

# **Tuning Into YouTube in the Classroom**

## **Tuning Into YouTube in the Classroom: Improving Assessment Scores through Social Media**

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### **Abstract**

Despite the consistent tendencies of higher-education faculty to utilize single testing measures (i.e. essay or multiple choice), education research indicates effective assessment of student learning must incorporate multiple formats. With the surge of online courses, programs, and universities in the last 20 years, there is an increasing need to align student assessments with available technology. Because online learning is steadily becoming the norm, it is important that more educators are aware of the types of tools they can incorporate in their own classrooms—such as Skype, Twitter, blogs, and YouTube—to ensure students are learning effectively and remain active participants in their own education. This article will focus specifically on YouTube. YouTube is a viable option as a means of modeling strategies and assessing student learning through student-created videos.

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### **Introduction**

Today's higher education classrooms are very different from the classrooms of the past.

Classrooms of the past often consisted of long monotonous lectures and very little academic stimulation. Students were often bored and inattentive. Doodling, daydreaming, sleeping and note passing were the activities of choice. Textbooks were often considered the sole source of instruction and the content of those texts was written in a static format of black and white with a small infusion of color.

However, learning did occur for some, but what about those who required a different type of instruction. They were often left behind. Teachers were forced to revamp their methods of delivery in order to create a positive and productive learning environment. This environment would allow all students to become active participants in the educational process. This massive change would have to occur with the use of online technology.

Because the very nature of teacher preparation is based on modeling practices, applying theories, and learning strategies in a traditional face-to-face format, some find it hard to believe that an online program could not only provide students with these same fundamentals, but also engage them and adequately prepare them for their own classrooms, as well. Despite the consistent tendencies of higher-education faculty to utilize single testing formats (i.e. essay or multiple choice), education research indicates effective assessment of student learning must incorporate multiple formats. With the surge of online courses, programs, and universities in the last 20 years, there is an increasing need to align student assessments with available technology.

Because online learning is steadily becoming the norm, it is important that more educators are aware of the types of tools they can incorporate in their own classrooms—such as Skype,

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Twitter, blogs, and YouTube—to ensure students are learning effectively and remain active participants in their own education. This article will focus specifically on YouTube. YouTube is a viable option as a means of modeling strategies, providing additional context on education trends, or assessing student learning through student-created videos.

Preparing teachers who can effectively meet the needs of today's students is a challenging task. In an effort to accomplish just that, more and more universities are expanding programs to include online certificates, courses, and degrees in education. When compared to face-to-face instruction, ratings for online teacher preparation programs have been found to be higher, as a result of more innovative online teaching and learning practices (Chiero, 2010). Online learning is a solution for engaging 21st century learners, and for preparing them for the classroom where they are expected to be technologically savvy. Brain research, software advances, teacher shortages, and budget constraints make online learning a rationale alternative for today's student (Umpstead, 2009). In addition, online programs offer flexibility to students and to professors, increasing opportunities for learners to observe and gain more experience teaching in classrooms prior to graduation.

One important aspect of effective online teaching is that learning involves the student's ability to take responsibility for their learning through interactive means (Richardson, 2006). Because YouTube is a free online tool that requires very little technological savvy or experience, it stands to reason that the incorporation of this tool in online classrooms would be helpful for students who are preparing to enter the education field.

However, whenever YouTube is mentioned there is a negative connotation because of some of the images that are presented. But, there are many positive uses for YouTube in education.

YouTube could be an ideal way to interact with students in an online class. Most asynchronous online classes do not lend themselves to two-way oral communication, even if the course should have heavy communication (Gentry, 2008). YouTube provides an opportunity for students to

## **Tuning Into YouTube in the Classroom**

record themselves and upload the material.

It can also be used by instructors to build learning communities where the students become engaged in the constructive learning process through problem solving, the development of higher order thinking skills and the engagement of collaborative work. Dunn (2011) reported that, “Youtube is one of the biggest resources for educational content ever.”

In addition, lectures can be recorded and uploaded to YouTube. This provides the student with an opportunity to review the video as often as necessary in order to understand the information (Cardine, 2008) or view the lecture for the first time if the class is missed. There are some educational YouTube videos that are public. One example is Youtube’s “Use a Learning Theory: Constructivism” Video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xa59prZC5gA>). This video provides examples of how teachers can use YouTube to supplement class instruction.

The use of Youtube in the classroom increases the student’s awareness of the world. It allows students to be more engaged in the learning process and encourages them to make connections between the text and real life experiences (Dunn, 2011).

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