Teaching With Digital Media Assignments

engage
Academic Technology
Division of Information Technology
University of Wisconsin-Madison
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What is Engage?

The mission of Engage is to transform teaching and learning at the University of Wisconsin-Madison by exploring and evaluating technical and pedagogical solutions to common teaching and learning challenges, and by disseminating methods for teaching with technology to the campus teaching and learning community.

In order to achieve systemic, widespread transformation, Engage is guided by the following pillars:

1. commitment to teaching excellence with solutions based on the affordances of technology;

2. contribution to research and evaluation using education research methodology to evaluate solutions from the student, instructor, and learning technology support staff perspectives;

3. alignment with campus initiatives by supporting campus values for teaching and technology literacy;

4. support of cross-campus, multidisciplinary collaboration and partnerships for input and support of planning, implementation, and dissemination processes;

5. fostering of campus community around the award topics and support needs; and

6. dissemination of methods of good practice to campus and beyond.

In partnership with the Teaching Academy and the Community of Educational Technology Support Staff (ComETS), Engage identifies campus teaching challenges, which inform possible award topics. After possible topics are identified and scoped, the Engage Faculty Advisory Group selects the focus of the award programs. Engage partners with faculty and instructional staff to identify, develop, test, and evaluate solutions and tools. The solutions, tools, and evaluation outcomes are disseminated to campus and beyond.
Engage Adaptation Awards

To accomplish its mission to transform higher education through technology, Engage has developed several different types of award programs – one of which is called an Adaptation Award. Adaptation Awards are offered to UW-Madison faculty and instructional staff who are interested in exploring and integrating new teaching approaches that leverage mature and stable technologies into their courses. Award participants work with a group of consultants to develop projects that can be used and evaluated in a class for a semester. In addition to working on the course project, award participants attend community events where they share their experiences.

The evaluation outcomes identified through the award benefit the UW-Madison teaching community and help identify needs and barriers on campus. A typical evaluation process includes award participants and their students responding to both pre- and post-surveys on activities related to the award topic. Award participants have the opportunity to explore questions of interest to them through the evaluation process. They are strongly encouraged to publish their results in their research publications and to present on their experience to their colleagues at departmental meetings and professional conferences. Engage shares the evaluation outcomes widely across campus and beyond through publication of reports, presentations, posters, and articles.

“The program forced me out of my comfort zone, but also helped me realize how digital media actually enhances a lot of my existing pedagogical goals—rather than detracting from the teaching I like to do, as I’d previously assumed.”

Instructor
Digital Media Assignments Award

Digital media assignments provide students an opportunity to demonstrate their learning of course content through the creation of multimedia learning objects using such formats as video, audio, still images and text. Assignments include the creation of short video documentaries, digital stories, audio and enhanced podcasts, digital essays, and other types of multimedia presentations. Students present their ideas for peer and/or instructor critique, research and integrate primary and secondary resources, reflect upon and communicate their perspective on what they’ve learned, and use the appropriate tools to structure their assignments.

Engage implemented the **Engage Adaptation Digital Media Assignments Award** during the 2010-2011 academic year to study the impact and processes around the creation of digital media assignments in the classroom. 21 faculty and instructional staff selected from schools and colleges across the campus participated in the award. The following is a list of UW-Madison faculty and instructional staff who participated in the **Engage Adaptation Digital Media Assignments Award**.

**Tom Armbrecht** - Department of French and Italian, College of Letters and Science  
**Davis Brown** - Department of English, College of Letters and Science  
**Nadine Connor** - Department of Communicative Disorders, College of Letters and Science  
**Kathleen Culver** - Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, College of Letters and Science  
**Greg Downey** - School of Library and Information Studies, College of Letters and Science  
**Yvette Egan** - School of Nursing  
**Mary Fiorenza** - Department of English, College of Letters and Science  
**Ralph Grunewald** - Department of Comparative Literature, College of Letters and Science  

