

Tessa McIntire
Faculty Seminar Series: Teaching with New Media

Reflections on My Final Project

While working on this project, I went through a range of emotions: doubt in my abilities; fear of failure and humiliation; frustration with my own limitations in access. On the brink of emotional exhaustion, I consulted my mentor, who helped me put things in perspective. I realized that I have been gaining skills in using new media all semester. I have all the tools I need to show what I have learned. Having worked over 12 weeks with a blog, I can offer a few reflections on how this seminar series has impacted my teaching.

First, pedagogy leads technology. This is the first part of a title to a text I picked up during my research. This presentation was originally about using blogs for asynchronous learning, but I gave a significant amount of space to resources that discuss the philosophical implications behind making these choices. The use of technology in the classroom should not be superfluous; it should always fulfill a specific pedagogical need.

Second, implementing new media in the classroom is a time-consuming process. It requires just as much intrinsic motivation on the instructor side as it does on the student side. Trial and error is inevitable. Maintaining a blog requires commitment and support.

Third, patterns of student engagement are unpredictable. Fluctuation is inevitable, especially in the Core class. What worked well one semester or during one class can fall flat the next. Even the most motivated students will lose engagement from time to time. We don't control external factors like lectures and events or even life in general. But we can turn those times into learning moments by asking for reflection. If students feel a loss of engagement, what caused it? What actions can we take in the future to circumvent such occurrences?

Lastly, we are limited by many factors. The capabilities of the equipment we own or borrow. Our knowledge of and familiarity with new media platforms. The infrastructure set in place for us. These factors contribute to us not always being able to do the things we originally envisioned. The wifi in the classroom is often slow. So is my laptop. I'm realizing that if I want to do bigger and better things, the first thing I may need to examine is the equipment I am using. The greatest activity in the world is useless if my computer is running slowly or cannot access it somehow. These are just a few things that I thought about during this seminar series. As a lifelong learner, I cannot underscore the level of impact this series has made upon me.