Success Stories

Collection of Stories from Other Universities

- UW Milwaukee Virtual Teaching Commons
  Includes strategy examples, hot topics, cool tools, teaching guides, and more.
- University of Michigan Center for Research Learning and Teaching’s (CRLT) repository of examples
  Most comprehensive publicly available list of examples I’ve found. The videos are worth watching. In them, the faculty presents how they used technology to solve pedagogical challenges, and what they did to help their students succeed in the assignment.
- Examples collated by University of Puget Sound
  Not as comprehensive as CRTL’s site, but nonetheless useful as a jump-start for creative assignment ideas.

Blog/Websites

- American Television from Broadcast Networks to the Internet
  Professor Patrick Jogoda’s UChicago media studies class blog
- Gleb Tsipursky (The Ohio State University)’s Russian History class website projects
  A description of the rationale and benefits of the project is at http://cgi.stanford.edu/~dept-ctl/cgi-bin/tomprof/enewsletter.php?msgno=1343
  Links to student sites and other resources at http://www.glebtsipursky.com/teaching/classsourcing
- The Armageddon Letters
  This website aims to educate the public about the Cuban missile crisis. While it was not developed for a traditional course, it nonetheless is an excellent example of how to use multimedia to enrich learning experience. Another example is the Making History website.
- The Lizzie Bennet Diaries
  An online modernized adaptation of Jane Austen’s Pride and Prejudice. It consists of 100 web video diary and accompanying tumblr, twitter and facebook posts. An interesting way to immerse oneself in a character.

Google Apps (e.g. Docs, Spreadsheets, Forms, Lucid Draw)

- Error Correction
  Prepare a document with deliberate errors in it and ask the students to make corrections either as the whole class correcting or in groups.
- Collaborative Textual Analysis
  Copy a text into Google doc and ask students to annotate the reading.
- Collaborative Writing or Peer Editing
- Synchronous or asynchronous debates (table of pro vs against)
  Form students into two sides of the debates, and collaboratively fill-in a table of pro- and con-arguments.
- Collaborative Brainstorming with Google Docs Drawing Tools
  Create concept maps or mind maps, diagrams, or timeline collaboratively in class (or out). Note, Lucid Draw is probably easier to use.
- Documenting team work during group projects/activities using decision-making matrix
  Guide student team work by moving group work/discussion online and asking them to fill-out a decision-making matrix template
- Crowd-sourcing study guide and exam question
  Ask students to write their own exam questions to help them reflect on what they have learned.
- Shared lab data for analysis
  Asks student lab groups to compile their data into a single Google spreadsheet. Instructors simply monitor the data as it accumulates, responding to problems as needed. Each lab group can analyze the entire data set to test student-generated hypotheses and predictions brainstormed during a brief pre-lab discussion.

Podcast Assignment

- Poetry Reading and Explication Podcast
  A podcast exercise suggested by Adobe. Students read the poem aloud and explain its historical context, formal features, and major themes, offering context, reading, and interpretation of a poem to make their chosen poem more accessible to a general audience. In doing so, students will practice critical, close reading skills, oral presentation skills, and research skills with the goals of increasing understanding of and fostering appreciation for poetry. Adobe’s page offers sample assignment prompt and grading rubrics. Audacity is a free alternative sound editing tool for creating podcasts and is probably easier to use than Adobe Audition, which is a fee-based professional sound editing tool.

Social Reading/Annotation

- “Annotation” by Paul Schacht, MLA Commons Digital Pedagogy in the Humanities: Concepts, Models, and Experiments
  Explains the significance of digital text and its affordance of social reading and annotation. Includes examples of social annotation exercises.

Timeline Projects

- "Timeline Assignment for World Politics: A History," by Charles Lipton, Professor Emeritus, Department of Political Science, University of Chicago, on his personal website.
  In this assignment, students pick one issue or theme within the time period of the course and create (a) a timeline of major events related to that topic and (b) a dictionary of key people and events for that same topic, with brief descriptions.

