“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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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 1<sup>st</sup> 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

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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!!

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Questions/Comments

• Text the Mob
• Twitter
• Verbal

Thank You

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