



Using Technology to Foster Collaborative Learning

Instructor: Smadar Goldstein

Length: 45 hours

Number of Continuing Education Unit Credits: 3, from the University of the Pacific

Online Course

Introduction

Digital learning and the use of online learning tools have the potential to significantly enhance student interaction and collaboration. There is no question that the development of the internet and social networking in the last decade has changed the way in which students learn, and potentially the way in which we teach. The trend toward wired classrooms, laptop environments, bring your own device venues, and iPad and/or Chromebook classrooms have opened up a vast resource of possibilities to more effectively engage our students in collaborative learning processes - to greatly enhance their classroom experience and to enable them to generate their own learning beyond the classroom.

This course presents a user friendly collection of online tools that include platforms that allow students to communicate online in writing, audio tools that enable them to speak and listen to each other, polls that facilitate crowdsourcing, social media that extends the learning community beyond the classroom walls, and a learning management system that helps teachers and the students organize and implement quality learning. Participants will use these tools in their own learning, and will practice utilizing them in hands on activities throughout the course.

Whenever a new tool is introduced, a screen cast will provide you with step by step guidance on how to use the tool. In addition, methodologies are presented that turn the tools into powerful catalysts for collaborative learning. The course examines ways in which digital tools can help teachers better monitor and assess student progress, and build valuable instructional rubrics.

This course examines the efficacy of collaborative learning, a method that is prevalent in any curriculum, and is viewed by leading educators as one of the essential 21st Century skills. The course also explores the value of online learning tools in creating collaborative classrooms that foster social and collaborative learning.

Accordingly, participants will:

- Discover the value of social and collaborative learning.
- Practice using written, audio, and video online tools to foster collaborative learning, as well as teacher collaboration.

For each tool introduced, participants will:

- Be shown how to utilize the tool.

- Become familiar with methodologies that turn the tool into a powerful instrument for collaborative learning.
- Explore ways in which the use of the tool can be applied in their own classroom instruction.
- Discover how the use of social media can be used securely to enhance social learning by expanding the students' learning community.
- Be shown how an LMS can be used to organize student learning and promote student and teacher collaboration.
- Explore how the use of online tools can provide opportunities for alternative assessment and for the use of instructional rubrics to enhance student learning and the monitoring of student progress.
- Appreciate the benefits of online learning for students, and its efficacy in meeting your curriculum.

Course Objectives

You will:

- Understand Vygotsky's theory of social learning and its implications regarding collaborative learning.
- Understand the efficacy of online tools for promoting collaborative learning in the classroom and teacher collaboration.
- Appreciate the value of online collaborative learning for developing 21st Century skills.
- Know techniques and best practices for creating an online learning community that supports collaborative learning.
- Develop proficiency in the use of specific online social learning tools such as Linoboards and Google Drive (including Google Docs, Google Forms, and Google Presentation).
- Develop proficiency in the use of online audio tools such as, audioBoom, Voki, and Record mp3.
- Be familiar with methodologies and best practices for promoting collaborative learning using the aforementioned online tools.
- Understand how instructional rubrics help to guide students in collaborative learning, and to provide a framework for evaluation of student work.
- Develop proficiency in the use of RubiStar4Teachers for creating instructional rubrics.
- Know how to create effective instructional rubrics.
- Develop proficiency in the use of Learning Management Systems (LMS), such as the Wiki LMS and the Digital Learning Tree LMS.
- Understand the efficacy of using a learning management system to organize student collaborative learning and to foster teacher collaboration.

Session Topics:

1. Getting to know you – Online icebreakers.
2. Collaborative learning.
3. Collaborative discussions – Using polls and icebreakers.
4. Guiding collaborative learning – Instructional rubrics.
5. Social bulletin boards – The Linoboard.
6. Crowdsourcing – Creating surveys.
7. Netiquette – Rules of engagement.
8. Monitoring and assessing student work.
9. Hearing your voice.

Methods of Instruction will include:

- Audio, visual, and/or written presentation of lesson.
- Readings relating to underlying educational theory and best practices.
- Screencasts to teach the techniques of using online tools.

Assignments: Activities to simulate use of online tools.

Final Project: Creation of model collaborative lesson using online tools.

Text and/or Other Materials

There are NO required textbooks. All learning materials are embedded in the Learning Management System, including screencasts, written lessons and articles, audio presentations, and online tools.

Percentage of Course Credit

Assignments: 70% of the grade will be determined by the quality of the course assignments.

Final Project: 30% of the grade will be determined by the quality of the final project.

Due dates of assignments and final project: This online, self-paced program can be started and completed at the student's own pace, but should be completed within 5 months of the beginning of the course.

Grading and Evaluation Activities:

This online course uses Letter Grading and/or S/US according to the quiz results.

The course administrator will review students' assignments and provide feedback.

Students will be evaluated on the quality of their assignment presentations, and the quality of their final project.

Students will have one opportunity to revise assignments and/or their final projects should they fail.