<http://www.facultyfocus.com/>



October 27th, 2014

# Maximize In-Class Time by Moving Student Presentations Online

By: Stephanie Smith Budhai, PhD

As a faculty member, I am always challenged with finding pedagogical techniques that allow my students to connect with course content, each other, and myself in new and interesting ways. Student presentations can help achieve this goal, but they require a wealth of time for each student to present and get immediate feedback from peers and the instructor. Some classes are so large that in-class presentations may not be feasible at all. Or, if you are a faculty member who is not on a block schedule, you would have to use several of your 50-minute class sessions to allow each student a chance to present his or her work. What’s more, some students have a difficult time listening to dozens of peer presentations in one sittings and may tune out after the first few presentations.

After facing all of these issues, I sought out other options that would allow for quality student presentations, but did not take up too much valuable in-class time. The answer for me is virtual student presentations, which allow students to research scholarly literature related to course content, present their findings, and receive peer feedback; all outside of class time. With virtual presentations, students can not only connect with content, the instructor, and each other; but they can also build their capacity to leverage technology to impact their learning.

#### Here are the four steps to implementing virtual presentations:

**Step 1: Work with students on a presentation topic.** Typically, I have students research a specific course-related topic already covered in class with the intention that they will develop a deeper level of expertise. Students also can use these presentations to flesh out content that is mentioned in the course textbook, but is not written about in detail. Either way, the topic should connect to course objectives and content in an intentional way, as well as provide students the opportunity to choose a topic that interests them. Once a topic has been determined, you must choose a distinct purpose for the presentation. I have had students synthesize and explain the findings of several research articles, as well as discuss how they plan to use the information in future practice

**Step 2: Provide guidelines.** This includes giving students specifics on the length of presentation, professional appearance, and how to engage an audience during a presentation. The technology options are endless so it is essential to provide students with some boundaries and expectations. I have found that shorter presentations of 7-10 minutes result in a higher quality. Two platforms that have worked really well for students to record and present their materials have been: Present.me (https://present.me/content/) and Knovio (http://www.knovio.com/).

**Step 3: Create virtual space for sharing presentations and getting feedback.** One of the benefits of virtual student presentations is the opportunity for students to learn from each other. Use a space within your Learning Management System (LMS) for students to post their presentations and get feedback. At my university we use Blackboard Learn, and I set up a discussion board forum tab where students can publicly post the link to the presentation and leave written feedback for their peers. In addition to students reviewing each other’s presentations, the course instructor should view and provide feedback. This feedback can be recorded and uploaded as an MP3 file or written as text.

**Step 4: Facilitate full-class discussion.** It is always beneficial to close the assignment with a brief in-class discussion highlighting everyone’s key learning points, if class size permits. This gives students who did not review certain presentations the chance to gain more knowledge, or for the instructor to ask deeper universal questions to the entire class.

Virtual presentations have worked well in my course, but I am always looking for other technology tools that can help students meet the course objectives and beyond. What other websites, tools, or techniques have you used to allow students the chance to present their work and get quality feedback from their peers, without losing quality in-class time?

Stephanie Smith Budhai is an assistant professor of education at Neumann University in Aston, Pa.