Suggested APA style reference:
Osborn, D. S. (2009). Wikis, podcasts and more… program policy considerations with online teaching. In G. R. Walz, J. C. Bleuer, & R. K. Yep (Eds.), *Compelling counseling interventions: VISTAS 2009* (pp. 329-336). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

Article 29

Wikis, Podcasts and More… Program Policy Considerations With Online Teaching

Paper based on a program presented at the 2008 National Career Development Association Global Conference, July 9-11, 2008, Washington, DC.

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There are many reasons why an instructor might consider teaching a course online. Students often seek online courses for the convenience of being able to complete course assignments at their own speed, from the comfort of their own home. Faculty might teach online because of a desire to enhance students' technological skills, enhancing the quality of their courses through technology, expanding course availability for those students whose geographic location makes commuting difficult, increasing flexibility in their own schedule of teaching, in response to student demand, and interacting with their students more frequently (McKenzie, Mims, Bennett, & Waugh, 1999). In addition, some administrators may encourage or offer incentives for instructors to teach online, as a means of increasing class enrollment and freeing up classroom space.

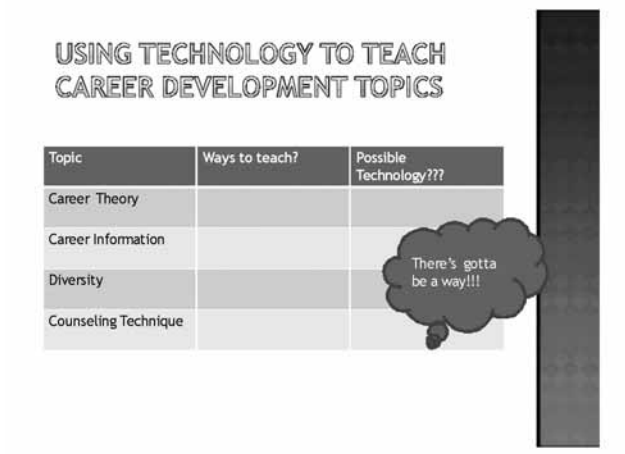
A faculty member should not dive into teaching online without first testing the waters. There are several considerations to keep in mind, for oneself, one's students, one's program, and from the institution's perspective. From a personal perspective, the faculty member should consider the positives and negatives for teaching a course online. Some potential positives include every student being

engaged, continued instructor challenge and growth, convenience, ability to engage all learning styles, more time to think about a response (versus thinking on the spot), discussions on multiple topics at the same "time," increased technological capabilities of students (which they can then share as part of their service delivery), and enhancing one's vita (Osborn, 2008). Potential negatives include: the amount of time required to create/deliver/maintain an online course; lack of understanding/appreciation by colleagues and peers; feeling disconnected from students; students' differing technological capabilities and available resources; academic honesty; technological glitches and frustrations; the challenge of teaching to different learning styles; addressing inappropriate comments; incorporating oneself into an initially stale and impersonal course; and the impact on one's professional career, annual evaluations, and tenure (Osborn, 2008).

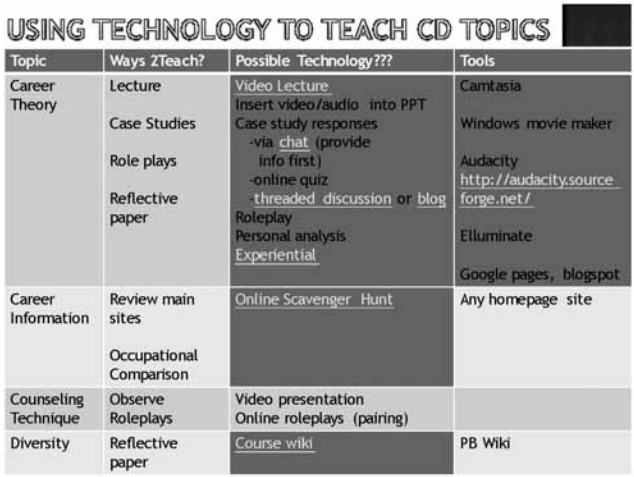
King, Nugent, Russell, Eich, and Lacy (1998) identified several key issues within seven policy areas that should be considered with distance education. The seven areas included: Academic, Governance/Administration/Fiscal, Faculty, Legal, Student Support Services, Technical, and Cultural. Some of the key issues were technology fees for students, intellectual property of the online course and activities, faculty compensation, technological support, the acceptance of distance education within a program, college, and university, and maintaining academic standards.

