A New Hampshire e-Learning for Educators Online Professional Development Course

Course: CE-11  Using Digital Tools to Engage Students and Personalize Learning

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Course Description
Learning is dramatically changing in the 21st Century. The ever increasing access to digital tools and technologies have redefined how students communicate, interact, and engage on daily basis. In order to ensure that our teaching remains relevant and interesting to our new learners, we have to adapt our teaching and reach students where they live, not where we think they should live. In this course, we will explore how digital tools can be used to engage students and promote personalized learning. You will understand the value of integrating a variety of tools into your teaching practice to engage students and enhance learning. You will get application experience using these tools directly to produce course projects. This course will require that you establish free user accounts and use a variety of tools yourself, to get first hand experiences with how these tools work. Rather than a single course project, you will produce a variety of projects, each using a different digital tool. While you will be given readings that enhance your learning, your discussions will focus on your experiences using these tools and consider their applications for teaching and learning in your classroom.

Unit 1  Making Yourself at Home with Digital Tools
In this orientation unit, you will be introduced to the ways in which technology has changed learning in the Digital Age. You will also explore what learning should look like in the 21st Century and use a simple tool to organize your thoughts about the concepts you will explore. You will also familiarize yourself with the course learning environment. You will explore the course, introduce yourself to your classmates, email the course instructor, and participate in a discussion about their current understanding of the digital tools and their use. You will set a goal or goals for your learning and growth in the course.

Unit 2  Adding Student Voice
One of the ways to engage students and make learning personal is to ask them to represent themselves in their work. Avatars are designed or created by individuals and used to represent themselves in new and interesting ways. The avatars students create to represent them, or add their personal flair into their work can help to engage students and foster ownership in their work. In this unit, you will explore trends in personalized learning along with a few digital tools that you can use to creatively introduce student voice and personalization to your projects and assignments. You will design your own avatar to represent yourself and use a comic strip tool to demonstrate understanding. Then explore how these tasks affected your engagement and interest in the project.

Unit 3  Manipulating Language
Manipulating the words used in writing assignments can be fun and engaging ways to demonstrate the power of language to students. When writing the choice of words and the number of times they are used can provide clues to overall meaning or intention. In this unit, you will use tools that play with words in new and different ways. As you use the products of these tools to generate meaning from your work, you will gain a deeper understanding of how these tools can be used to engage your students in deeper learning through personal manipulation of language.

Unit 4  Collecting Data Through Polling
Feedback is an important part of student achievement. Students can only improve if they understand what is needed for improvement. In teaching, there is often a feedback lag time as teachers take home quizzes or papers, score them, and then pass them back several days later. While this kind of feedback is better than none at all, students benefit more from instantaneous feedback that catches them in the moment of engagement and allows them to analyze their thinking and performance. Polling tools represent engaging ways to collect information from students directly, in real time, and give real time feedback. In this unit, you will develop an understanding about how collecting data through polling can enhance your ability to provide feedback to students. While the nature of the course does not allow for real time polling and feedback, you will use an online polling tool to collect data and get feedback. You will discuss ways in which these activities can personalize learning and engage your students.

Unit 5  Creating Displays and Presentations
Posters and presentations can be a double edged sword. On one hand, we know that students can benefit greatly from actively presenting their work or designing a poster that presents it passively. But the downside is that students who are witness these demonstrations often do it without any real attention for focus. There is no learning advantage to the
A New Hampshire e-Learning for Educators Online Professional Development Course

Audience of these presentations. Online and interactive presentations can help to engage the audience and focus their attention. In this unit, you will explore some free online tools that you can use in class to make your displays and presentations more lively and interesting for both the presenter and the students who listen. You will get first hand experience using at least one of these tools to make a presentation. Then you will explore the benefits of using presentation tools to the learning of both presenter and audience.

### Unit 6 | Making Diagrams and Infographics

With next generation learning, there is a great emphasis on using data and evidence to support ideas and concepts. When using information or data to support a concept, it can be helpful to use a diagram of some kind to organize the information in meaningful ways. Visual representations can make the supporting points much clearer than narrative text which describes the supporting information or data. In this unit, you will explore a variety of forms that diagrams can take and you will identify some free online tools that you can use to help engage your students in making meaningful diagrams for their projects and assignments. You will also explore the infographic, which has become a popular and preferred method to distill lots of information into compact graphics that focus attention on the data and information in creative ways. You will use a simple infographic design tool to develop your own infographic.

