**Web Apps for the Writing Classroom**

**Engage Students with Technology!**





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**“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I will learn.”**

*Ben Franklin*

**Technology in the Writing Classroom:** For less tech savvy instructors, integrating web apps into the writing classroom can be overwhelming. We are not sure about what apps to start with, and worry about how long it will take to learn to use new apps. Finally, some instructors wonder whether such apps truly make a difference. The short answer: Yes, they do! Web apps help engage students, which is crucial for learning. Students © digital technology, and lucky for instructors, there are a number of free web apps that are simple to use. Let’s get our digital natives involved by meeting them on their own techy turf!

**How to get started using? The following are free user friendly web apps that engage students:**

**Polling Apps**: Free, fun polling apps for computers and cell phones (students do not have to own a Smart phone) get the conversation going.

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1. Ask your class a question with the Poll Everywhere app

2. Class answers in real time using mobile phones, Twitter, or web browsers

3. See your response live on the web or in a PowerPoint presentation

**Why use polling in the classroom?**

* Increase classroom participation and attentiveness
* Encourage risk-taking with anonymous student responses
* Elicit diverse opinions when there isn’t a correct answer
* Gauge student comprehension of material immediately
* Grab students with thought-provoking opening questions
* Assess last night’s reading with a quick quiz
* Take fun surveys just because!

**Video Customization Apps** are great for making non-Googleable lessons. Instructors can have students make their own videos with Q&A and discussion forums for their peers. You can make a custom interactive lesson in ten minutes or less.



“A site that allows users to select a video and customize it by editing, cropping, recording audio, and adding questions to make an engaging presentation or lesson.”

**EDpuzzle** is free and simple to use:

* Take already existing videos from Youtube, Khan Academy, Crash Course, etc. or upload your own.
* Enable self-paced learning with interactive lessons, add your voice and questions along the video.
* Know if your students are watching your videos, how many times, and see the answers they give.

**Video Creation Apps:**



“User friendly and intuitive presentation software that allows someone with no technical or design skills to create engaging professional “look and feel” animated.”

**Powtoon**: Powtoon is a great app for prewriting and final writing presentations. Before beginning, students must think of the overall point (thesis) and relevant support. Hmmm, sounds a lot like writing to me!



**“**A cloud-based video creation service that produces video from photos, video clips, and music into video slideshows.”

**Animoto**: Super easy app! Animoto is as easy to use as PowerPoint, but the difference in the end creation is unbelievable! Animoto is free for educators and as many as fifty students per educator. There are so many uses for Animoto:

* At the start of the school year, students could use Animoto to introduce themselves
* Students can illustrate their own poetry using digital images they find on Internet or ones they take.
* Animoto can be used to present research information to the class.
* Use to digitally present major points of a completed paper

**A few handy websites:**

* Edutopia: <http://www.edutopia.org/film-fest-classroom-apps>
* Digital Writing Workshop: [https://digitalwritingworkshop.wikispaces.com/Websites\_And\_Apps](http://www.edutopia.org/film-fest-classroom-apps)
* Edudemic: <http://www.edudemic.com/best-web-tools/>

Questions? Email me at mgeiger@georgian.edu