What is Media for Digital Teaching and Learning?

Media for digital teaching and learning can take many forms, including: video interviews and lectures, webinars, demonstrations, case studies, interactive PowerPoints and documentaries. Additionally, media may include software tools such as Articulate, simulations, virtual office hours, video discussion boards, blogs, and wikis, or simply images and graphics. Although you may find the idea of using media as an educational tool overwhelming, or even unnecessary, there is no doubt that media literacy is a necessary 21st century skill set. Today’s tools for media creation require little technical knowledge and are easy to master. Many media tools are available in Blackboard, and others are available for free on the internet.
Why Use Media in the Hybrid, Blended or Online Classrooms?

The effective use of media provides numerous benefits in the classroom, but it requires a thoughtful approach. Consideration should be given to when, where, how, and why it is being used. Media can enrich the student experience by enabling communication in a means other than text. For example, media can:

- Create faculty presence – provide a means for the faculty and learners to connect
- Prompt engagement – provide a means to challenge, motivate, or inspire the learner
- Provide instruction – offer a means to explain, demonstrate, or assess relevant concepts

Improved engagement leads to improved outcomes. In a digital environment, faculty and students may have limited ability to discuss topics and ask questions face-to-face. Media can help learners engage w

How to Conceptualize Media for the Classroom

To ensure that classroom media will be effective, start with the basics:

- Understand the student population – is the media appropriate for them?
- Use media that suits the purpose intended. For example, audio won’t be effective for content that requires a strong visual component, and a quiz game will not be effective for something that requires reflection.
- Avoid unnecessary media. As with any learning object, have a clear understanding of how the media will help the learner.

When media is being used for instruction, it can be used as an activity, or an assessment. There should be a close alignment between the measureable learning outcomes, the assessments, and the learning activities. (You can find more information about creating measurable learning outcomes in the HBO toolkit.)

Some questions to consider before adding media are (Carnegie Mellon, n.d.):

- What intellectual skills and/or technical competencies do you want students to develop?
- Will a particular information visualization tool help students meet these learning objectives?
- Would another tool be more appropriate?
- How can you structure the course or assignment to ensure learning objectives are reached?
There is no harm in starting simply. The creation of a simple graphic may be just as effective as advanced drawing software. Be creative, and always keep the objective in mind.

Other considerations:

- Is internet speed sufficient for the type of media being offered? Complex media can be large files. A simpler type of media may be needed.
- Can the learner use the media in a reasonable period of time? Duration of 5-10 minutes is preferred for mobile usage. Keep things short and topic-based.
- Does the learner have all the tools to effectively consume or use the media? Does it work on mobile devices? Does it require unusual or difficult to obtain software?
- Is the media tool/technology relevant to the learner’s job readiness? Does it involve software they will use in their profession? Try to take advantage of authentic learning opportunities.

Digital teaching and learning offers fantastic new opportunities, and effectively using educational media is a great way to explore the new possibilities.

### Using Media in the Classroom

In the table below are suggestions for media use in the classroom dependent upon your goals:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Virtual office hours, blogs, discussion boards, webinars, web conferencing, or live lectures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team Projects</td>
<td>Social networking tools, group discussion threads, video or audio group meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Creation or Ideation</td>
<td>Wikis, concept mapping, real-time or shared access to document editing (such as a link to a shared document on Google Drive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consensus Building</td>
<td>Polling or discussion boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>Webinars, audio or animated PowerPoints, audio or video interviews or lectures, infographics, documentaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill-building</td>
<td>Quizzes, interactive tools, gamification, case studies, branching exercises</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References:


