eTools: Using Jing and Screencast in the Classroom

Alison M. Lietzenmayer, Old Dominion University

Introduction

As instructors, we spend a lot of time preoccupied with the idea of "feedback." We might ask ourselves: "What is the best method for feedback in this class?," "What types of feedback can help my students improve?," and even "Do my students read the feedback I provide?" This is where creative online platforms provide assistance. Using Jing and Screencast, instructors can provide uniquely tailored feedback that benefits students in both traditional and online classes.

What are Jing & Screencast?

Jing is an easy to use program that allows for screen capture of both video and images from your computer desktop. It allows for simple video editing functions, and then the content is ready to share through Screencast. Jing is positioned on a desktop computer, and with a few easy clicks focusing on a target screenshot, instructors can "grab and share" images or video, save them for editing, and provide links to students or colleagues.

Jing partners with Screencast to allow instructors to host and provide immediate web links for videos. These links can then be shared directly with individual students (for example, providing the link through their feedback in classroom management systems such as Blackboard or Canvas) or shared with all the students enrolled in a course.

Students have the opportunity to watch the video multiple times, as long as the host (the instructor) keeps it available.

Jing videos are limited to five minutes. While this time limit might present a challenge in some cases, it encourages instructors to provide concise statements or directions. One tip is to inform students that mediated feedback for an assignment or a "virtual overview" (wherein instructors walk through the requirements of an assignment, a sample outline, or an example) is available only for a limited amount of time, which should motivate students to view the video promptly. At a later time, instructors can remove or delete a video by changing the settings within Screencast. Instructors can archive their videos or images with Jing and Screencast for use in future semesters, or delete them as needed to save space.

How can I get Jing & Screencast for use in the classroom?

Jing is hosted by TechSmith, with a free download available at http://www.techsmith.com/jing.html. You will be prompted to create an account, which is linked to a Screencast account for hosting videos. The free version of Jing (with content hosted by Screencast; http://www.techsmith.com/screencastcom.html) is limited to 2 GB of storage and 2 GB monthly bandwidth. While this amount likely is enough for most instructors who provide both generalized and individual feedback for students, additional storage (up to 25GB) and bandwidth (up to 200 GB monthly) can be obtained for a monthly rate of $9.95 or an annual charge of $99.95.

How can I use Jing and Screencast in the classroom?

Jing increases the level of social presence that instructors have with their students by adding audio and visual content for them to review. It is important to be mindful of FERPA limitations with mediated feedback, though. When in doubt, remember that specific grades should not be discussed, and students might be tempted to share their link with others, so video feedback should be designed with these considerations in mind. As we strive for inclusive classes that work for students of all abilities, remember to save a transcript of your generalized feedback statements to share with your students for ADA compliance.

More specifically, Jing and Screencast can be used to:

1. *welcome your students to the course (f2f or online)*. A video introduction is a great way to connect with students, share general reminders about registration, and outline your expectations for the course before the first formal meeting. For online classes, this is an opportunity to create a communicative dynamic that begins building a learning community in a shared online space.

2. *review your course syllabi*. Recording a brief video highlighting the policies, expectations, and requirements for the upcoming course or for a specific class session can help prepare students for a new semester.

3. *review any particularly challenging assignments*. Most instructors know which of their assignments or courses are likely to raise questions from their students.

Providing additional directions, rubrics, or resources to your students might alleviate some space in your e-mail inbox, but more importantly will serve to direct them on where and how to get started.

4. *provide students with individual (or group) paper feedback.* Consider FERPA parameters for what is appropriate to share when choosing this option, but walking through a paper outline or draft, noting citation style and errors, or verbally highlighting student strengths is another opportunity to encourage your students to engage with the course materials beyond the course meeting time. It is quite useful in tracking development over a semester with an Honors project, graduate proposal, or group project. Students can refer to exactly what you noted as problematic, beneficial, or an area of concern for subsequent coursework.

5. *provide students with general class feedback on an assignment.* For classes using scaffolded assignments, you might find that listing trends (e.g., highlights, challenges) with direction on how to improve in future writing assignments can be beneficial to the entire class.

6. *incorporate tutorials for conducting research.* Preparing resources for introductory or core Communication classes is another useful application for Jing and Screencast. Learning to effectively use an online library database or providing pointers for "how to read a scholarly article" are just two suggestions that can be helpful across a spectrum of Communication courses for any instructor.

7. *present a mini-lecture.* Recording short lectures of a theory or adding further insight to a topic that was discussed in class can be valuable for inclement weather days when you need to catch up on a topic, but need to move forward as well.

8. *deliver student projects.* Public presentations are a core component of our discipline, and encouraging students to design and deliver recorded presentations gives them an opportunity to build professional portfolios, engage with new audiences, and share their knowledge in potentially inspired ways.

Conclusion

Using Jing and Screencast provide creative solutions for offering additional feedback or tutorials to your students. These two eTools can even help improve the dialogue between instructors and students, offering additional opportunities for engagement with course material outside of the classroom. Whether it is a traditional, flipped, or online class, Jing and Screencast are advantageous options for mediated feedback in a Communication course.