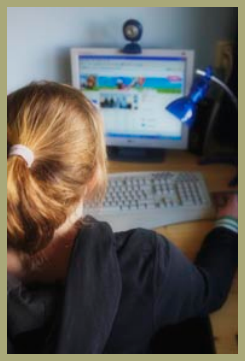


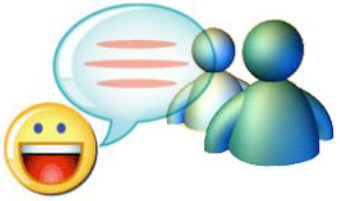
Increasing Student Interaction in Your Online Course

Kevin Oliver, NC State University

Shaun Kellogg, Sandy Grove Elementary

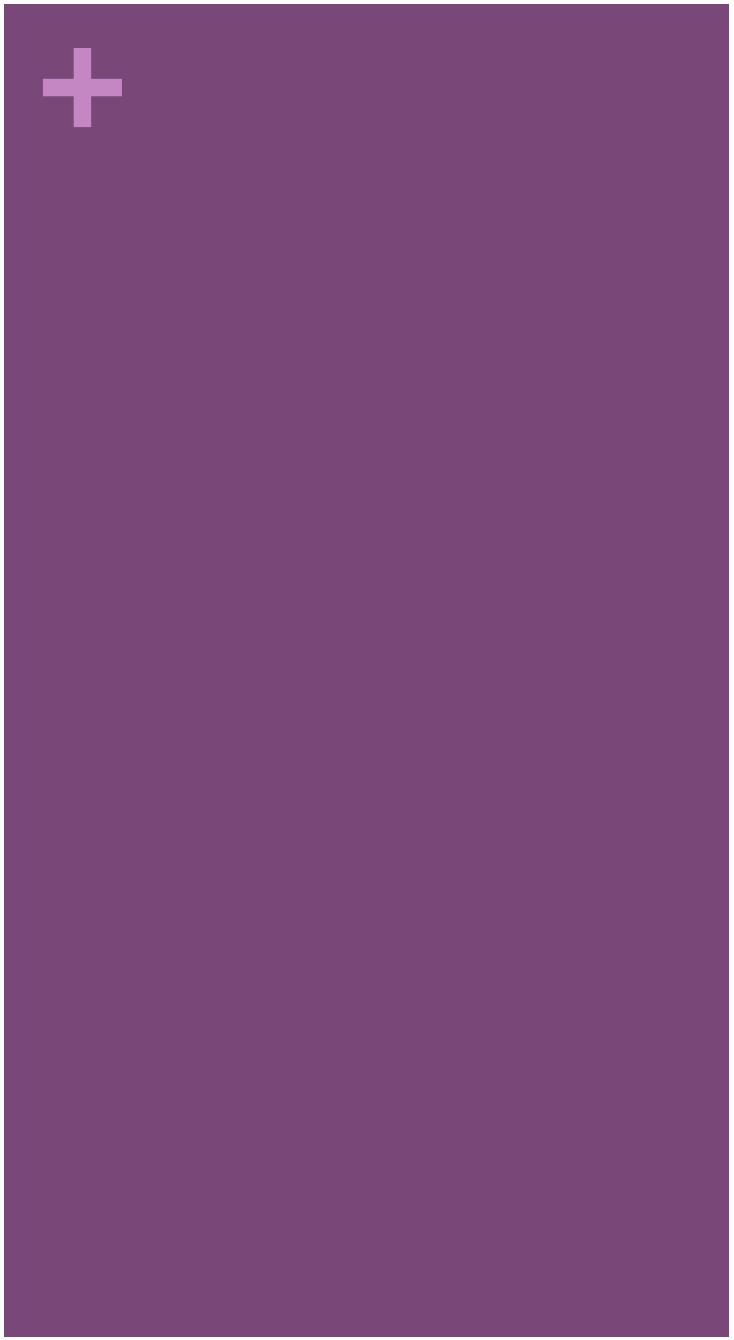
Session Description

In this presentation, activities to increase student interaction in online courses will be demonstrated--session openers, closers, group brainstorms, content reviews, and more. All activities are supported by free Web 2.0 tools or common online course management systems. While online courses are emphasized, activities are also applicable in face-to-face settings.



Outline

- course openers, important to begin developing student relationships, let learners know interaction is valued, introduce students to key tools they'll use during semester
- group research, activities such as social bookmarking, wiki trails, and podcast tours to help students identify and cull resources that can be used by their peers
- structured collaborations, activities such as six thinking hats, dear abby, and wikibook projects to get students building knowledge together
- content review, practice, activities such as link in the blanks, google maps, and peer workshops to help students review and elaborate on course material
- course closers, activities such as time capsule to prompt students to reflect on lessons learned in a course and help teachers improve the same



Course Openers

Synectics

- creative thinking strategy involving metaphor and analogy; useful as an ice breaker
- the teacher saves a group of random photos from the Web that elicit varying reactions (e.g., baby, dog, disaster, wedding, tree, river, ocean, playground, car, police, radio)
- students are asked to choose one photo that reminds them of an experience they've had in a similar course (e.g., another science course, another online course)
- students describe the experience and why the selected photo reminds them of it
- one way to support this activity--store photos as "files" or "media libraries" in a course management system, have students save one, and post their photo/reflection to a forum
- another way--place photos online in a tool like Voicethread, where students can leave text/oral reflections

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

Build | Teach | Student View

Course Tools

- Course Content
- Syllabus
- Calendar
- Assignments
- Media Library

My Tools

- My Grades

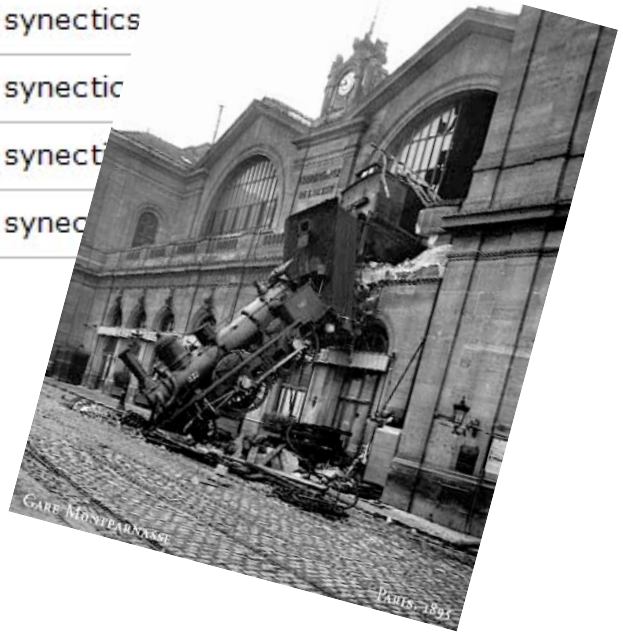
Your location: Media Library › **Media Library--Syne**

