THE EDUCATION FUND

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TECHNOLOGY

Demystifying Content Creation in Schoology

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Demystifying Content Creation in Schoology

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Goals and Objectives

This grant's main goal is to support teachers in effectively incorporating their daily classroom instructional materials into their Schoology courses. With thousands of teachers now trained in Schoology, many are still struggling with how to create content within the LMS (Learning Management System) platform to engage their students. My idea addresses this question precisely. As a member of the original team responsible for supplying Schoology 101 and 102 professional development sessions for instructors within Miami-Dade County Public Schools, I have gained valuable insights into the eagerness teachers face to learn more about content creation and effective methods to incorporate their instructional content within Schoology.

The primary objective of this grant is to demonstrate effective methods for structuring and crafting valuable instructional materials using the Pacing Guides found in the Curriculum Resources Group within Schoology. By providing educators with essential insights and tools for establishing organized folders and creating engaging content, this initiative aims to significantly empower teachers.

Utilizing the information provided will enable teachers to seamlessly integrate their individually designed instructional resources directly into the Schoology platform, thereby elevating the quality of their pedagogical approaches. As a result, this grant will not only enhance teachers' proficiency in instructional content development but also pave the way for an enriched educational experience that nurtures both educators and students alike.

Florida Computer Science Standards

SC.K2.CS-CS.3.2 - Create, review, and revise artifacts that include text, images, and audio using digital tools.

SC.35.CS-CC.1.1 - Identify technology tools for individual and collaborative data collection, writing, communication, and publishing activities.

SC.35.CS-PC.2.1 Explain how computers and computing devices are used to communicate with others on a daily basis.

SC.68.CS-CC.1.1 - Demonstrate an ability to communicate appropriately through various online tools.

SC.912.CS-CC.1.1 - Evaluate modes of communication and collaboration.

Introduction

As educators, we understand the value of our time and the need for a smooth transition to new technologies. Schoology is designed with simplicity in mind, making it incredibly easy for teachers to import and adapt their current course content. Whether you have been using traditional paper-based resources or have a digital setup in another platform, Schoology allows you to seamlessly import your materials, ensuring that you can continue delivering high-quality education without any disruptions.

Infusing the classroom with modern technology whether its brick and mortar or virtual, is essential in addressing today's student needs (Wichlinski, 2017). According to Wichlinski (2017), the integration of innovative teaching methods into our existing educational framework yields a more effective preparation of students for real-world challenges. For instance, incorporating project-based learning where students tackle real-world problems or simulations that mirror professional scenarios can cultivate critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and adaptability.

The significance of Wichlinski's (2017) assertion becomes even more pronounced in the aftermath of the pandemic. The sudden shift to remote learning highlighted the necessity of engaging and effective teaching methodologies, regardless of the learning environment. The ability to seamlessly transition between classroom and remote settings ensures that students continue to receive quality education. One example is the ability for teachers to use video conferencing tools to conduct interactive virtual lessons, supporting student engagement and interaction even when physical presence is limited.

The pandemic emphasized the importance of flexibility in education, as disruptions to the traditional system can occur unexpectedly. Having a robust Learning Management System (LMS) like Schoology enhances this adaptability. For instance, in case of future crises or unexpected circumstances, students can access course materials, assignments, and assessments through Schoology's online platform, ensuring continuous learning regardless of their physical location.

Furthermore, Schoology's LMS capabilities empower educators to create diverse and engaging learning experiences. They can design multimedia-rich lessons, interactive quizzes, and discussion forums that encourage active participation. For example, teachers can use Schoology's collaborative features to facilitate group projects where students collaborate virtually, refining their teamwork and communication skills.

Personalized learning is also made possible within Schoology. Students can progress at their own pace, accessing added resources or advanced materials as needed. This personalized approach caters to diverse learning styles and aptitudes, enabling students to explore their interests deeply. For instance, a student passionate about environmental science could access supplementary readings, videos, and interactive simulations related to the subject through Schoology's platform, thereby expanding the student’s experience and knowledge base.

