Hello and welcome to Digital Tactics: Enhancing the Traditional Classroom. I am Rebecca Parker. I graduated from Pitt-Greensburg last spring and have been working this past year as the technical assistant for the Center of the Digital Text. Here, I've provided my twitter handle as well as Pitt-Greensburg's twitter handle and some useful hashtags if anyone wishes to tweet at me during this presentation.

CHANGE TO SLIDE 2

Here is what you can expect today out of this workshop.

First, we are going to spend about 10 minutes discussing the research that supports using digital tools in classrooms and the importance of creating productive digital learning environments that promote higher-level thinking.

Then, we are going to spend another 10 minutes addressing some of the most common concerns of students and faculty when it comes to using digital tools and incorporating them into one's teaching.

Next, will be what I think is the highlight of this presentation. I will preview these four digital tools: Wikispaces, Voyant, TimeMapper, and Kumu. Giving a brief run through of each tool's functions and ease of usability as well as several examples of how these tools can enhance the traditional assignments and classroom materials we have all grown to "love" like the traditional research paper, short essays, annotated bibliographies, class discussions, etc.

Finally, we will take the final 10-15 minutes to discuss as a group the teaching materials and assignments some of you wish to make more digital so that by the conclusion of this workshop you will leave with an arsenal of digital teaching tactics.

CHANGE TO SLIDE 3

The natural question after that is WHY, and hopefully you aren't just thinking that because of the tune.

So, the best argument to incorporate digital learning into your teaching materials can be illustrated by reviewing the basic Depth of Knowledge hierarchies.

Here I am showing you Bloom's revised taxonomy, but just as well is Webb's Depth of Knowledge levels. The fundamental idea is that higher levels of understanding and thinking are derived from assignments that have students creating, evaluating, and analyzing; these three upper-levels of cognitive engagement are at the core of digital learning when done right!

What do I mean when I say when done right. That is to say when students are asked to use digital tools and digital learning spaces alongside clearly defined goals of application and analysis.

To have students reiterate information in a digital environment is not enough; the digital environment should act as a way of engagement that brings your student's more robust opportunities of higher-level thought and analysis.

CHANGE TO SLIDE 4

And this higher-level thinking will bring a creative and deeper understanding of content. What you will see is students will begin to understand the information differently and more holistically than with traditional assignments.

Digital Learning Environments promote collaboration and with collaboration comes a stronger understanding of proper and respectful project-work etiquette.

These digital spaces engage students in work that is multi-faceted and dynamic and studies show that students are more motivated to complete assignments that have multiple points of engagement.

Student learning is flexible; the digital space creates opportunity to complete work beyond the constraints of a classroom, outside of the typical school day, and at a pace and progress rate chosen by the student.

Working in Digital spaces hastens the availability of feedback for your students not only from you (as their professor) but also from other students. Most traditional assignments have a one way stream of feedback from professor to student weeks after completion of the assignment; whereas, digital assignments tend to elicit a quicker response from professors as well as engage other students. Moreover, when students construct creative visualizations that are easily assessable online they are more likely to share their creations and learning with their friend and family groups. This creates new opportunities for students to gain a better understanding of their work as they explain their process to others that are outside of their traditional learning environments.

Finally, Digital Learning prepares students for our ever-changing digital world. Creating visualizations that relate to written analysis, learning to differentiate reliable from unreliable sources for information on the Internet, maintaining appropriate online etiquette, and learning to write professionally in digital spaces are all vital skills that your students will use in their futures.

CHANGE TO SLIDE 5

The most common reason people have given me as to why they do not want to "go digital" is a lack of time. This comes in two folds; either a lack of time to think up a new assignment and develop the supplementary materials for teaching that assignment OR a lack of time to work in anything new to a course that is already covering too much material. In response to this, I encourage you to revamp existing assignments so the workload is kept to a minimum. For each of the tools I will be previewing today I will be showing how a traditional assignment, similar to ones you may already be using, can be adjusted to work in a digital tool that significantly enhances your students understanding of the assignment's content.

In response to the concern of accessibility, always direct students to library and community resources and cater assignments when necessary to allow group work in order to share resources. A good way to gage if this is legitimate concern for your classroom is to have your students complete a survey at the start of the course where you ask them to identify whether or not they have access to the technology necessary for your assignments, and you can even toss in some questions to measure their pre-existing tech skills. Also, it's important to advocate free and open-access digital tools that DO NOT require memberships

fees from the students in order to use. All of the tools I will be showing you today can be used for free and have an abundance of available documentation.

The final common concern is fear. Many think that because they do not use a lot of technology in their day-to-day lives or if they've had "bad luck" with tech in the past that they cannot incorporate digital learning into their course materials because it will be a failure. To that, I say start small and know there are many resources out there that you can rely on when things go awry. The best way to prevent unforeseen bumps in the road is to create a well-organized assignment that you have test-piloted; however, trust in your students' abilities and resiliency. Often there is more learning to be done in correcting our mistakes than there is if all is smooth sailing.

CHANGE TO SLIDE 6

OPEN: http://hist1560spring2017.wikispaces.com/Revolution+%26+Politics+%28Left+and+Right%29

OPEN: http://literaryfame.wikispaces.com/project/list

OPEN: http://cityslavegirls.wikispaces.com/Nell+Nelson+%28a.k.a.+Helen+Cusack-Carvalho%29+Biography

Wikispaces is a simple, web-based wiki platform that makes group writing and course management easy and efficient. Wikispaces is notably different from a course management system, like CourseWeb, because of its ability for students to contribute multimedia content and to collaborate on assignments in a space that can be made into a public space for student's to display their understanding. Wikis simplify the process of publishing to a secure course website and makes for peer-to-peer learning possible.

CHANGE TO SLIDE 7

OPEN: http://docs.voyant-tools.org/tools/

Voyant is a free, online text-analysis program that generates a word cloud of most frequent words and other graphs regarding word and phrase frequency across a

single document or a corpus of texts. Voyant requires you to use plain text documents so once you have created that plain text version of the document or documents you want to analyze it is as simple as uploading it to the web interface and experimenting with the variety of visualizations. Voyant assignments should go beyond generating the visualizations and should ask students to make connections and formulate in-depth analyses of what those visualizations represent and reveal.

CHANGE TO SLIDE 8

OPEN: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1MnCpJYDDN6K0oMgm0fJYQOPFThLsSlpOY2S51RNIAEs/edit?usp=sharing

OPEN: http://timemapper.okfnlabs.org/anon/pka06y-american-lit-timemapper-stewart#1

TimeMapper lets you create elegant and embeddable TimeMaps quickly and easily from a simple spreadsheet.

A TimeMap is an interactive timeline whose items connect to a geo-map.

Creating a TimeMap with TimeMapper is as easy as filling in a spreadsheet template and copying its URL. TimeMapper assignments should have supplementary class discussions and/or student analysis in order for them to be considered a form of higher-level thinking. A good TimeMap will reveal to students unforeseen connections and strengthen student understanding of course content or source chronology.

CHANGE TO SLIDE 9

OPEN: https://kumu.io/rparker43/liguori-nelsoninfluence#visual-depiction-of-nell-nelsons-influence

OPEN: https://kumu.io/jeff/celebrity-ice-bucket-challenge

Kumu, which means “teacher” or “source of wisdom” in Hawaiian, is a powerful visualization platform for mapping systems and better understanding relationships.

CHANGE TO SLIDE 10

Now, I am going to open the floor for discussion. I'd like to hear from those using digital tools in their classrooms as well as those in the audience looking to use digital tools in the future who might have a particular assignment to enhance. I'm also open to reviewing anything I've covered and answering any further questions.