**Erica Halverson** - Department of Educational Psychology, School of Education  
**Adam Kern** - Department of East Asian Languages and Literature, College of Letters and Science  
**Phillip Kim** - Department of Management and Human Resources, School of Business  
**Kerry Martin** - Department of Zoology, College of Letters and Science  
**Jan Miernowski** - Department of French and Italian, College of Letters and Science  
**Rebecca Muehrer** - School of Nursing  
**David Noyce** - Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, College of Engineering  
**Kent Peterson** - Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, School of Education  
**Jacqueline Preston** - Department of English, College of Letters and Science  
**Linda Roberts** - Department of Human Development and Family Studies, School of Human Ecology  
**Amy Trentham-Dietz** - Department of Population Health Sciences, School of Medicine and Public Health  
**Catherine Voge** - School of Nursing  
**Jane Zuengler** - Department of English, College of Letters and Science

For links to their projects, visit the Engage website at: [http://engage.doit.wisc.edu/dma/awards/](http://engage.doit.wisc.edu/dma/awards/)
Examples of Digital Media Assignments

Videos on Environmental Issues and Sustainability - Thomas Eggert
Thomas Eggert is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Business and the Environmental Assistance Coordinator for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. He had his students teach middle school classes about environmental issues and sustainability, first without the use of digital media, and then incorporating videos into the class. This assignment was valuable to his students both technically and substantively. Technically, students needed to develop the skills necessary to record and edit the video. Additionally, they needed to learn how to develop a story that was both entertaining and educational. Substantively, students needed to understand their content well and learn how to communicate it effectively to reach their intended audience. His students enjoyed creating digital media assignments and thought it was an effective way to teach middle school students.

To watch the videos that Eggert’s students produced, visit: http://go.wisc.edu/385qg9

Online Magazine - Kathleen Culver
Kathleen Culver is an Assistant Professor in Journalism and Mass Communication. Her class of 20 undergraduates spent a semester working in teams to create an online magazine called Curb (www.curbonline.com). The magazine featured various sources of digital media that included audio, video, slideshows, and timelines. While her students mainly pursue careers in professional communication, she felt the skills and satisfaction they received from these types of assignments were invaluable. Working with digital media assignments helped students become adaptable and analytical. Having these skills can help lawyers as much as it can help journalists. Through her experience, Culver found that lessons in new tools helped foster students’ creativity when using traditional tools. These skills were transferable with other assignments, such as writing research papers, and traditional skills were transferable with digital media assignments.

For more examples, go to the Engage website at: http://engage.doit.wisc.edu/dma/examples/
Methods of Good Practice

The resulting methods of good practice that emerged through Engage evaluation efforts can help in the planning and integration of digital media assignments in a course.

1. Assign students to work on projects in small groups to promote student-to-student interaction and to build collaboration skills.

2. Provide training and support resources to help students learn new multimedia tools and software. Ensure these resources are available to students at the time of greatest need during the development process.

3. Educate students about the resources and methods for acquiring digital assets, as well as the ethical and legal issues related to using these materials in their projects.

4. Address a real problem to increase motivation and to provide students with the opportunity to share their projects with an audience outside the course to obtain authentic feedback (rather than a strictly classroom audience).

Additionally, through reflecting on what helped award participants and consultants succeed in their own projects, the following points should be considered before starting a digital media assignment.

1. Meet with a learning technology consultant early in the design process for the assignment.

2. Study different examples of digital media assignments to understand and recognize the ways in which others have presented information in a multimodal format.

3. Develop a digital media assignment before assigning one to students. This will help identify the knowledge and skills students will demonstrate through their digital media assignment.

4. Identify and recommend specific technologies students should use for their assignment.

5. When selecting technologies, build on technologies that are familiar to students.

6. Remember that students can overestimate their technical abilities. Help them assess their level of expertise with the technologies being used.
Methods of Good Practice (cont.)

7. Identify campus digital media equipment checkout, support, and training resources for students.

8. Develop and share the rubric to be used to evaluate their digital media assignment.

9. Help students understand the amount of time required to complete a digital media assignment.

10. Implement check-in phases of a project to guide students through a thoughtful process (i.e., storyboarding, script writing, rough draft, critique and feedback, and final due date).

11. Provide students with small, low-risk activities prior to giving them an official digital media assignment to give them an opportunity to practice and develop communication and media literacy skills.

12. Provide in-class time for students to work on their digital media assignment.

“I am so much more comfortable using technology in the classroom. At this point, I would consider it a disservice to my students not to incorporate technology. I’m convinced that technology is central to preparing students for the work they will be required to do, both in and outside the university, and that it is fundamental to courses in composition.”