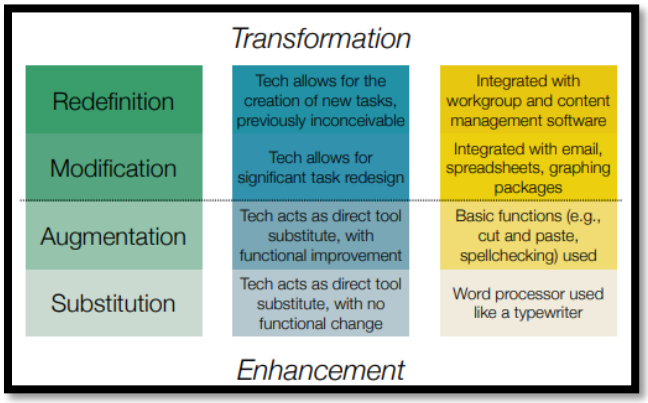
The ability to engage students effectively, whether in traditional classrooms or remote settings, is crucial for maintaining a resilient educational system. LMS platforms like Schoology play a pivotal role in ensuring uninterrupted learning and fostering diverse, engaging, and adaptable educational experiences.

Course Outline and Overview

Having Schoology as Miami-Dade County Public School's (M-DCPS) LMS means students and parents need to only go to one place to get their classwork, assignments, assessments, and communication from their teachers. Our new LMS gives teachers the capability to still use all their additional resources to support their individual students' needs but now all housed in one place. Having a better understanding of how Schoology works will affect the overall educational experience for all stakeholders.

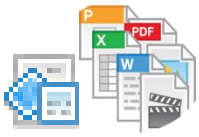
As educators, we not only have the power to impact what happens in our classroom, but our students' future. Think back to when you were in grade school. Does any teacher stand out by having made a positive impact in your life? Was there a teacher who inspired you to take your future career path? Did any of your teachers prepare you for college? If you answered yes to any of the above questions, then you are blessed, and now have the same ability to do the same for your students. Schoology aids educators by empowering students from anywhere they have internet access, to remain connected with their teacher and classmates. Our schools are no longer an isolated place of learning, they are blended learning opportunities for continued academic growth and success.

Schoology gives every teacher the power to engage students with the 4 Cs in education: critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. It provides teachers the opportunity to elevate their technology level with lesson planning, instruction, student engagement, assessment, student analytics, and communication as seen from Dr. Ruben Puentedura's SAMR (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition) model of technology integration.



Dr. Ruben Puentedura's SAMR Model (2006)

Schoology Course Materials Icons



Files

Upload different types of files stored on your computer or drive directly to your course Materials page.

Assignments

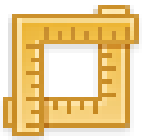
Use Assignments to collect, view and grade student submissions. With the use of Annotated Assignments students can now annotate directly on the added resource such as a PDF, JPEG, PowerPoint, Word document, etc. to complete their teacher created assignment.

Assessments

Create assessments in your Schoology course to assess your students' grasp of the material or evaluate their preparedness for class. Each assessment is automatically graded (unless you have included a subjective question), providing you with instant and powerful feedback that can help guide your upcoming lesson plans.

Links

Add a link to your Materials page to create a central location for the webpages for online reading, videos, and tools you use in class.



External Tools

External or LTI (Learning Tools Interoperability) Tools enable your web-based resources to be accessed and viewed within Schoology.

Lock

Lock an assignment to prevent submissions to the item.

Discussions

Create a discussion to enable your students to interact with each other and discuss the material while evaluating their participation. Students add threaded comments, reply to one another, and like their peers' posts.

Pages

Create a custom Page to add text, images, videos, and HTML to present information to your students. Each page has a Rich Text Editor that enables you to customize font styles, colors, indentations, and other options.

Media Albums

Create albums to organize and share photos, videos, and/or audio files for your course.

Folders

Create folders to organize your course content.

Question Banks for Test/Quiz

Use Question Banks to create a repository of test questions that you can then use within Tests/Quizzes. You can create question banks in Personal and Group Resources.

Items Banks for Course Assessment

Use Item Banks to create a repository of assessment questions that you can then use within Course Assessments. You can create item banks in Personal and Group Resources.

Display on a New Page/ Display Inline

Disable this for your material to display on a new page or enable it for the item to display inline on your course Materials page.

Align with a Learning Objective

Click the blue target to align the material with a custom or standardized learning goal to track students' progress in the Mastery gradebook.

Individually Assign

Assign an item to a specific student or grading group.

Add a Rubric

Add a rubric to measure student performance against multiple criteria.

Revised and adapted from Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School

Teacher Tips for Content Creation in Schoology

When creating content in Schoology, here are some helpful tips to ensure an engaging and effective learning experience for students:

1. **Clear Learning Objectives**: Begin by defining clear learning objectives for each content piece. What do you want your students to achieve or understand after completing the material? This will help you structure your content effectively.