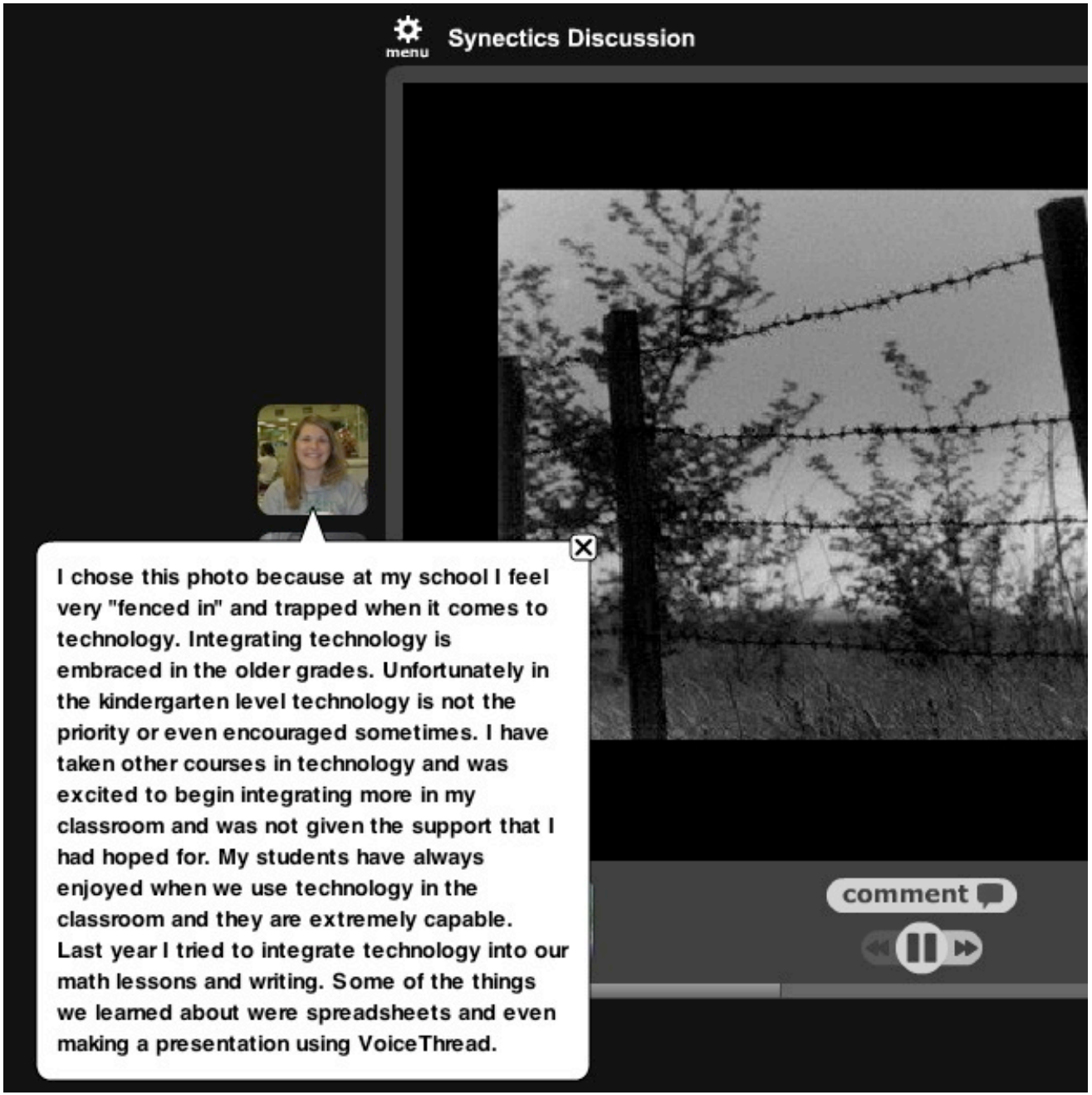
Media Library--Synectics

Description

Photo files for use with the synectics exercise.

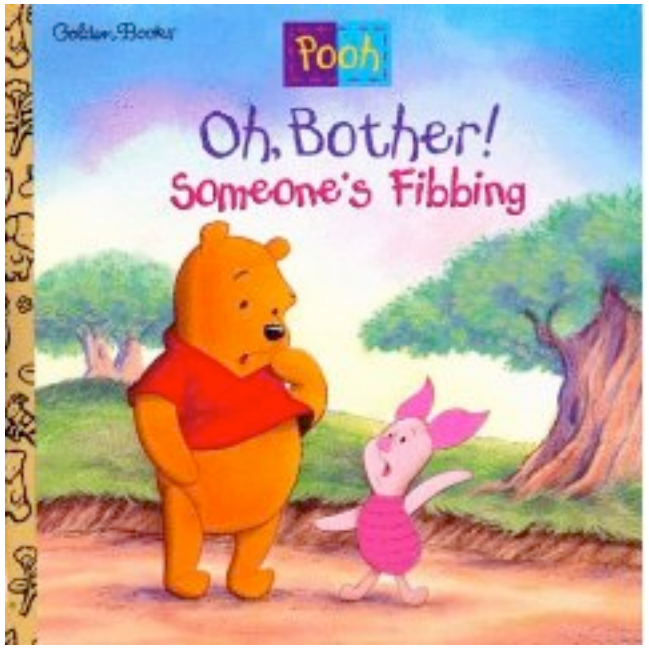
Title	Description
baby_foot	random synectics image
bare_trees	random synectics image
bloom	random synectics image
boats	random synectics i
cascade	random synectics
cat	random synectic
caught_fish	random synect
clock_watchers	random synec




menu
Synectics Discussion
I chose this photo because at my school I feel very "fenced in" and trapped when it comes to technology. Integrating technology is embraced in the older grades. Unfortunately in the kindergarten level technology is not the priority or even encouraged sometimes. I have taken other courses in technology and was excited to begin integrating more in my classroom and was not given the support that I had hoped for. My students have always enjoyed when we use technology in the classroom and they are extremely capable. Last year I tried to integrate technology into our math lessons and writing. Some of the things we learned about were spreadsheets and even making a presentation using VoiceThread.
comment

Two Truths and a Lie

- to help students get to know one another before an online course begins, the teacher creates a discussion forum and ask students to introduce themselves with three facts--two facts should be true and one should be false
- other students in the class guess which fact is false
- vary the activity by having each student supply two goals they've accomplished that are true and one that is false (i.e., something they eventually hope to accomplish)
- the teacher can recognize the students who identified the most false facts/goals, as well as the students who best stymied the class



Virtual Interview

- assign each student in class a partner, and ask students to schedule a time when they can talk via a synchronous course tool such as text-chat
- give students a list of questions to use in interviewing one another (e.g., why they're taking this course, hobbies, talents, favorite foods, ideal career, etc.)
- students take notes, then create a thread in a class discussion forum to introduce their partner to the class
- helps students get to know one another and provides a good introduction to both synchronous and asynchronous course tools