Instructor
Road Map to Success

The Engage Pedagogy Team developed a useful and memorable framework called The Five R’s. This framework helps consultants and instructors think broadly about the assignment objectives and address important pedagogical issues such as:

- integrating research into the assignment;
- scheduling time with subject librarians or technology trainers; and
- teaching critical legal issues such as copyright and sharing one’s work with the public.

Using this framework, Engage created a checklist to keep projects and consultations on track.

Re:search
- Students seek primary and secondary sources.
- Students collect and create appropriate digital assets for the assignment.
- Students integrate information from the course.
- Students and instructors have opportunities to work with library staff.

Re:fect
- Students integrate course work with challenging problems that extend beyond the classroom.
- Students communicate their ideas, perspectives, and emotions in creative ways.
- Students articulate what they are learning using media.

Re:construct
- Students and instructors develop a process for planning, producing, revising, and delivering a media assignment.
- Students integrate various forms of media and apply a range of skills to demonstrate their learning.
- Students build new knowledge and understanding of the course content.

Re:view
- Instructor creates criteria to assess the media assignment.
- Students go through an iterative process to develop their assignment.
- Students receive feedback from the instructor and/or other students in the course.
- Students learn to critique in a constructive manner.

Re:lease
- Students share their work for public viewing and reuse.
- Students get Creative Commons license for their work.
- Students and instructors improve their understanding of copyright issues.
Grading Digital Media Assignments

Digital media assignments can be challenging to assess, especially if students are working in a group. The following is a list of suggestions to consider in the development of a grading rubric.

- Identify key course learning objectives, learning outcomes, and skills that are developed through the digital media assignment.
- If applicable, determine whether students will receive a group grade, individual grades, or a combination of the two.
- Solicit feedback from students on how the assignment should be graded.
- Consider ways to assess projects on the following: clarity of ideas and details, overall organization, effective use of language, voice and audience, and technical competence.
- Identify logical phases for the development of the assignment (i.e., storyboarding, script writing, rough draft, critique and feedback, and final due date).
- Provide and/or facilitate feedback sessions for projects at each phase of the assignment.
- Evaluate the quality of the resulting media by reviewing items such as length, pacing, appropriate use of visual and/or aural transitions, clean edits, and video quality.
- Consider the use of journals and team feedback for student reflection on the assignment to assess the collaborative creative process.
- Grade the process used in the creation of the digital media assignment, as well as the product itself.

Examples of Grading Rubrics

- The Media Literacy Network’s website provides an overview of media literacy, reasons for teaching it, and different approaches for implementing and assessing media assignments: http://go.wisc.edu/d1b71r
- A sample digital video project rubric and some tips for creating a digital media assignment: http://go.wisc.edu/3hg283
- Another sample video project rubric: http://go.wisc.edu/284839
- This website provides considerations for assessing digital stories and new media narrative: http://go.wisc.edu/jjpn5w
- A rubric used to assess digital stories at the University of Colorado-Denver: http://go.wisc.edu/12g373
Copyright and Fair Use

As part of the Re:lease section on the Road Map to Success, students were guided through a conversation on copyright and fair use policies. The Engage Pedagogy Team and the UW-Madison Libraries developed several resources that were used in a number of courses.

**Checklist for Library Support for Digital Media Assignments**
http://go.wisc.edu/70x1j9
This checklist is for consultants and librarians working with faculty to develop instructional design and support materials related to research, citation, and copyright.

**Copyright for Digital Media Assignments**
http://go.wisc.edu/14a7vw
This guide, created by the UW-Madison Libraries, provides resources regarding copyright for students using images, video, and music for digital media assignments.

**Copyright for Digital Media Assignments Web Module**
http://go.wisc.edu/c694h1
This web module addresses key learning outcomes related to copyright that were articulated by the Engage Pedagogy Team.

**UW-Madison Libraries and Copyright Basics**
http://go.wisc.edu/mk2429
This guide describes basic ideas about the exclusive rights of copyright, some of the exemptions to those rights, and library services related to copyright.