2. **Organize with Folders**: Use folders to keep your course materials organized. Group related content together and provide clear titles and descriptions for easy navigation.

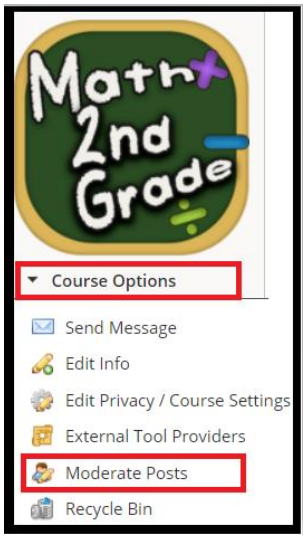
3. **Use Multimedia**: Incorporate various multimedia elements such as images, videos, audio, and interactive elements. These can enhance engagement and cater to different learning styles. For example, creating a spelling test. Go to this YouTube video tutorial to see how to create a self-graded spelling test:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RPuSX0tAMGk

4. **Chunk Information**: Break down your content into smaller, manageable chunks. This makes it easier for students to digest the information and helps them stay focused.

5. **Interactive Assessments**: Integrate quizzes, polls, and other interactive assessments within your content to gauge student understanding and provide immediate feedback.

6. **Promote Collaboration**: Encourage collaboration and discussion among students by using features like Discussion or group activities within Schoology. Remember you can always moderate Schoology

created Discussions by clicking on the **Course Options** and selecting **Moderate Posts**. See below:



7. **Mobile-Friendly Design**: Ensure that your content is mobile-friendly, as many students may access the materials on their devices.

8. **Accessibility Considerations**: Keep accessibility in mind when creating content. Use alt text for images and ensure that all students can access the material regardless of their abilities. Try not to use images of text-related content so students can use the Immersive Reader option.

9. **Consistent Format**: Maintain a consistent format and layout throughout your content. This helps students focus on the material rather than navigating different styles.

10. **Provide Clear Directions and Instructions**: Do not assume every student will be in class when they are completing your assignment, project, or classwork. Write your directions for completing the assignment as if students were absent and not in class to avoid confusion. Use concise language and avoid jargon or complex terminology that students may not understand.

11. **Provide Resources**: Include additional resources or references for students who want to explore the topic further.

12. **Create Grading Groups for Differentiated Instruction**: Click on **Members** on the left navigation rail and then on the upper right-hand side of the page, select **Add Grading Groups** to help organize your differentiated instructional groups.

13. **Update Regularly**: Review and update your content regularly to keep it relevant and accurate.