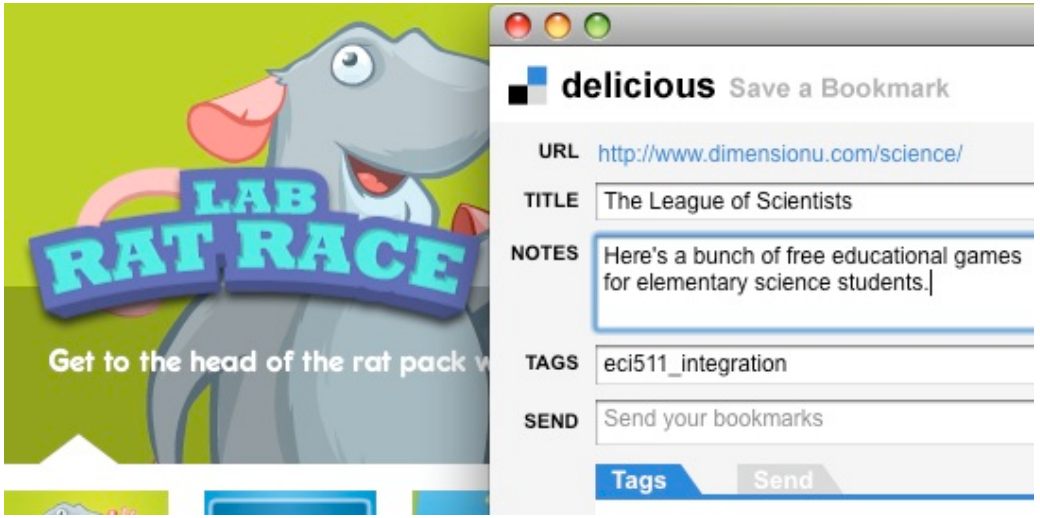
Top Ten List

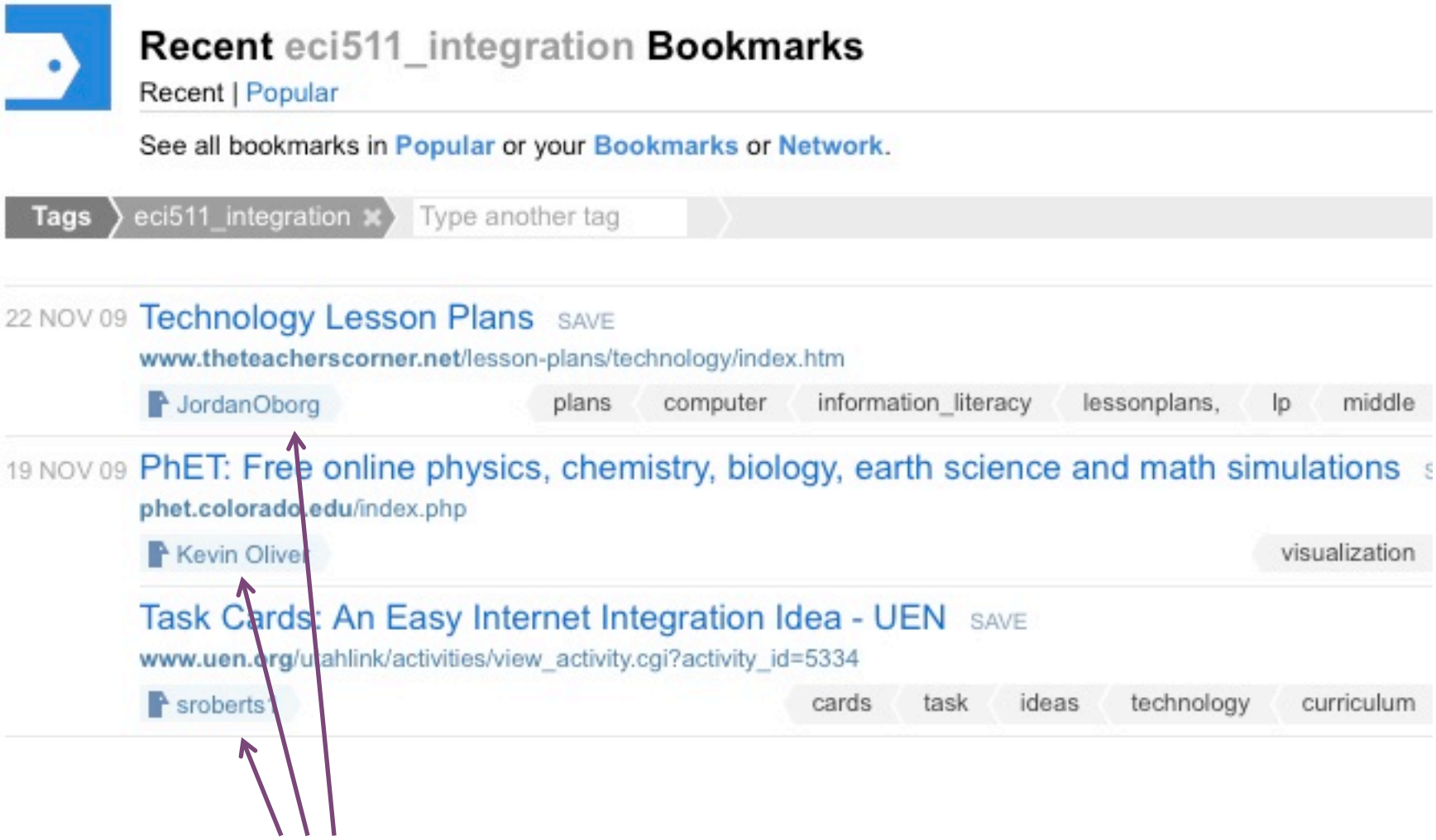
- as a play on David Letterman's popular "top ten list," encourage students to post "strategies for success in an online course" to a discussion forum
- students should reply to the strategies they concur with and explain why that strategy is important
- the teacher can identify the strategies that were discussed most often to generate a top ten list to share with the class
- this activity encourages students to think about important strategies for success in online courses at the start of the course, and reinforces the strategies by having peers affirm good habits

Group Research

Social Bookmarks

- have students create new accounts on a social bookmark tool such as del.icio.us
- give students a list of tags in advance, so as they research assigned topics, they can mark resources they find with a common tag (e.g., eci511_integration)
- student-saved resources are compiled and can be accessed by the entire group using a URL that references the common tag… http://del.icio.us/tag/eci511_integration





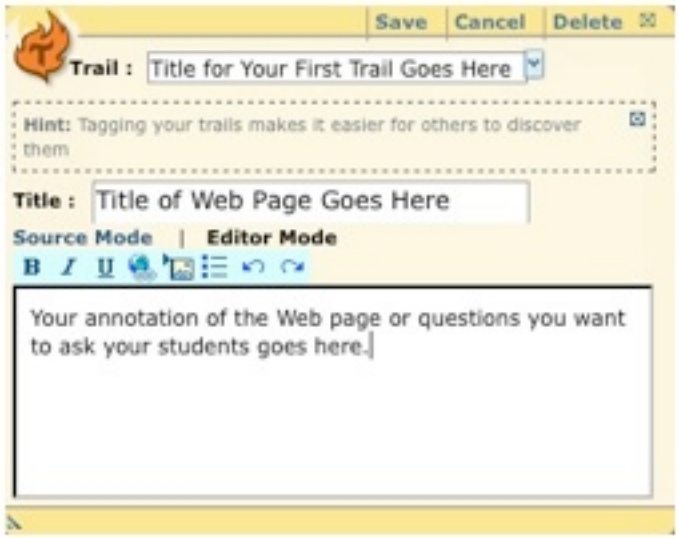
- different users have used the same tag 'eci511_integration' to contribute resources to this list

Wiki Trails

- Trailfire is a free Web tool that allows teachers or students to grab a group of Web pages and put them into a "trail" for other users to "walk" through
- you could, for example, create a trail that takes users to every state park in North Carolina; each park Web site would be called a "mark" on the trail

