Technology Tools to Support Reflection

Patti Clayton explains that critical reflection "generates, depends, and documents learning." Given this definition, it's clear that reflection is an important part of transformative learning— learning that has the power to change how one views themselves and their beliefs about the world. It's not enough to have an experience. The learning comes from analyzing what happened and organizing that experience into a cognitive framework.

Students don't always understand what we want from them when we say reflection. This can result in a recitation of facts, rather than the sort of metacognitive exercise that fosters transformation. Consider having the students use a model or framework for their reflections. Driscoll's "What, So What, Now What" model is a simple, yet powerful example of a reflective model.

Can technology play a role in supporting this kind of reflection? In this resource guide, we'll present three strategies for using technology to support and deepen reflection.

- ejournals: Most learning management systems have a journal tool that is accessible only to the instructor and the individual student. This mimics a paper journal but eliminates the need to submit and return heavy notebooks. These tools are typically integrated into the grade book and have a comment area where instructors can leave feedback. Consider an assignment where the student journals on a regular basis throughout the semester.

- Podcasts: Podcasts are having a resurgence in the last couple of years, sparked by the success of Serial. You could incorporate a podcast assignment into your course as an individual student project, or as a group project. This could be a standalone recording or an ongoing episodic project running the entire semester. Some students will be perfectly comfortable recording a deeply personal narrative knowing others will listen to it, while other students will not have the same comfort level. You need to take that into account when determining if there will be an authentic audience for the podcast or if you will be the only listener.

- Inserting comments: Both Microsoft and Google have a feature to insert comments into presentations, documents, and spreadsheets. In PowerPoint, it's easy to record a narration for an entire presentation. Consider constructing an assignment where students insert comments directly into their files to reflect on their work.

Resources

Patti Clayton
https://curricularengagement.com/

Critical Reflection Models
 http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/nmp/sonet/rlos/placs/critical_reflection/menu.html

Four Mistakes I Made When Assigning Podcasts:
https://www.chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/four-mistakes-i-made-when-assigning-podcasts/41377

For more information or to discuss how you might incorporate these ideas into your courses, contact the Reinert Center at cttl@slu.edu.