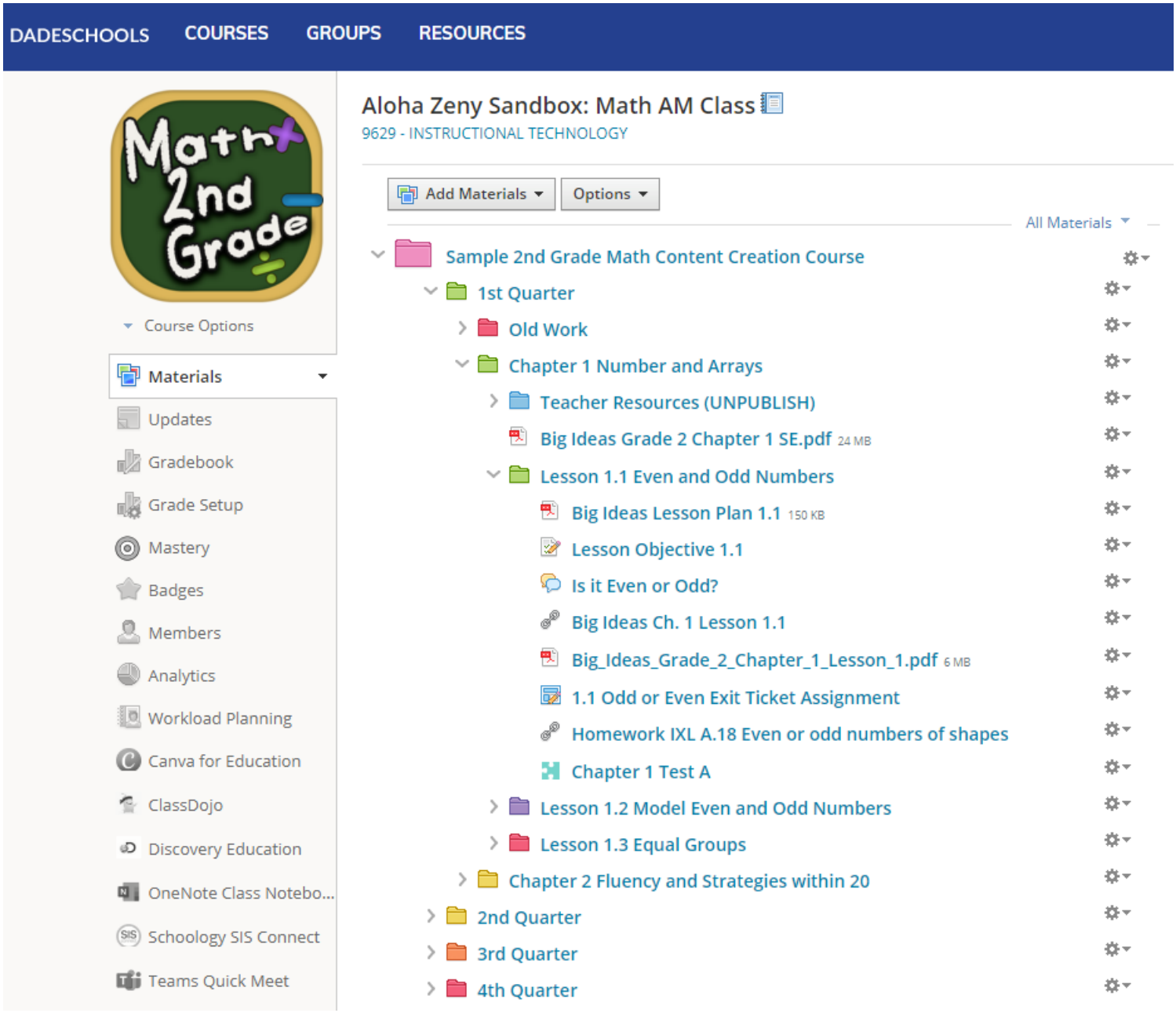
14. **Seek Student Feedback**: Encourage students to provide feedback on the content and course structure. This will help you refine and improve your materials over time.

15. **Monitor Engagement**: Use Schoology's analytics and data to track student engagement with the content. This will give you insights into what works well and what may need improvement.

16. **Use Workload Planning**: Before assigning due dates, click on Workload Planning from the left navigation rail to ensure your students' workload for their other classes does not coincide with your assignment, projects, or assessments. Note, if not all teachers are using Schoology in your school, you will not get a clear perspective of your students' workload.

By following these tips, teachers can create compelling and effective content in Schoology that fosters a positive learning environment and helps students succeed in their educational journey.

Sample 2nd Grade Math Content Lesson and Organization of Content within Schoology



Resource List and Internet Sites

- Our M-DCPS (Miami Dade County Public Schools) LMS web page created by our district and constantly being updated with an assortment of Schoology information including Schoology Tutorials for instructors, students, and administrators.
- YouTube Schoology Channel from learning the basics to how to create assessments. Here is a link to one of their playlists for Schoology QuickStart Tutorials. There are many more.
- M-DCPS Schoology How to Guides with over 45 pages of content to help teachers with their Schoology questions. Simply go to the Table of Contents to quickly find the information you need help with.
- Links to Resources in Schoology's Curriculum Resources Group (keep in mind that you need to already by signed into your Schoology account for the following links to work):
    - Link for **Pacing Guides**: https://dadeschools.schoology.com/resources/group#/resources/group/5123593021
    - Link for Schoology **Student Self-Paced Course**: https://dadeschools.schoology.com/resources/group#/resources/group/5123593021?f=237485501
    - Link for Schoology **Instructor Self-Paced** modules, recordings, and guides: https://dadeschools.schoology.com/resources/group#/resources/group/5123593021?f=237485547

References

Puentedura, R. R. (2006, August 18). *Transformation, Technology, and Education* [Conference Presentation]. Hippasus. http://hippasus.com/resources/tte/

Wichlinski, K. (2017, November 30). *Technology in schools: Why it's a good idea*. Medium. https://medium.com/@kwichlinski001/technology-in-schools-why-its-a-good-idea-53cad5e074a8