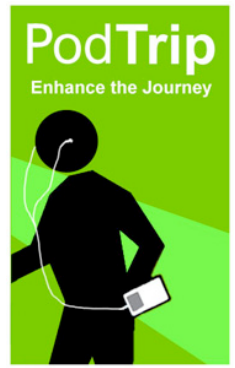
Wiki Trails

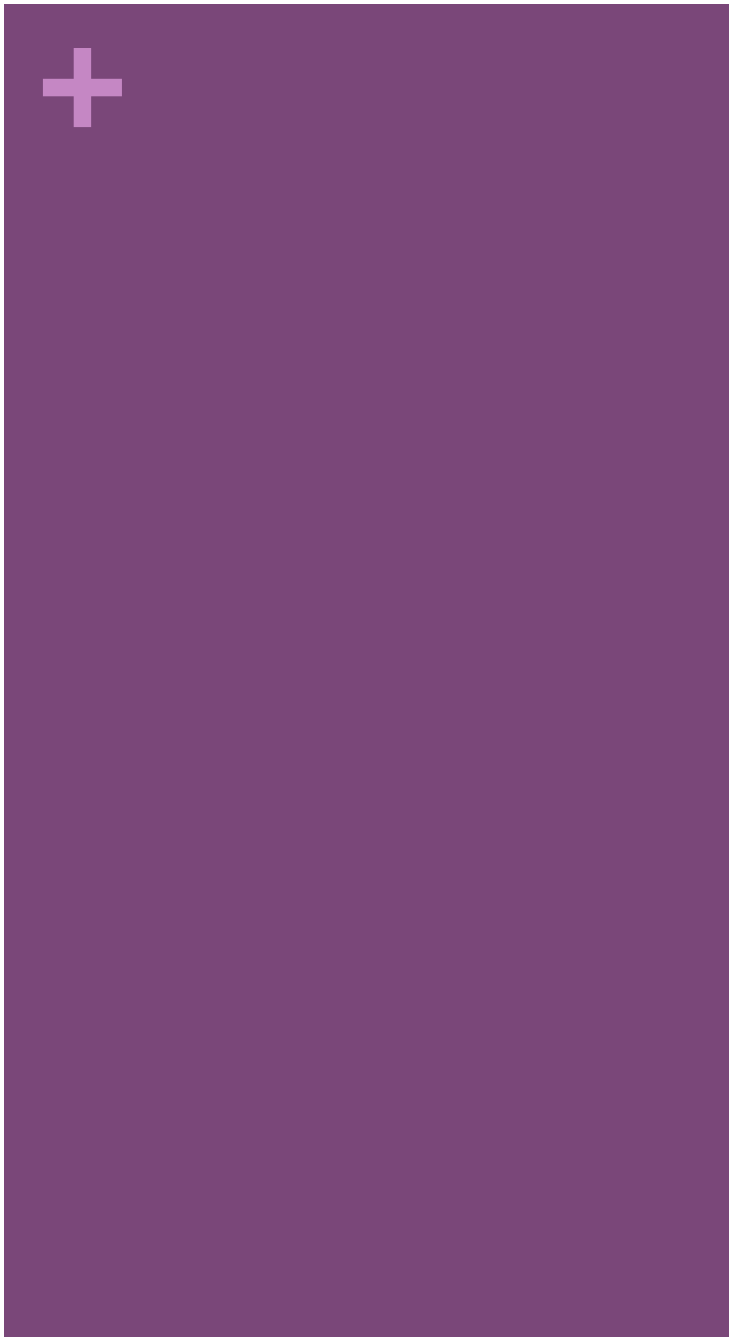
- at each mark, the person creating the trail can leave annotations that summarize the current page, or questions that encourage users walking the trail to read and identify specific information on a page
- commenting allows trails users to answer reflection questions
- in terms of supporting group research, Trailfire has a feature called "wiki trails" that allows someone like a teacher to set up a trail in advance, check the wiki trail option, and then students can be tasked with contributing "marks" or sites to a shared trail
- for example... "mark and annotate Web pages that discuss global warming; write reflection questions for your peers"



Podcast Tours

- given the popularity of ipods, itouches, and phones that play MP3 files, some museums have started developing podcast tours users can download to learn more about exhibits
- in this same spirit, online students can be tasked with creating their own podcast tours to introduce peers to available online resources
- an online student studying French, could create a podcast tour to introduce peers to popular online French newspapers
- an online student studying Algebra, could create a podcast tour to point out good homework help sites
- new tools like audiopal allow students to record audio for use on Web sites through a computer mic or phone, then teachers can take the URL that is generated and post it on their course site for peer use
- tours can include reflection questions, so students on the tour are more engaged





Structured Collaborations

The Collaborative Glossary

- Instead of creating a glossary on your own, why not have the students create their own?
- Students are assigned to contribute a term, a definition, comments and ratings on definitions.
- Multiple definitions can be rated by teacher and by the students, with the highest-rated definitions accepted for the final class glossary.
- Suggested Web Tools:
  - Glossary Module (Moodle)
  - Wikis
  - Discussion Forum

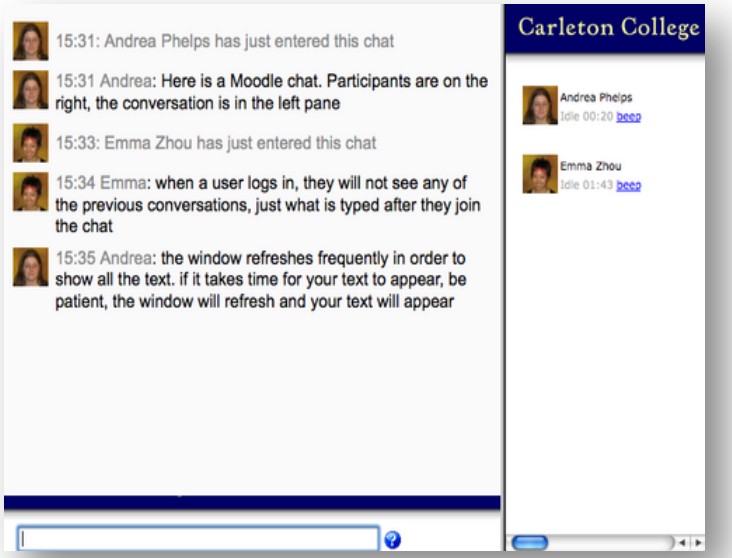
The Round-Robin Response

- Students in small groups (4-5) respond to a series of related questions on discussion topic.
- The 1st student to post to the discussion forum responds to question #1
- The 2nd person responds to the 2nd question and so on.
- The last person in the group summarizes the responses and add any relevant information.
- Each group member then further refines the previous summary posted.
- Student are then graded on the only last summary posted to the discussion.

Role Playing

- Participants in role playing assignments adopt and act out people different from themselves taking on their personalities, backgrounds, and behaviors.
- Typically involves a scenario or simulates an authentic activity.
- Instructor's Role:
  - Provide materials and guidelines
  - Establish situation and space
- Learner's Role:
  - Research background
  - Create notes or outline for role
- Types: Conversations and interviews, debates, improv, historical re-enactment, mock trial, diary

- Suggested Web Tools:
  - Chat (CMS) or IM
  - Discussion Forum (CMS)
  - Adobe Connect
  - DimDim
  - Second Life
  - Blogs



Standard Chat Module in Moodle

Buddy System

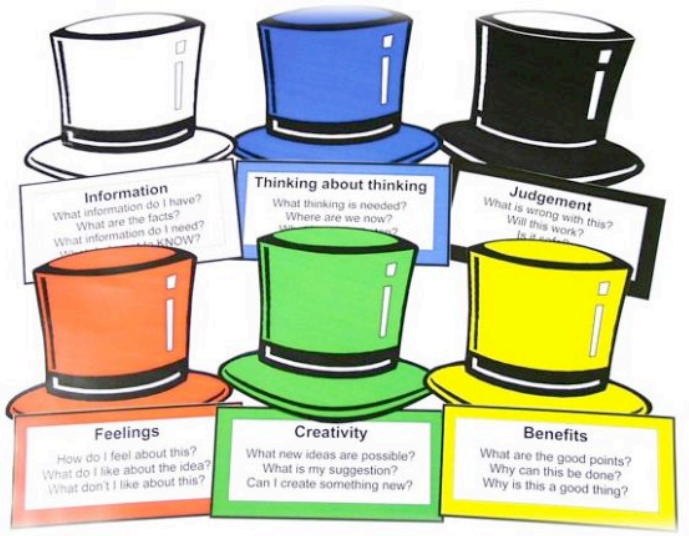
- to reduce the sense of isolation inherent in many online courses, particularly those with an over-abundance of self-directed activities, adopt a "buddy system"
- pair students with a partner at the beginning of the course and embed recurring activities that require partner conversation via chat or instant messaging
- partners can complete joint assignments, or peer review one another's work before submission
- partners can develop review questions or virtual flash cards to help each other prepare for a quiz (see quizlet)
- partners can be encouraged to dialogue beyond course assignments (e.g., exchange e-greeting cards)