### Unit 7 | Assessing for Learning

Formative assessments are used by teachers and students alike to provide useful feedback in order to help students understand where they are in the learning process. These kinds of assessments can help students identify areas of learning that need work, as well as help teachers recognize when students are struggling, so they can provide help. Formative assessments can take many forms, but generally are low stakes and do not penalize students in any way. Quizzes are great ways to monitor learning and find out what students know and still need to learn in the process. While quizzes are good formative tools, students can benefit greatly from online quizzes, as they can provide practice and immediate feedback with minimal teacher support or guidance. Online quizzes can also free up class time for higher-level thinking activities. Likewise, rubrics can also be used as formative assessment tools. The criteria and performance-level descriptions of rubrics help students understand what is necessary for successful performance of the task. They can also indicate what further learning or performance is necessary to increase the quality of their learning. In this unit, you will explore online quiz and rubric making tools that you can use to enhance formative assessment in your teaching. These tools can be used by students to engage in their own learning.

#### Course Project

Your final project in this course will consist of the various products you produced using the digital tools in each unit. The emphasis will not be on the content of the products you create, but the creation of them using the online tools.

- Create a **KWL Chart** using the *KWL Chart Generator*.
- Create an **avatar** using *DoppelMe* or another avatar generator.
- Create a **comic strip** using *Strip Generator*.
- Create a **word cloud** using *Wordle*.
- Create an **acrostic poem** using the *Acrostic Poem Maker*.
- Create an **online poll** using *Flisti*.
- Create a **brochure** or **flyer** using *Printing Press*.
- Create a **diagram** or **flow chart** using *Gliffy*.
- Create an **infographic** using *Piktochart*.
- Create a **rubric** using *Rubistar*.
- Create an **online quiz** using *Quizstar*.

#### Course Expectations

This course is divided into seven one-week sessions beginning with an orientation week. Each session includes readings, activities, and an online discussion among workshop participants. The time for completing each session is estimated to be five to six hours.

Your instructor will review and assess your progress throughout the course. At the conclusion of each session, your instructor will update your course Gradebook. It is important to review the assessment criteria in the course rubric that will be used to determine your grades. In short, if you pay attention to the following, you will do just fine:
1. Make sure you complete the readings each week and do the activities each week. Afterwards, your first posting in the discussion area should make reference to the readings and activities in such a way that your instructor can tell you read the material and engaged in the activities.

2. Make sure you post at least 2 message replies in the discussion area each week, and that each posting contains substantial comments (i.e., a comment like “oh, that's interesting” is NOT substantial).

3. Choose at least 2 different days each week when you will participate in the discussions. We suggest posting at least once within the first few days of the week, with your second post at least two days before the next week begins. If you only post on one day each week, you will not receive full credit because one posting a week does not help the group develop rich ongoing discussions.

4. Make sure you post on time, not after everyone else has moved on to the next week’s discussion.

5. Keep up with your project work each week. This course is a little different because you will have to attach each of your creative products to the discussion forum and talk about the usefulness of the tool for learning and teaching. Remember that the emphasis will not be on the content in the products you make, but in the actual use of the tool to produce a project. The content just gives you something to work with in order to build the product.

In order to be eligible to receive a Certificate of Completion, you must participate in all of the 7 weekly discussions and complete all assigned tasks. Participants will be evaluated on the frequency and quality of their participation in class discussions. Participants are required to post a minimum of three substantial comments for each discussion, including one that addresses the discussion starter and demonstrates understanding of the course/unit concepts, citing examples from the readings. Additional postings should provide substantive comments to other participants, which are thoughtful, relevant, and serve to extend the discussion.

Progress will be reviewed and assessed throughout the course. At the conclusion of each unit, the course Gradebook will be updated to reflect the quality of your participation in the course.

In order to receive a Certificate of Completion at the end of the course, you must earn a passing grade of 60% or more in the course requirements, earning at least 150 out of 250 points.

**Graduate Credit**

If you choose to take the course for graduate credit, there is an additional requirement to complete a Reflection Paper, which is worth an additional 50 points. The guidelines and rubric for this paper are posted in each course. You will need to (a) send your tuition registration form with payment directly to the university graduate studies office no later than the start of Unit 7 of your course and (b) notify your instructor that you have registered for graduate credit. If taking the course for graduate credit, a passing grade is 70% or more, earning at least 170 out of 300 points.