**Creative Commons**
http://go.wisc.edu/kvu7x5
Creative Commons is a nonprofit corporation dedicated to making it easier for people to share and build upon the work of others, consistent with the rules of copyright. They provide free licenses and other legal tools to mark creative work with the freedom the creator wants it to carry, so others can share, remix, use commercially, or any combination thereof.

**What is Creative Commons?**
http://go.wisc.edu/2zuazj
This handout provides useful information on Creative Commons, the different licenses, and using Creative Commons content in your own work.
A Scholarly Approach: Citing Resources

As part of the award program, Engage stressed the importance of having students cite resources they used in their assignment. UW-Madison Libraries developed several resources and provided in-class training on citation practices.

**Checklist for Library Support for Digital Media Assignments**
http://go.wisc.edu/70x1j9
This checklist is for consultants and librarians working with faculty to develop instructional design and support materials related to research, citation, and copyright.

**Digital Media Assignments: Options for Organizing Citation Information and Citing Sources**
http://go.wisc.edu/hegcm6
A proper citation gives credit to the source and allows the reader to locate the original source. No matter what method or citation style is used, it is recommended that students gather all the necessary citation information at the time of conducting research.

Telling a Story

As part of the Re:construct section on the Road Map to Success, instructors encouraged a thoughtful process of storyboarding and script writing prior to development. Additionally, instructors provided guidance to students regarding effective interviewing practices.

**Storyboarding / Script Writing / Interviewing Skills**
http://go.wisc.edu/yavs97
Download this file to see how Professor Phillip Kim, School of Business, used the storyboard technique to plan his own digital media assignment video.

**Six Panel Storyboard Template**
http://go.wisc.edu/11xhx6
Download the template to be used by students to create their storyboards. Microsoft Word document.

**An alternative storyboard approach by David Macasaet**
http://go.wisc.edu/x3j2ho
Download the example to help students create their storyboards. TIFF image file.
Release Forms

As part of the Re:lease section on the Road Map to Success, Engage focused on providing students and instructors with an understanding of the need to get consent to record and share information that they collected. Through the help of the UW-Madison Office of Administrative Legal Services, release forms were also provided to students and instructors.

Talent Release Form
http://go.wisc.edu/p3jge2
The Talent Release Form was signed by any actors or participants in the projects whose voices or images were recorded for a project. One cannot claim full ownership of the copyright of the production without the consent of those participants. It was the responsibility of the author of the work to collect this consent.

Release Agreement Form
http://go.wisc.edu/5ql115
The Release Agreement Form needed to be signed by the student(s) who created the digital media assignment, so the instructor and Engage could use the production in the ways outlined by the agreement. For example, it gave instructors the authority to show the student work outside of class and at conferences. It also allowed Engage the right to use the work to promote digital media assignments for teaching and learning on campus, on websites, and at conferences.

“The final project gave students an opportunity to identify a real audience and a purpose directly related to their research/disciplinary interests. It encouraged students to think about the needs of the community and how they can use their emerging communication skills to meet those needs.”

Instructor
Campus Policies and Guidelines

As part of the award, Engage focused on ensuring that students and instructors were aware of campus policies that may have affected their projects.

Policy for Appropriate Use of UW-Madison Information Technology Resources
http://go.wisc.edu/m04k32

Access to electronic mail, the Internet, databases, computers, and other information technology resources is essential to the mission of the UW-Madison, and the achievement of excellence requires their effective use by all members of the University community. Use of information technology must be consistent with the University’s mission and with its role as a public agency. Each member of the University community is expected to protect the integrity of these resources and to know and adhere to University rules, regulations, and guidelines for their appropriate use.

Guidelines for Use of Non-UW-Madison Applications and Services for Instruction
http://go.wisc.edu/fd69gq

When instructors find that tools provided and supported by UW-Madison do not meet their instructional needs, they may consider using non-UW-Madison applications and services. While campus-provided applications and services meet UW-Madison guidelines for privacy, intellectual property, security, and records retention, providers of non-UW-Madison applications and services may not. This document provides guidance to those instructors considering the use of non-UW-Madison applications and services, as well as to those who are already using them.
Literature Review

http://go.wisc.edu/5y2vt0

Jenkins expands on his idea of a participatory culture – a culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one’s creations, and some type of informal mentoring whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices. Jenkins provides rationale, opportunities, and examples for why and how educators can help students participate and develop the cultural competencies and social skills needed for full involvement.

