

Professor Corner

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Mary Conran – Online Engagement Tools

I have found Voice Thread as a flexible tool to dive deeper into course topics (allowing students to explore or apply concepts) or to deliver a modest lecture on less-mission critical, but relevant, concepts. Further, Voice Thread fosters the construction of the learning community, especially in short delivery format courses.

USING VOICE THREAD to ENGAGE

[Voice Thread](#) is a relatively versatile learning tool; while it does require a little investment of time for instructors to get started, it is easy to integrate into canvas and use by learners is relatively intuitive.

I had been looking for a tool which would allow me to cover supporting course concepts which needed a little more elaboration than scheduled classes would allow, but I realized that many of these themes also needed a connection to practical applications for learners to appreciate and apply the concepts.

I can structure Voice Thread activities which are short and concentrated that either deepen student engagement or develop these into online learning activities that contribute to students' earned grades. While there are many ways to use the tool, what has worked best for me is to create a short PPT deck (4-5 slides on a topic or

theme), and to import them into Voice Thread encouraging learners to respond to my prompts or to the prompts of their peers (hence the concept of THREAD).

Over my two years of using Voice Thread, I have found my learners, including Graduate students, appreciate Voice thread to connect with their peers and to share their growing understanding of course concepts and themes; Voice Thread allows them to connect in a way which strengthens our time in the virtual classroom.

This semester, I am starting a modest experiment using Voice Thread for my in-person classes too. The tool plays a different role here, allowing me to concentrate on concepts which students seem to need more development or elaboration. I plan to use it as well for virtual case discussion next week.