main idea that you want the students to take away from that slide. And then you use something that's highly visual, an image, a graphic to help reinforce that assertion, and you provide as little text as possible to help support it. So, sometimes, you might need some supporting text. And that's why I call it a modified assertion evidence style. Since there's no narration, it's not a presentation, there is a little bit more text in the more authentic Assertion-Evidence Style. But I do try to minimize the wordiness, because in online classes, the students have so much reading to do, so I try to minimize that wordiness so that they can just focus on the key ideas. One thing that I really like about these interactive presentations is that you can even embed audio and video into the slides, so you can kind of make a hybrid of an interactive video with an interactive presentation. And those same types of interactive points that I discussed with the videos, you can add those in your presentations as well. The next idea for working with H5P is to help your students practice the vocabulary using different tools. So, the two tools that I prefer to use through H5P for practicing vocabulary is crossword puzzles and flashcards. And both of these are incredibly easy to make. These are hands down, the fastest and easiest H5P assets to create. What I really love about both of them is that they're so customizable. So, for example the crossword puzzle, you type in the clues, and you type in what word is supposed to be there. It auto generates the puzzle. But you can change things, like you can add a background image that kind of correlates to the topic. You can even change the cell color and other aspects of the crossword puzzle. You can even set it so that they can try the puzzle multiple times, and it will generate a new puzzle each time, so you can give more clues than you want in the original ones. That way, it'll kind of scramble it and give them a new puzzle so they can practice over and over again. Because we all know, these vocab terms, they've got to be exposed to these concepts multiple times before it's committed to that long term memory.

Tierney King 07:14
There are numerous technologies out there. In this program, Jean Mandernach explains how to incorporate specific technologies to create a personalized, interactive and impactful learning experience for your students in her 20-Minute Mentor, What are 5 Easy-to-Use Technologies that have a Big Impact on Learning in the Online Classroom?

Jean Mandernach 07:35

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. 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. 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. 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. 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.

Tierney King 13:22
If you do decide to integrate technology into your course, we want to make sure it's intentional. In this program, Flower Darby explains how you can work backwards from your learning objectives to intentionally choose a technology solution.

Flower Darby 13:36
You may have heard, when you have a hammer in hand, every problem looks like a nail. Well, think about it for a minute. If you think your problem is a nail and you apply your hammer, that might be OK. But what if the problem is actually a screw and then you apply the hammer? You're going to end up doing a lot more damage with that hammer. So it really is important to slow down and really understand the nature of the problem that you're trying to solve—once you have done that, then you can walk through the process that we call backward design to help you identify and implement the best technology tool solution. So very typically, backward design consists of those three steps—identify and articulate clear learning objectives, plan authentic assessments, identify your content and instructional materials. But today, I'm going to introduce a fourth step. Once you have those big pieces of the class in place, now it's time to think about technology. What is the technology tool that will best facilitate student interaction and engagement with your instructional materials? In order to prepare them to succeed on the assessments, in order to demonstrate mastery on the objectives, technology is the last step. And if we go back now to understanding the nature of the problem that we were trying to solve, now we have a two-fold way to evaluate technology. We've been very deliberate and thoughtful in analyzing the problem that's really happening in our classes, and then taking a step back to look at the overall design of the course. Now, when we look at technology, we can evaluate it in two different ways. First of all, does it align with the rest of the class? Will it allow students to facilitate their interaction and engagement with our course materials? That's one aspect. The other element that we want to consider is, is it likely that this technology tool is going to really solve the true core problem that we identified in our initial diagnosis? If you can put those two together and look at technology that supports the course learning objectives and technology that solves the real problem that we have identified, chances are good that you'll be able to implement a much more successful technology tool. Whether you're driving to work, or you just need a 15-minute think session, we hope the Faculty Focus Live podcast will inspire your teaching, and offer ideas that you can integrate into your own course. For more information on the resources included in this episode, please check out the links provided in the episode description.

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