Six Thinking Hats

- do you have difficulty fostering conversation in online discussion boards?
- consider using Edward Debono's Six Thinking Hats strategy
- useful for open-ended discussions on topics that require analysis from varying angles, good prep for debate (e.g., health care, school choice, pollution, energy)
- create six separate threads in a discussion forum and assign students to one thread--each group has a different focus
- reuse hats during the semester and rotate students through different hats, so they get a feel for the varying angles
- white hat (information)--state facts objectively, look at details and information, generate questions
- red hat (feelings)--think with your emotions, intuitions, and feelings, without the need to justify or substantiate a point of view

Six Thinking Hats

- black hat (judgment)--think seriously and cautiously, play devil's advocate and ask questions that may expose weaknesses in a proposal
- yellow hat (benefits), lend support to an idea or solution path, optimistically state reasons why an idea may work, be constructive
- green hat (creativity), challenge convention and look for alternatives, be creative, think laterally
- blue (metacognition), overview perspective; evaluate which perspectives were most productive (white, red, black, yellow, or green)



Dear Abby

- create a Dear Abby discussion forum in your online course that allows students to post problems they may be having with a particular concept or assignment
- assign a few new students to the role of Abby each week and have them respond directly to any peer questions
- encourage other students in class to confirm "Abby's" suggestions or provide alternative suggestions
- make contributions to the forum a part of your "participation" grade

DEAR ABBY: It seems that everyone is aware that there is a dark side to the Internet, but I would like to let you know about another side of it.

There are many charity projects on the Internet, like the Linus Project and the ABC Quilts, which provide quilts for children with AIDS.

After the Oklahoma City bombing and again after the recent California fires, the chat rooms and news groups were full of people offering various kinds of help. Quilts were made honoring the children who died in Oklahoma, and supplies were shipped to Californians who lost their homes.

A man called Magic Mike who has access to scraps from a fabric factory now sends those scraps to

DEAR ABBY

quilters across the country who craft for charities, for the price of the postage. He is not only reducing the size of landfills (where the scraps would otherwise go), but he is also providing very low-cost supplies to charities that need them.

There are whole communities of people on the Internet who have never met face-to-face or spoken on the telephone, but are ready, willing and able to act whenever a call for help is transmitted.

The Internet has more caring people than it has the bad seeds we read about in the paper. It's time to turn the spotlight away from the few who are giving it a bad name and shine it on those who are quietly making this a better world through their use of this Information Age tool.

— LESA FARMER, KANSAS CITY, KAN.

DEAR LESA: Your letter is very timely, and I am pleased to help highlight the good side of the Internet.

The Internet provides millions of people with access to the information superhighway, an electronic assortment of resources, information and communication. Today's computers make navigating the Internet so easy that almost anyone can do it, and the cost is becoming more reasonable every day.

People communicate with one another through newsgroups, mailing lists, e-mail and chat areas, where they can ask for and receive information, share experiences, and access worldwide resources on virtually any topic.

DEAR ABBY: In a recent column (I've lost the clipping, so I can't give you the woman's "nom-de-gripe") a woman complained that her son and daughter-in-law refused to have children, thus depriving her of her *rightful* grandchildren. And, although she didn't specify it, her qualification of the family background — doctors, lawyers, college professors, etc. — indicated that she perceived it to be her son's duty to contribute to and further the family's illustrious gene pool.

Collaborative Writing

- collaborative writing involves a group of students contributing to the same written work
- in English/Language Arts, one student starts part of a story, the story is passed to another student who continues the story, and so on until the originating student gets their story back and provides a conclusion
- wikis are particularly well suited for collaborative writing, given the ability for multiple students to co-edit the same page of text; just make sure each student "signs" their individual contribution
- collaborative writing can also be brought into science and history courses, with one student describing an event, and other students describing what should happen next based on scientific fact or prior historical experience

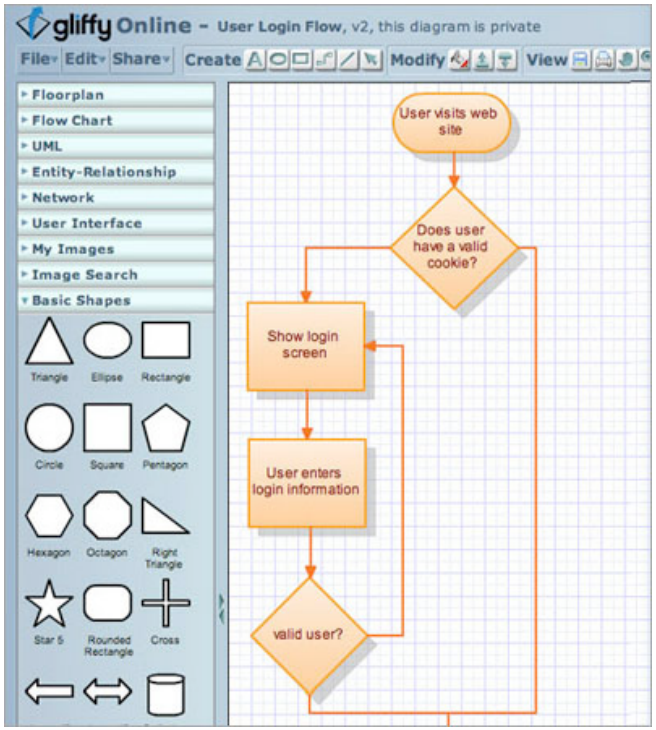
Wikibook Projects

- if collaborative writing is too disjointed for you and your students, with one student starting a story, and multiple others finishing the thought, consider a wikibook project
- in a wikibook project, students are assigned related "topics" or "chapters" to write about, similar to an edited textbook, and the teacher pulls together all of the links to the different topics into one wikibook
- you could create a collection of short stories, a collection of poems written in a foreign language, a collection of biographies about famous North Carolinians, a collection of student art work, etc.
- consider publishing student works in your class through a service like Lulu and allowing parents to buy their student's book (profits to school?)

Content Review, Practice

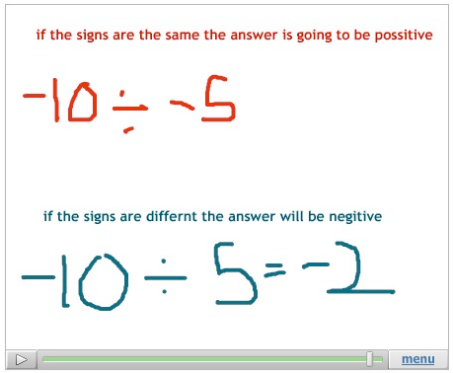
Do You See What I Think?

