

eTools: Using Padlet in the Classroom

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Introduction

Paper is commonly used in the traditional classroom for various tasks such as group work, assignments, syllabi, and general classroom activities. Students are given numerous sheets of paper to keep track of throughout the time in a given course. As an alternative to paper use, Padlet creates an online environment where students and faculty members can work together by adding, deleting, editing, or sharing documents.

What is "Padlet"?

Padlet is similar to an online corkboard where students and professors can collaborate on projects and share documents. In Padlet, walls are created by the user and each wall has a unique URL. No limit exists on the amount of walls that Padlet users can create, allowing users to create as many walls as they wish.

The default privacy setting for all Padlet walls is semi-private, which means knowing the URL is necessary to access the wall. Padlet allows these walls to be private, to be password protected, to contain hidden links from Google and other public areas of Padlet, or to be totally public. Users not only decide who can view the Padlet walls, but also who is allowed to share information on their walls. Word documents, pictures, PDFs, YouTube videos, a few words (typed into the wall) and others types of content can be shared on the walls. Padlet can be used to store, share material, or edit material as

well as collaborate on material.

How can I get Padlet for use in the classroom?

Access to Padlet is simple and free. Go to <http://padlet.com/> and click on the "Sign up" tab in the upper right corner. You can sign up using an email address, your Facebook account, or your Google account. You can download up to 25 MB per file that is placed on Padlet, which allows a variety of types of multimedia, documents, files, and other bits of information. There is no limit to the amount of walls you create on Padlet.

How can I use Padlet in the classroom?

Padlet works well in traditional face-to-face classes, online classes, or classes that are broadcasted to multiple locations. Additionally, it can be used as:

1. *a location to store and access course readings.* This website allows instructors to store various types of content in one place that can be used as course readings. Doing so allows instructors to add information to the wall anytime they assign a new reading. Because the wall is accessible at all times by instructors and students as long as they know the URL and have Internet access, course readings can be accessed from any location.

2. *a location for students to work collaboratively with other students on course projects.* Students can work with other students on group projects by submitting various documents to support the project. They can also work collaboratively by completing peer reviews and submitting various drafts on the Padlet wall. Students can submit their

work and others (e.g., instructors, classmates) can download the document, edit the document and upload the new document into the Padlet wall.

3. *a location for students to receive faculty input on projects and papers before submitting the assignment for assessment.* If students desire feedback prior to grading, this site works well for placing it and seeking it. Feedback does not need to be only from instructors; students can seek feedback from their classmates, peer tutors, family members, or friends.

4. *a location for students to create online scrapbooks or reflections/journals.* At times, students are required to create an online scrapbook to show they understand the concepts discussed in their courses. Padlet is a great place to create a digital scrapbook. Because the wall can support data from various formats, students can link other websites, YouTube videos, PowerPoints, and Word Documents, among other types of content, to the wall. Students can also move the content around on the wall to change the order as well as label the content as necessary. Padlet can also serve as a platform for reflections or journal entries by uploading the content as necessary.

5. *icebreakers for classes.* Sometimes icebreakers are necessary to get students to say what they are thinking or to get students to get to know each other. Padlet can be used to have students answer questions such as roll call or other questions to get to know each other.

6. *a forum for in-class polls or to answer questions.* At time, instructors want to

have students participate, answer content specific questions, or indicate whether they understand the material. However, there may be some students who are uncomfortable answering questions aloud. Padlet allows for students to answer questions without the fear of being incorrect or having to speak in front of their classmates by allowing them to simply type their answer into the wall.

7. a location to store documents for department, committees, or conventions.

Instead of bringing stack of papers to a meeting to distribute or lugging papers to a convention, share a URL instead. This gives interested individuals access to the material at any time it is needed, and they can save the material to their computers should they desire. All they need is the URL and Internet access.

Conclusion

Padlet is a tool that can be used by students and instructors. The website does not limit the number of walls that can be created by the users and privacy is variable based on the users' needs. It also helps institutions save paper while using a free resource that enables instructors and students to be organized and share materials.