

Proposal for Paper:
One Subject, Two Schools, Two Countries:
Using Technology to Create An Innovative and Collaborative
Approach to Teaching History

David Greenfield
Instructional Technology Analyst, Loyola Marymount University
Ed.D. Student, Learning Technologies, Pepperdine University
(expected graduation- June 2012).

Arguably, one of the continuing legacies of the enlightenment and industrial revolution is a world that grows increasingly complex where cycles of history seem to repeat with an increasing rapidity. This is especially true of the major events of 50 or 60 years ago that altered the world and continue to influence contemporary politics, economies societies. One of the consequences of these events and changes is the continuing challenge of liberal arts teachers is to find ways of constructing meaning to such complexities. One event in particular that summons educators to delve into creative thinking is the holocaust. How can we explain how millions were killed in an automated, almost assembly line process? This question has instigated a wide range of solutions and curricula developed by educators around the world.

In the Spring of 2010, Loyola Marymount University (LMU), a private Jesuit university and California State University at Northridge (CSUN), a public institution entered into a innovative partnership to address this complex and difficult quandary by offering an innovative, collaborative and multi-modal course called “The Holocaust in Poland”. In this course, academic content is directly integrated with digital technologies to create a diverse community of learners.

LMU and CSUN students are both Jewish and non-Jewish and come from a socioeconomically and ethnically diverse, true cross-cultural demographic. The course is taught by Jewish Studies/English faculty who bring diverse and interdisciplinary perspectives to the material. Using a web-based video bridge, students and teachers at the two campuses meet weekly for lectures, discussions and to view media. Blackboard and a Facebook group are also employed as digital destinations that allow students to reflect, blog and post assignments. Students are also given the opportunity to meet with survivors on a regular basis to interview and learn from.

Although this is a one-semester course, an additional section will be offered in the summer providing students will the opportunity to travel to Poland for two weeks to meet with Polish students and educators for classes and visits to the locations studied in class. During this visit, students will be assigned to groups and will be given media kids that

contain a digital still camera and HD-DV camera with eye-fii cards that will upload images and videos directly to the web. Students will be encouraged to record and reflect their experiences as blogs, vlogs and podcasts to, dedicated ning and twitter sites. .

The goal of using this mixed environment is create a broad community of learners to explore the Holocaust actively interviewing surviving witnesses to create rich media compositions on the history and literature studied. The result of this blended course is a set of diverse learning goals that include:

- Students to acquire a greater understanding of the holocaust and it's human legacies
- Learning to use a variety of digital tools to create rich media
- Promote digital collaboration using a selection of web-based learning and communications tools to create online communities and social-networks

I propose to give a paper that will review:

- The initial proposal for the course
- Instructor preparation of curriculum
- Identifying and integrating technologies used in the course (web-based video, hardware, software and social networking sites, etc)
- Classroom choreography of instructor and students
- Assessment of success of the learning goals
- Application of process to other subjects and topics
- Analysis of course in terms of specific learning theories and theorists such as S. Papert's community of learners, R. Schenk's narrative as intelligence, as well as ideas of community and meaning of Bruner, Vygotsky and Dewey.