“Meeting students where they are”
Adapting natural resource education to emerging digital landscapes

9th Biennial Conference
University Education in Natural Resources
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Zachary D. Cole
Doctoral Candidate
Ways to connect to the presentation…

• Textthemob:
  * Text:
    “RETURN ID 6757 followed by your text” to 41411
  * Internet:
    http://m.textthemob.com/id6757
• Twitter: @gatorzac
• Skype: gatorzac
• Others…
The story…

• Like all great ideas...

• “I can’t stand when students these days…”

So, as I began thinking about teaching my 1st class…
The rest of the story...

…I thought why not a different approach?
“meeting students where they are”

• Instead of this…

• We want/get this…
Leveraging Technology

• Logic: meet them at the digital interface

• Scary?
  * Learning/comfort curve
  * Schema
Justification

- Textbook cost/year: $1,168
  * Digital textbooks
- Technology prevalence amongst college students

Ownership:
- Cell phone - > 95%
  - > 53% smart phone
- Laptop - 83% (desktop 41%)
- Audio player - 80%
- Digital camera - 77%

Usage:
- Hours per day: > 8.5 (decreases over time)

Communication
- Technology
  - 19x/day friends; 5x/day family
- In-person
  - 10x/day friends; 1x/day family

"RETURN ID 6757 followed by your text" to 41411
http://m.textthemob.com/id6757
Case Study

• Park Management – Spring 2011 & 2012
  * University of Florida
    • Natural Resource Recreation Management track
  • Hybrid Learning Environment
    * Leveraging technology by adapting in two ways…
      1. Modifying course structure to integrate digital mediums
      2. Rethinking course requirements/expectations/outcomes

Not an ONLINE course!!!!
Modifying Course Structure

Traditional

Lecture (heartwood)

Text & fieldwork (sapwood)

Extras (cambium/bark)
Modifying Course Structure

New…

Audio
- Record live lectures
- Utilize digital radio & podcasts

Lecture
- New material
- Debate/discussion
- Testing
- Presentations

Visual
- Voice-over PowerPoint
- Utilize digital video/video logs

Online
- Create interactive space for discussion (i.e. message boards)
  “digital roundtable”; “digital office hours”
- Utilize Twitter, Facebook, etc. to “Like” additional material
  constantly checking, regardless

Fieldwork

Text
Rethinking the Approach

• Multimedia approach = multimedia outcomes
  * Essays → presentations
  * Presentations → videos
  * Videos → interactive workbooks
  * Group work → website creation

• Students need to learn to write for the web, with the web
  * Newspaper vs. academic journal vs. technical report vs. novel
  * Text vs. Facebook vs. Twitter vs. Websites vs. blogs

• Don’t expect less, just expect different
Challenges

- Setting limits
  - Access
  - Effort/Investment
- Finding a balance
- Learning curve
- Pace of change
- Ensuring privacy (two-sided)
- Source reputability (ahhh, Wikipedia)
Opportunities

• Increased engagement with material

• Freedom to invest in topic/issue of interest

• Opens up time/space for discussion

• Advances skills that are required

• Better matches classroom experience to workplace reality

• Greases the wheels to information
Final Thoughts

• Employers expect “technology fluency”
• Business (& life) is moving online
• Students are the experts, ask them how
• If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it
  * Just improve it instead
• Risk vs. reward
• Start slow
• Experiment
• Have fun!!
Questions/Comments

- Text the Mob
- Twitter
- Verbal

Thank You

Zachary D. Cole, Doctoral Candidate
Department of Tourism, Recreation, and Sport Management
University of Florida
zaccole@hhp.ufl.edu; @gatorzac
Dissertation project website: http://www.flseagrant.org/boating/projects/solves/