Twitter
  Students created two different personae on different ends of political views based on historical readings. Through Facebook posts, tweets, posting on various right-wing and left-wing blogs, they explored complex intellectual territory that they might not have visited otherwise.
  Professor Ferris describes how his scaffolded Twitter assignment connects students and the application of statistics in real world context.
• Dartmouth foreign language classes embrace Twitter
  Italian language class requires students to follow prominent Italian individuals, companies, and organizations on Twitter and to tweet among themselves in Italian. This technique exposes students to vocabulary and culture that otherwise would be hard to expose to. Students appeared to enjoy the low stake exercises for learning new vocabulary and writing. Students were given a workshop on how to perform Twitter searches and filter results. Note potential problem with FERPA.
• Mark Simple, "Remarks on Social Pedagogy at Mason’s Future of Higher Education Forum," (November 3, 2012)
  The blog post discusses using twitter to create a collective experience among student in a movie watching exercise and asking students to write twitter "essays" (e.g. define "alien" in 140 characters or less).
• Opera Plot in less than 140 characters
  A competition organized by Marcia Adair, a classical-music blogger in Toronto. Participants are to summarize the plot of an opera in the length of a tweet, which is 140 characters or less, including spaces. See the LA Times story for details.
• Monica Rankin (UT Dallas), Some general comments on the "Twitter Experiment"
  An example of using twitter as a discussion tool in large classes (90 students in this case). Rankin mentions a few issues in setting up a Twitter exercise and adjustment she took.

Video Assignment

• "Spanish Instructor Leverages Online Video to Enhance Students' Language Skills," from Purdue University
  Spanish instructor using video assignment to help students develop listening, comprehension, and speaking skills.

Wiki

• The Chicago School of Media Theory
  Wikipedia like entries of terms written by students
• Powerpedia
  A collaborative resource created by students in Richard Westerman's Power, Identity, and Resistance Core Social Sciences course at the University of Chicago in 2010-11, and retained as a reference for future students in that course.
• Being Christian in the Roman Empire: Midterm Site on UChicago Wiki | Final Site on Wikipedia
  Class wiki created by students in Brandon Cline's Being Christian in the Roman Empire course in 2012 spring quarter
• Wikis in University Teaching and Learning (YouTube Video)
  Richard Buckland of University of New South Wales discusses what wiki is, how it works, how he has used it successfully (collaborative class notes, assignments) in a presentation for the Foundations of University Learning and Teaching (FULT) program. The video is almost an hour long, but is worth watching.
  Katz describes asking his students to create WikiTextbook in the first part of the blog post.
• "Wiki Brings a Class Together - Tim Paustian,"
  Paustian (UW-Madison) uses wiki to help microbiology lab students work collaboratively on a class lab project and help them see how their individual work fit into the bigger class project.
• "Wiki Improves Peer Editing - Erica Halverson"
  Halverson (UW-Madison) assigned her education students to work on their instructional design group projects in a wiki so that students can get peer feedback from group members and from other groups.

Other Ideas

• Virtual worlds among latest trends in language education: Immersive environments can reduce student stress, increase engagement
  The use of virtual worlds such as SecondLife to aid language learning. The article contains links to other resources on virtual worlds and language learning, and a list of mobile apps for language learning.
• Reacting to the Past
  This is less an example of using technology for learning than learning through games or other creative activity. "Reacting to the Past (RTTP) consists of elaborate games, set in the past, in which students are assigned roles informed by classic texts in the history of ideas. Class sessions are run entirely by students; instructors advise and guide students and grade their oral and written work. It seeks to draw students into the past, promote engagement with big ideas, and improve intellectual and academic skills." One can easily apply a version of this concept that involves the use of collaborative technology or social media.
  • You can read James M. Lang's account of Reacting to the Past in the Chronicle of Higher Education. It is in 3 parts.
  Being Nehru for 2 Days, July 21, 2014
  How Student Learn from Games, August 25, 2014
  Third part forth-coming in September, 2014