- in a course that involves processes and procedures, put students in groups of two
- have one student prepare a written description of a process and share it with their partner via email
- the second student takes the written description and uses a Web-based diagramming tool to turn the process into a visual (e.g., diagram, flowchart) (see Gliffy)
- the second student posts the written description and a link to their "shared" diagram on a class discussion forum
- repeat the steps with the second student providing the written description for another process



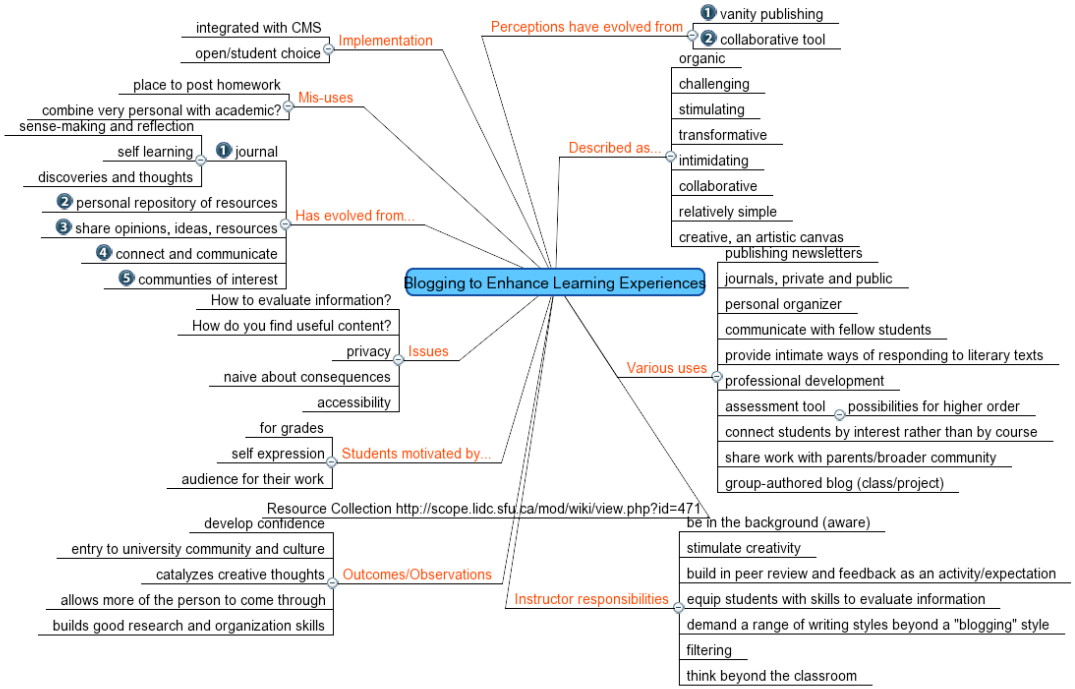
Link in the Blanks

- the teacher or student posts summary text corresponding to a course topic on a course discussion board
- the paragraph includes blanks that other students must fill-in
- the blanks are not filled-in with text responses, however, they are filled-in with URLs to Web sites
- students can fill-in the blanks with URLs to regular Web sites, or they can be encouraged to fill-in the blanks with URLs to their own Web-based elaborations (see, xtranormal video editor, audiopal audio editor, sketchcast drawing recorder, toondoo comic creator)



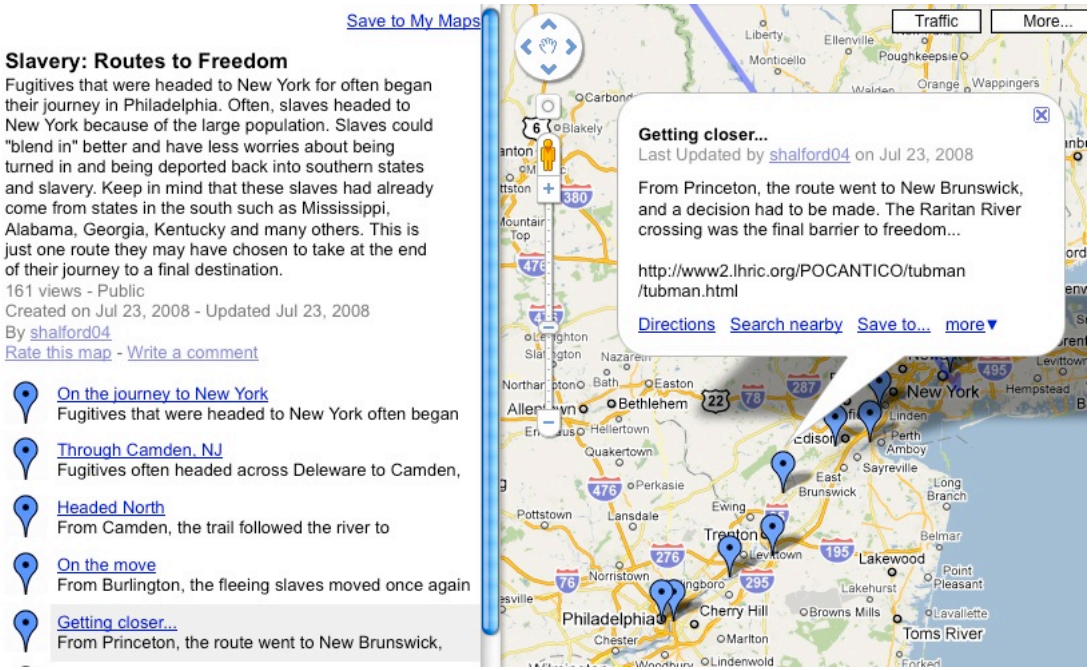
Mind Maps

- a mind map contains a central main concept that is built on with branches to related information
- numerous online tools are now available to support groups building mind maps collaboratively on a given topic (see, mindmeister)
- teachers can have students create a mind map from scratch starting with only a central topic, or they can start students off with a skeletal map that has a few ideas for students to build on



Google Maps

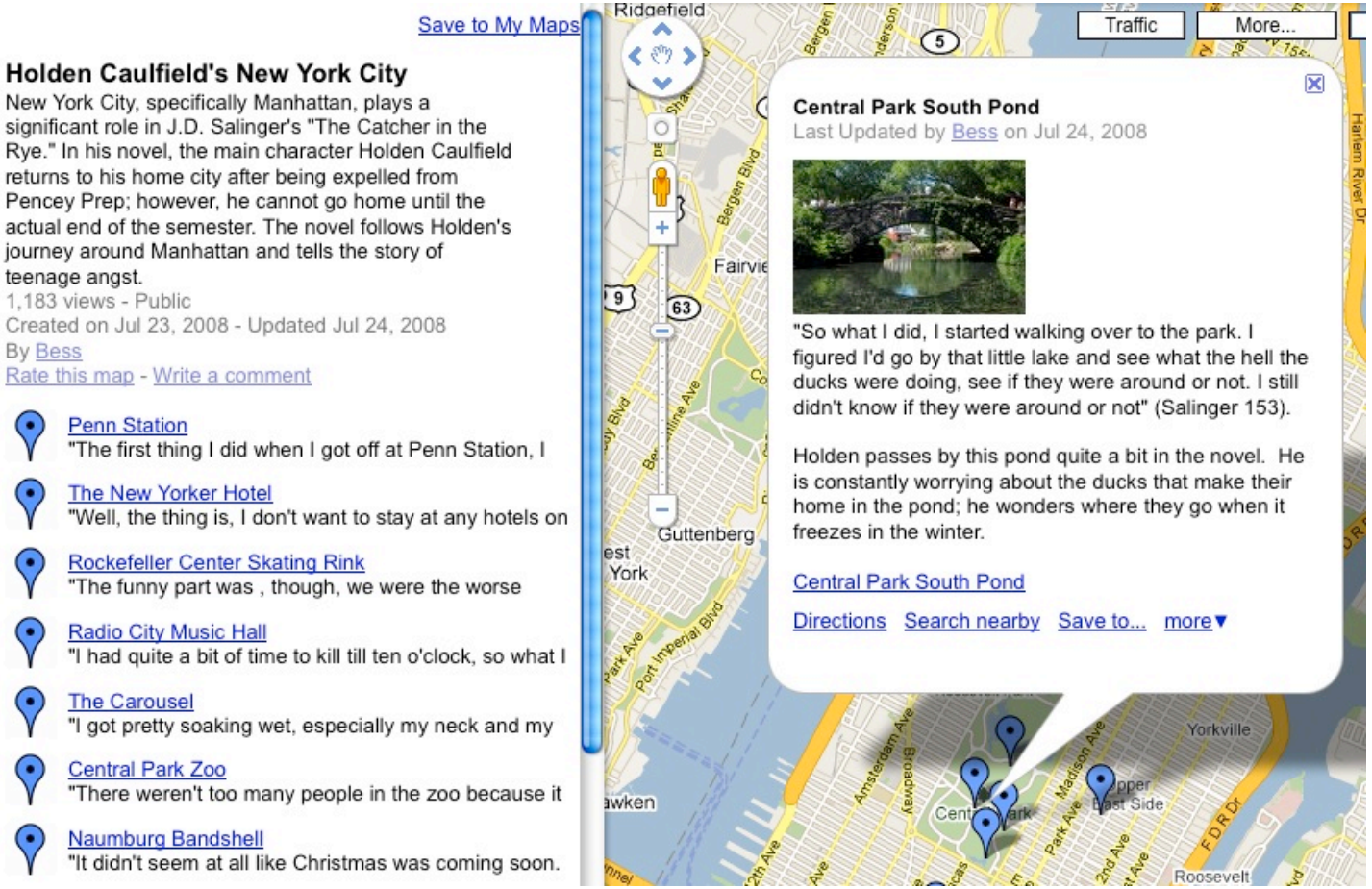
- students can create their own Google Maps to reflect more deeply on a topic or reading in your class
- you can assign multiple students to the same map space, to co-edit marks, annotations, images, and links to resources
- students studying history might create a map that discusses stops on the Underground Railroad



