How To Use Schoology to Teach Production Classes

I've taught news production, studio production, and film production for many years, but have struggled to find the right online tools to supplement my work in the classroom. I needed something that would help me better organize my courses, as well as something that could serve as a resource bank for my students to access and interact with each other. I started experimenting with learning management systems, which are software programs that are used for online learning, but was unsatisfied with the programs I tried.

Enter Schoology. Schoology is a learning management system that provides teachers with the tools and connections they need to engage their students to the highest degree possible. It's an online learning community that can adjust according to a student's needs and is constantly evolving as more students and teachers use it.

Since I started using Schoology, my classes have become more streamlined, allowing my students to get more out of each class. A Schoology membership comes with your own active site, where you can organize all the course materials into folders. In the Materials folder, I keep three subfolders: Resources, Weekly Overview, and Course Information. The Resources tab is most useful to me—I store all my teaching materials in this folder and then can copy them to other courses as needed. I take photos of my board after a lesson and upload the photos to the Notes subfolder within Resources, which is great for students who want to review what I covered in class. I also keep PDFs, embed Prezis and video clips, and link to relevant sites. I can post project assignments with both detailed instructions and links to successful projects, which is a tremendous help to my students.

I utilize the Updates page to remind my students of important calendar events, such as the STN Convention and STN contests. On our Schoology site, my students can share video clips and articles with each other, discuss ideas for upcoming shows and projects, and take polls on show-related issues to effectively share feedback. These organization methods work for me, but Schoology allows you to organize your course in the way that works best for you.

With Schoology, I can quiz my students at my convenience, as I am able to set the time of each quiz. This makes quizzes substantially easier to grade because it's on my preferred schedule. My personal approach is to give students one or two quizzes early in the course so that they are accountable for introductory information. This is important because most of my grading is based on projects and in-class activities.

By using a learning management system like Schoology, I use much less paper than I ever have in the past. It's easier than ever for me to update my content and materials, making everything I provide to my students much more current. Plus, by having easy access to all my course materials, Schoology ensures that I stay focused on my syllabus and curriculum.

What truly sets Schoology above the rest is that it synchs with other programs like Google Docs and Inception. I can utilize the virtual assignment board through Google Docs and create, edit, and view online scripts and manage rundowns for shows on Inception. Schoology has given me to tools to keep things organized, current, and engaging. My students are more invested in learning, and as a result, I'm invested in Schoology!

Submitted by Beth Kennedy
STN Board of Directors
Southeast Region