**Learning, Teaching and Scholarship in a Digital Age.** (2009) Christine Greenhow, Beth Robelia, and Joan E. Hughes.  
http://go.wisc.edu/u36a25

This article describes the contextual conditions in which students use the web today and examines how Web 2.0’s unique capabilities influence teaching and learning. “Conceptually, Web 2.0 seems to embody knowledge as a collective agreement that may combine facts with other dimensions of human experience, such as opinions, values, and spiritual beliefs.”

http://go.wisc.edu/t63168

This white paper describes the challenges and opportunities in transforming the educational system to help students attain the outcomes necessary for the successful life in the 21st century.

http://go.wisc.edu/a8vr26

This paper describes the work that took place at the 21st Century Literacy Summit – a meeting to explore the affordances and challenges of the shift in the way people communicate and express themselves in the 21st century. The group used the NMC’s definition of 21st century literacy as a common starting place, “21st century literacy is the set of abilities and skills where aural, visual, and digital literacy overlap. These include the ability to understand the power of images and sounds, to recognize and use that power, to manipulate and transform digital media, to distribute them pervasively, and to easily adapt them to new forms.”
Literature Review (Cont.)

http://go.wisc.edu/u8v0d2

Dede discusses how the rapid advances in information technology are influencing characteristics of entering students, development of new teaching and learning methods, and the knowledge that society values. Among his ideas are: co-design, designing learning experiences students can personalize, and co-instruction – utilizing knowledge sharing among students as a major source of content and pedagogy.

http://go.wisc.edu/w3q353

Lombardi provides a description of authentic learning and a variety of example assignments, including one on student-created media. Based on her research, authentic learning includes the following 10 design elements: real-world relevance, ill-defined problems, sustained investigation, multiple sources and perspectives, collaboration, reflection, interdisciplinary perspective, integrated assessment, polished products, and multiple interpretations and outcomes.

http://go.wisc.edu/718f55

This article is a comparison of two cases in which youth use digital media as they learn about civic engagement and democratic practices. “The process of developing young people’s leadership and active participation in the world around them does not come about simply as a result of having access to the technology, or even to training in the analysis and production skills they need to use it. It is a complex, iterative process that involves identifying and thinking through what it is they want to say; interacting with adults who play a key role in setting parameters, offering possibilities and challenges; collaborating with peers in new ways; and taking account of the audiences that they seek to address and to influence.”
Students in the Director’s Seat: Teaching and Learning with Student-generated Video. (2005) Matthew Kearney, and Sandy Schuck.  
http://go.wisc.edu/0uykku

A research paper that looks at the use of student-generated digital video (SGDV) at five K-12 schools. In this study, they identified three main ways teachers used student-created video: as a communication tool, as an observation and analysis tool, and as a reflection tool. In most cases, students developed the following: movie-making skills, media literacy skills, communication and presentation skills, and metacognitive and affective skills. Further, the authors offer the following elements as crucial for SGDV tasks with the primary aim of facilitating rigorous development in curriculum content: assessment needs to be properly aligned with these outcomes, students need to be familiar with and develop necessary teamwork skills, students need some movie-making skills, and students need an opportunity to “celebrate their learning.”

Students as Producers: Second Year Students’ Experiences as Podcasters of Content for First Year Undergraduates. (2006) Mark Lee, Anthony Chan, and Catherine McLoughlin.  
http://go.wisc.edu/5y394t

Second-year students produce podcasts to alleviate students’ preconceptions and anxiety about course content and other course-related issues. “In the design and development of instructional materials, it is the designers who learn the most, since the process of articulating their domain knowledge compels them to reflect on their own knowledge in a new and meaningful way.”
Engage Adaptation Digital Media Assignments Award
Consultants and Librarians

Academic Technology
Division of Information Technology

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Blaire Bundy
Jasun Carr
Ron Cramer
Cheryl Diermyer
Timm Dugdale
Cid Freitag
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Jim Vannes

School of Pharmacy

Mike Pitterle
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Learning Support Services
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Brian Deith
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