Google maps

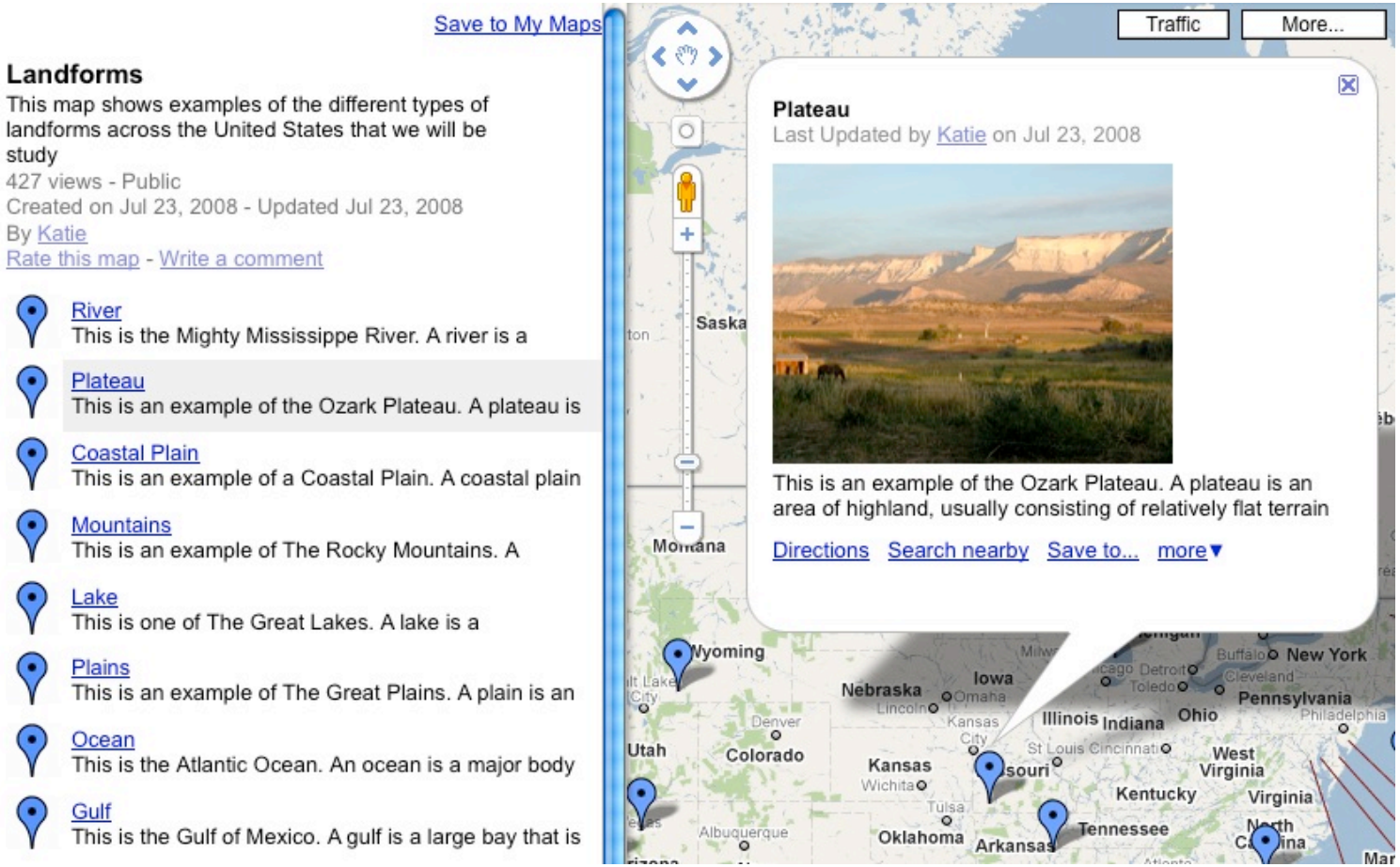
Google Maps

- students reading a novel could map key locations from the text and what occurred there



Google Maps

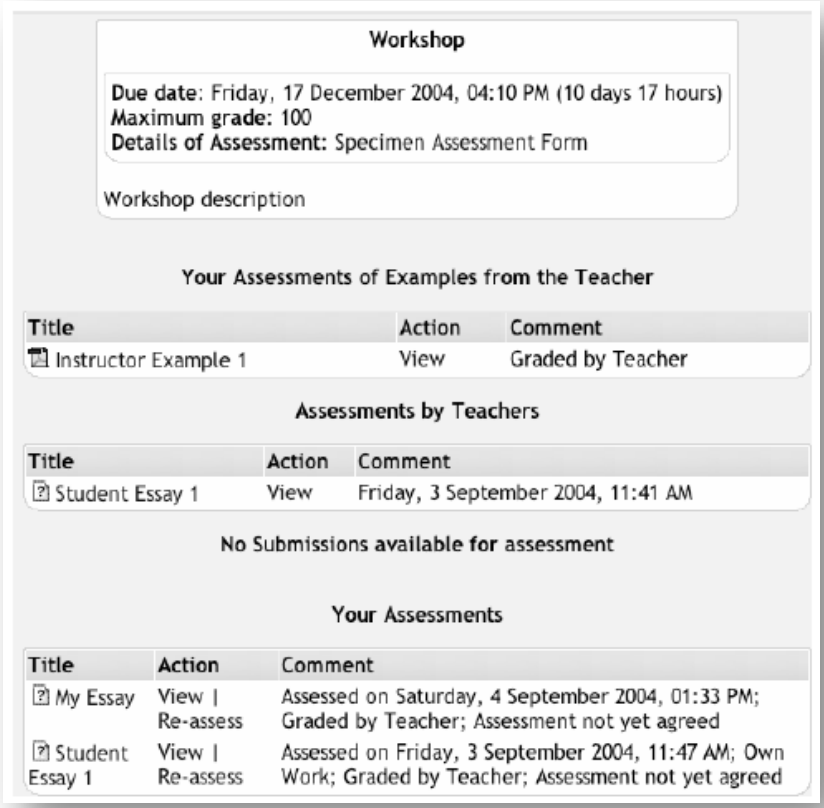
- students studying geography could identify instances of specific landforms on a map



