CGLC Tech Tips: Social Learning Platforms (VoiceThread and Flip)[1]

I.   Scenario

Dr. Ehrhardt teaches a class called Topics in Greek History: Athenian Democracy twice a week. Durir

(Educause 1). The platform can be used on all standard web browsers and mobile devices. What sets   apart from other platforms is the ease with which video commentary can be added by both the student and the instructor. The ability for the students to add annotations is what distinguishes the platform from other commonly used educational technology tools such as Canvas Studio. The   interface uses a thumbnail image (either the user's initials or a photograph) to identify the annotation on the artifact. Once the VoiceThread (VT)[2] is created, users can create shared links and add it to a Canvas assignment or embed the VT on a Canvas page.

This tool is extremely effective for practicing the goals being assessed this year, particularly interpretive listening and speaking as   allows students and instructors to annotate on Powerpoints, Google Slides and other media with videos and audio comments. The software allows for two modes: "moderated VTs" and "non moderated VTs". The moderated voicethreads means that instructors can determine which VTs the students should respond to. In that sense, it is a good tool for assessment. However, non moderated VTs permit students to respond to each other as well as to the instructor. Moreover, depending on whether the instructor wants to pursue an instructor license or a site license, VoiceThread does permit Canvas integration. However, even without full Canvas integration, instructors can still share VoiceThreads with students either via a share link or by embedding the VoiceThread onto a Canvas page. VoiceThread offers an extensive series of webinars and workshops on the different features that their platform offers.

With that said, we can also highlight a number of weaknesses. For example, if an instructor chooses to incorporate film clips from a source such as Vimeo or YouTube, those clips have to be publically available and not hidden behind a firewall. The pricing plans can be quite expensive depending on the capabilities you want. Additionally, while they do offer very extensive webinars and tutorials, their customer support is through email only (although their response time is generally quite good).

   B. Flip

    (previously FlipGrid) is a Microsoft application for both web browsers and mobile devices that allow students to create video presentations and asynchronous discussions. It functions as a concise message board where students or instructors can add 90 second videos or 240 character responses to a grid of discussion questions. Similar to   they do host a blog which contains example flips and offers tutorials. However, their corpus of resources is not as extensive as that of   . With that said, as distinct from   there are a number of advantages to Flip over VoiceThread, namely that they offer age specific resources for busy teachers and it is also a free tool which does allow for Canvas integration. Additionally, the

V.   Where can I find out more?

Instructors are more than welcome to consult with CGLC Staff to discuss how service learning platforms can be used with your students. The Coordinator is also more than happy to come in for a classroom demonstration as well.

VoiceThread and Flip also have extensive tutorial libraries which instructors can consult. Here are simply a few relevant to our objectives and also to spur ideas about the different platforms. Please note that as VoiceThread was designed more for the college classroom while Flip is designed for K-12 education, their tutorials are more specific.

Teaching Languages with VoiceThread   Tricks and Tutorials from Flip
Game Based Learning with VoiceThread   Educator Toolkit from Flip
VoiceThread and Storytelling
Using VoiceThread for Student Portfolios