If, after considering these policy issues, a faculty member decides to proceed with delivering either a web-enhanced or an online course, the next step is to determine how to either create an online course from scratch, or in most cases, how to translate an existing course effectively into an online format. The best way that I have found to begin is by taking the current syllabus, and outlining the activities that are traditionally used to ensure that students have learned the related objective or skill. Once I have outlined this, I then begin the brainstorming process of how to translate that activity into an online activity that would hopefully result in the same pedagogical outcome.

Consider the slide below:



The topics listed above are commonly found in a graduate career development class. You'll notice the caption that says, "there's gotta be a way." Having a philosophy such as this is imperative to developing an effective online course, and for ensuring that you don't use the same online tool for each activity. The next slide shows a completed grid with potential ideas.



Topic	Ways 2Teach?	Possible Technology???	Tools
Career Theory	Lecture Case Studies Role plays Reflective paper	Video Lecture Insert video/audio into PPT Case study responses -via chat (provide info first) -online quiz -threaded discussion or blog Roleplay Personal analysis Experiential	Camtasia Windows movie maker Audacity http://audacity.sourceforge.net/ Elluminate Google pages, blogspot
Career Information	Review main sites Occupational Comparison	Online Scavenger Hunt	Any homepage site
Counseling Technique	Observe Roleplays	Video presentation Online roleplays (pairing)	
Diversity	Reflective paper	Course wiki	PB Wiki

I've created several video lectures that accompany the assigned readings. These lectures range from ½ hour to 1 hour in length (broken up into fifteen minute segments), and cover key issues in the reading as well as additional information I want students to know. Sometimes, it will include a demonstration of a skill. The purpose of the video lecture is to let the students see and hear me in a traditional lecture format. I create PowerPoint slides in a guided note format that accompany the video lecture so that students can follow along. Another option is to create an audio podcast of your lecture, which would allow students to play it on their iPOD or mp3 player.

If you use a pre-made course shell such as Blackboard or WebCT, you should make use of the discussion board format. (If you do not have such a shell, you can create a blog and have students post replies to the blog). For larger courses, you might consider creating smaller workgroups and having students give two suggestions to a question, and then one member post a summary of the group discussion to the main discussion board. This will allow you to quickly check off that a student has made two original contributions, but only respond to the group summaries on the main page.

You can use an online chatting format such as provided through Elluminate, or ILinc, or netmeeting, where students can chat verbally. The benefit of a verbal chat is that you don't lose slow typers. A drawback is when a student has failed to make sure the microphone/speakers work, when they forget to join the chat, or when there is a computer failure (on the instructor's side or student's side). If you have a verbal chat room, you can use it in much the same way as a regular chatroom. You can roleplay with a student, send them into breakout rooms to roleplay or discuss a case, talk through a PowerPoint or have them make presentations.

A wiki is a webpage that students can edit. This is useful for covering information that is of interest to the students, and when time does not allow for in depth coverage in class. For example, some students are very interested in the military, or career development and offenders. These are topics that receive only a cursory overview in the class because of other objectives that must be covered in depth. In my

