

Digital Textbooks: Using Fusion (or any web platform!!!) as an AWESOME resource

What is a traditional textbook?

- Informational text
- Pictures, charts and graphs
- Learning objectives
- Review, context or practice questions

What COULD it do?

- Discussion blogs OR LIVE blogging
- Video clips
- Podcasts
- Additional websites for learning extension, practice or learning games.
- Create a quiz to determine if learning objectives were met.
- Downloadable homework assignments
- Interactive homework calendar
- Email YOU if they have questions from the lesson
- Enable parents to see EXACTLY what is happening in your class (including what the homework is for that day).
- Enable absent students the ability to stay up with the class EVEN THOUGH they are not present.

DOES YOUR TEXTBOOK DO ALL THAT? *It could...*

Technology is driving education in new and exciting ways. At the same time, this wave of technology is forcing teachers to rethink old methods and pedagogies. The idea of a “textbook” as a physical necessity of a classroom (or at minimum the primary resource) is being challenged. Using a web platform (Fusion, My Big Campus, etc.) you can enhance the learning in your room in new and AWESOME ways. By creating a class website and making it your “digital textbook”, you will open your students up to new academic possibilities.

Breaking down how to can create a digital textbook:

1. **Announcement:** What is your lesson about? Give an introduction to the content and **INCLUDE learning objectives** (this will satisfy principals who want to see what your learning objectives are for the lesson!!!!). Let your students know what they are learning. Upload a picture for the visual learner. Use color to augment the text.
2. **Informational Text:** If you are giving out “hard” copies during class, **convert it to PDF format for your digital textbook**. PDF format ensures that ALL students can download it as some computers and devices do not come with Microsoft Office/Word installed. Upload ANY text the students will be reading or using into a unit file.

3. **Homework:** Same applies to the homework as with informational text. Any “hard” copies given out in class **convert to PDF** for digital textbook. ANY teacher created assignment, reading, chart, graph, and diagram can be uploaded. **If you are using a worksheet that does not have an electronic file, scan it and save as a PDF.**
4. **Video Clip:** Maybe there is an AWESOME video clip from YouTube you want to show in class. Upload it directly into your digital textbook! Go to the video clip and **click on the SHARE button.** Afterwards click on the **EMBED** button. If you are using Fusion web platform (ANY LSC employee has Fusion) I would suggest doing a **CUSTOM SIZE** and adjusting it to **350 X ___** as it will be best viewed with that size. **Now HIGHLIGHT the code that is INSIDE the box and COPY it.** On your Fusion page, **ADD A NEW ANNOUNCEMENT** and then press the **SOURCE** button. **PASTE** the code onto the announcement and then **press SOURCE again.** You should see the video clip is now uploaded. **Press SAVE** and you now have a video clip on your digital textbook!!!
5. **Blogging:** Blogging is a way for your students to **EXTEND** their learning. It is a chance for them to interact with other students about the lesson. **LIVE** blogging could occur if there is an event (television episode, news event, community event) tied to your lesson or class and you want the students to interact and discuss while the event is taking place. For example, I did a Live Blog during the 2012 Presidential Election. While the results were coming in, my students and I were blogging as history was being made. **I had over 100 students blogging with me for four hours while we watched the results come in.** It was an AWESOME way to extend what we had been learning in my class. Find those learning extension possibilities and ways for your students to Blog.
6. **Websites:** Is there a website that you will be using in your lesson? Is there a website that contains a learning game or interactive web resource that your students can use to extend their learning? **Make it part of the homework or lesson activities and UPLOAD the URL directly onto your digital textbook.** Save the link into the websites section of your digital textbook and you will have it for next year. Many of my students can go back to the websites after class.
7. **Homework Calendar:** One of the most frustrating parts of homework is that students won't complete it and parents have a difficult time holding them responsible because they do not **KNOW** what the homework is. Erase that by creating a homework calendar and listing the **SPECIFIC** assignments from that day. Be sure to note what **IN CLASS** assignments are and what is expected to be completed **AT HOME.**

So how long does all this take? I spend NO MORE than 30 minutes a day on my class website/digital textbook. HOWEVER, the time spent has been completely worth it. I had TWO emails/phone calls about homework and/or the lesson from parents last year! My website was visited over 4,000 times last school year by my students. If you create it, they will USE IT and your classroom will benefit from it.