The Peer Workshop

- A **Workshop** is a course peer assessment activity allowing participants to assess each other's projects, papers, or work in a number of ways.
- **Teacher's Role:**
  - Define project or paper
  - Provide Rubric w/examples
  - Models Assessment
- **Students' Role:**
  - Assess projects using guidelines
- **Effective Practices**
  - Break big workshops into small
  - Clear, concise rubrics/guidelines
  - Facilitate rather than dictate

- Suggested Web Tools:
  - Moodle Workshop Module
  - Course or Site Wiki
  - Discussion Board w/ratings



Workshop

Due date: Friday, 17 December 2004, 04:10 PM (10 days 17 hours)
Maximum grade: 100
Details of Assessment: Specimen Assessment Form

Workshop description

Your Assessments of Examples from the Teacher

Title	Action	Comment
Instructor Example 1	View	Graded by Teacher

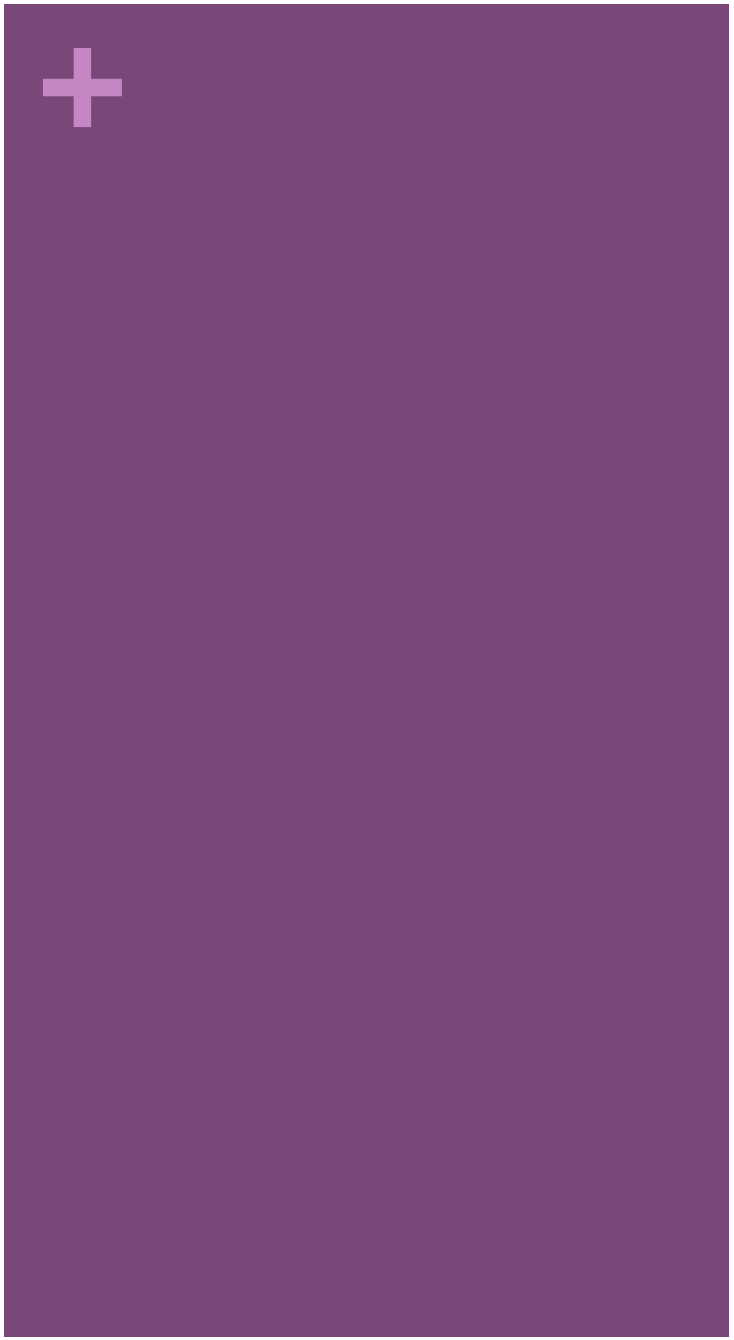
Assessments by Teachers

Title	Action	Comment
Student Essay 1	View	Friday, 3 September 2004, 11:41 AM

No Submissions available for assessment

Your Assessments

Title	Action	Comment
My Essay	View | Re-assess	Assessed on Saturday, 4 September 2004, 01:33 PM; Graded by Teacher; Assessment not yet agreed
Student Essay 1	View | Re-assess	Assessed on Friday, 3 September 2004, 11:47 AM; Own Work; Graded by Teacher; Assessment not yet agreed



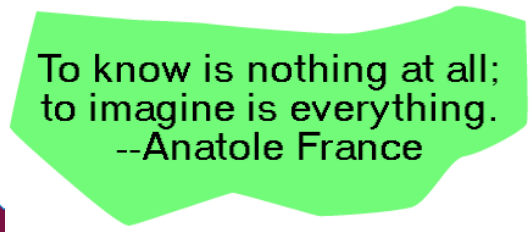
Course Closers

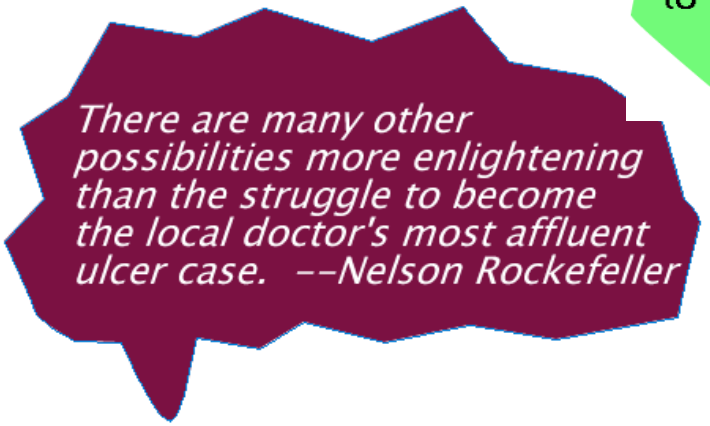
Time Capsule

- create a discussion forum and ask students to leave notes for future students about what they should know to successfully complete the online course
- the suggestions provide students with an opportunity to reflect on what they did well and not so well during the semester, and should give the teacher some good insights into how they can improve their teaching of the course
- suggestions can be shared with future students

Select-A-Quote

- students select a quote that speaks to their experience or feelings about the course (e.g., select one quote that helps to describe your current feelings about Algebra I)
- in the discussion board, students describe their experience or feelings, and attach their quote file to the post
- a teacher can create quote image files in advance and load them into a course management system "media library" for students to peruse; Voicethread is another option





Resources

Resources

some of the activities in this presentation were drawn from paper-back books you can purchase to learn more:

- Bonk, C. J., & Zhang, K. (2008). *Empowering online learning: 100+ activities for reading, reflecting, displaying, and doing*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Collison, G., Elbaum, B., Haavind, S., & Tinker, R. (2000). *Facilitating online learning: Effective strategies for moderators*. Madison, WI: Atwood Publishing.
- Iverson, K. M. (2005). *E-learning games*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

- the presentation handout may be downloaded from: http://kevoliver.com/pdf/interaction.pdf