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## **Ways to Engage Students** by Shirley Graham

### **1. Learning Management System (LMS)**

These websites/apps are probably the most efficient way to engage students. They are essentially online classrooms where you can communicate with students, share resources, give assignments, give feedback, and track student work. Students only have to learn how to get to one program and you can direct them to other things from there. Here are the three options I would suggest for different reasons. All three have a website version that works on computers and an app version that works on phones.

#### **Edmodo**

- simple layout/complexity,
- doesn't require students to have emails,
- suitable for lower level students
- **Training:** Teachers –  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3BpGWRE8e0>

#### **Google Classroom**

- relatively simple layout/complexity,
- familiar to parents of kids in OCDSB schools,
- requires Gmail accounts unless you use the generic Cell1@ocdsb.ca, etc. accounts,
- works seamlessly with Google apps like Google docs.
- Good for providing feedback on writing.

#### **Edulinc.org** (Part of Learnit2teach project)

- complex features and vocabulary, difficult for students without tech experience or limited English to use
- emails an asset,
- very versatile; includes ability for students to record themselves and to have video conferences with students,
- readymade LINC activities (courseware).
- **Training: Teachers** - You must complete 5 hours of training before accessing this resource. Contact admin@learnit2teach.ca OR 1-855-522-2221.

## 2. Educational Apps

Many educational apps also have online classrooms that allow you to direct and track student learning. Here are some of my favourites. Most of these also have a web and app version that work on computers and phones. These apps could also be integrated into the LMS above. E.g. you can provide links to them in assignments.

- [Flipgrid](#) allows students to record short videos of themselves based on a prompt. Students could be allowed to see others work and comment. It is great for speaking practise.  
Training: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=McmJ93GV6E4&t=1s>
- [Edpuzzle](#) allows teachers to add activities/questions to videos.  
Training: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eWRseaT7-9U>
- [Quizlet](#) allows teachers to create sets of flashcards. The flashcards can have pictures, words, phrases, and audio. Teachers now have access to the paid version for free. This allows teachers to record audio for the flashcards. This would be great for literacy and lower level classes. There is also a Quizlet live part of the site that is similar to Kahoot. <https://quizlet.com/blog/free-quizlet-teacher-to-support-remote-learning>
- [Quizizz](#)– This is a new quiz creation app that I've found which is similar to others, but has one added feature of being able to create questions based on short audio clips you can record. It also has the ability to have live games.  
Training: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oDO3j2PjS7s>,  
Instructions:
- ESL Library have upgraded our standard memberships to plus memberships that include the ability to create classes and assign online work.  
Training: <https://esllibrary.com/blog/coronavirus-support>

## 3. Social Media

I've gone to workshops on how to use social media like Twitter and Facebooks with students, but unfortunately I think there are privacy issues with most of them.

The only alternative I can think of is [Padlet](#). It allows you to create boards that students can post to or interact with. There is a limit to the free content - maximum 3 boards, but if you recycled your work, it could be useful.

Training: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UkBnwPqaljA&t=12s>

Although it isn't social media persay, I'm including creating a **Youtube channel** here. You could create a Youtube channel and upload videos for students on a regular basis. This could work with lower-level students. Most people know how to get to Youtube.

Training: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41YehxZ7t4o>

#### 4. Video Conference Apps

Video Conference Apps allow you to connect live (synchronous) with multiple people using video, audio, and chats. They also allow you to show documents. Some of the most common ones include Google Meet, Google Hangout, Big Blue Button, and Zoom.

- **Google Meet** is a paid google app that we have access to through our school board gmail account. You can invite anyone to participate in this meeting not just people with gmail accounts.  
Instructions: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J\\_ywOjB1c4Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_ywOjB1c4Q)  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1w\\_mb223OnGQSSqg42S6fYCWEo9tben8v4W03kB8jxk8/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1w_mb223OnGQSSqg42S6fYCWEo9tben8v4W03kB8jxk8/edit?usp=sharing)
- **Google Hangout** is the free version. If you use a nonboard gmail with your students you could use this. Unfortunately it requires all users to have gmail accounts for a video call. People who don't have gmail accounts could participate by phone. It also has a limit of 10 on the number of participants.  
Training: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DPZb3D0500I&t=131s>
- **Zoom** is a robust free video conferencing program for business.  
Training: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UTXUmoNsggQ>
- **Big Blue Button** is a free video conferencing program for education. It is used by Tutela and Edulinc. There may be a limit on # of participants. There is a limit on the meeting length. It has been reduced to 30 minutes because of demand.  
Training: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fwmFsCDXvmM>

#### 5a) Voiceover with Presentation Software

Presentation software like Powerpoint, Google Slides, and Prezi all allow you to add audio to presentations. This could be a way to provide instruction to students.

- **Powerpoint** – Powerpoint is nice because you can create the audio directly in the software. Training: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pP3kTmsnbnY>
- **Google slides** – You cannot create audio in Google slides. You must use a website like Vocaroo to create the audio and then insert it into Google slides..  
Training: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4B7T8GFA6E>
- **Prezi** is presentation software for the more technically inclined. You need to use a website like vocaroo to create the audio and then insert it into the presentation. Prezi is nice for adding audio attached to objects  
Training: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wlqNKjaYmZg>

## 5b) Screen Capture

You can create a video with narration of anything on your computer screen using screen capture programs like Screencastify and Screencast-o-matic. This is the type of software people use when they create instructional videos on Youtube. Note: The free versions of these programs have limits on the length of the videos.

- Screencastify - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b8cASJG7zp0>
- Screencast-o-matic - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7iN5yvZK0\\_w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7iN5yvZK0_w)

## 6. Emails

If students have emails you can simply send them links and assignments attached to emails. If students don't have emails, you may want to consider other options or try to have them create a gmail account.

## 7. Text Messages

I have not been able to find any form of text messaging that doesn't show your phone number. This includes **WhatsApp**. The **Remind** app is an option, but some recent changes made people hesitant to use it because for some people it could cost money for each text message.

## 8. Phone

Literacy teachers may simply want to contact students by phone. There are ways to contact students by phone without giving out your phone number. In both cases your number will show as unidentified

- a) Blocking your number when calling from a personal phone  
[https://support.bell.ca/Mobility/Smartphones\\_and\\_mobile\\_internet/How\\_to\\_block\\_or\\_unblock\\_my\\_mobile\\_phone\\_number\\_when\\_making\\_an\\_outgoing\\_call](https://support.bell.ca/Mobility/Smartphones_and_mobile_internet/How_to_block_or_unblock_my_mobile_phone_number_when_making_an_outgoing_call)
- b) Making a phone call with your computer and Gmail. (Thanks Joanne)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DRPU1zXc1Dc>

You could speak to groups of students this way as well. (Conference Calling)

[https://support.bell.ca/mobility/rate\\_plans\\_features/how\\_to\\_use\\_conference\\_calling\\_on\\_my\\_mobile\\_phone?step=2#step2](https://support.bell.ca/mobility/rate_plans_features/how_to_use_conference_calling_on_my_mobile_phone?step=2#step2)