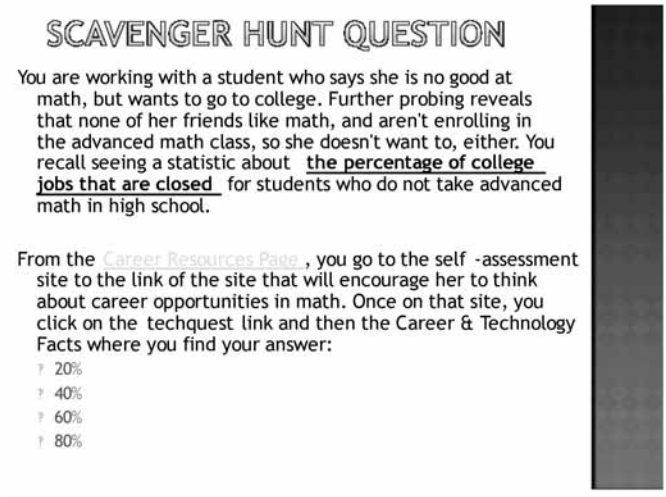
career development class, I have assigned different groups a wiki to develop. They have a group page, and then each has their own individual page. Some ideas for wikis include: fan page of their favorite career development theorist/theory, specific career development topic, best strategies for working with a particular population, an FAQ page on a specific topic, or responding to a case study. Students can add text, links, video and audio, diagrams and pictures. For a sample way to grade a group wiki project, see the rubric below:

SAMPLE WIKI GRADING RUBRIC

20	Individual Contribution	Averaged by group rating of individual members' contribution and instructor rating. The group must include a link to a page of acknowledgements on which individuals list their contributions.
GROUP GRADE		
20	Content	Covers the topic in depth with details, demonstrations, examples, images, etc. Content is factually accurate. Demonstrates complexity of the topic. APA citations used appropriately and correctly when paraphrasing, quoting, or summarizing, in text and in references.
10	Organization	Content is well-organized, uses headings or bulleted lists as well as a table of contents.
10	Hyperlinks to sources	Provide working, appropriate hyperlinks to sources that provide additional information about the topic.
15	Original, intelligent wording	Provide a summary of key points, findings, etc., related to the topic. Do not copy! Always cite appropriately.
15	Accuracy (-1 each up to 15 points)	No spelling, grammatical, or APA errors. No HTML errors in wiki (e.g., broken links, missing images). APA citations used appropriately and correctly when paraphrasing, quoting, or summarizing, in text and in references.
10	Visual Appeal	Graphics are used as needed and add to the message. Graphics are not distracting and are used to further explain a topic. It does not look cluttered.
	Extra Credit (Up to 10 points	Uses technology in a creative way, or in a way that is above and beyond what is expected. For example, links to a well designed PowerPoint created by the work group or includes a link to a video of one participant demonstrating a particular skill or technique.

An instructor can make use of the various technological tools out there to create experiential activities for students. For example, a simple PowerPoint can be adjusted with internal hyperlinks to create a *Career Jeopardy* type of game (Osborn, 2005c), or an experiential way to teach career theories (Osborn, 2005a). To see examples of each of these, go to http://careerresource.coedu.usf.edu/linkcareerlab/interactivelab.htm, and click on either "Career Jeopardy" or "Virtual Career Counseling Experiment."

Another creative idea for using technology is to create a virtual career scavenger hunt (Osborn, 2005b) to teach students about various career information sources. This is a great way to teach students about common questions that clients may present with, and to increase students' awareness of the variety of resources available. An example scavenger hunt question is presented on the following slide. You will see that the instructions are very specific about how to go about finding the correct answer. By being this descriptive, you will avoid students spending hours searching for the answer to one question and still achieve the goal of student exploration. As the student goes through each step, they will see other links that they might be interested in exploring. The process of discovering the correct answer – and the multitude of other tools and information sources available, far exceeds the simple benefit of a earning a few points on an assignment.



In summary, an instructor can be excited by the plethora of online tools, and challenged by the question of how to transform traditional activities into virtual ones that address and achieve the same pedagogical purpose and outcome. At the same time, it is wise to remember the old cliché that *all that glitters is not gold*, and avoid the temptation to put every bell and whistle into an online course and miss the emphasis on learning. In other words, each online activity should be tied in with one of the course's objectives, and not just be technology for technology's sake. An instructor should regularly evaluate the usefulness of each online activity. Finally, the wise instructor of an online course should consider policy issues outlined earlier in the manuscript.

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