"Meeting students where they are"

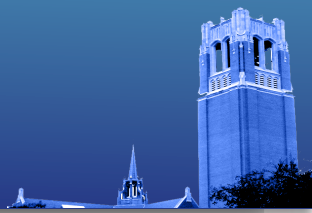## Adapting natural resource education to emerging digital landscapes

9th Biennial Conference

University Education in Natural Resources
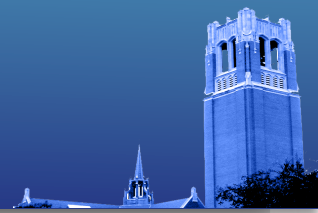
Saturday, March 24th, 2012

Zachary D. Cole

Doctoral Candidate

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…
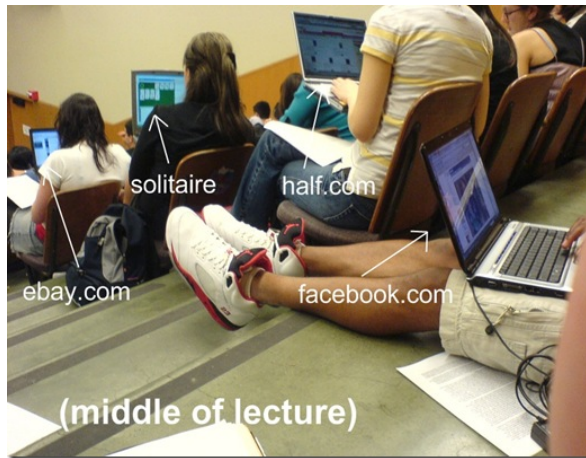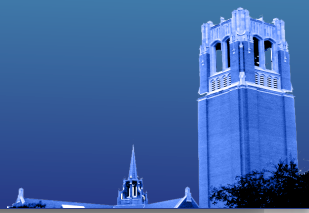
The story…

- Like all great ideas…

- "I can't stand when students these days…"

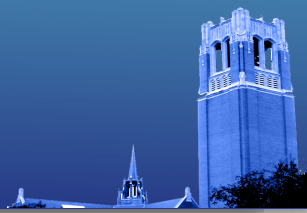
So, as I began thinking about teaching my 1st class…

The rest of the story…

…I thought why not a different approach?

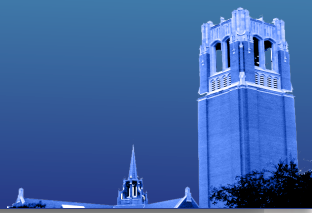"It's a text! From Sir! He's giving me a detention for having my mobile on."

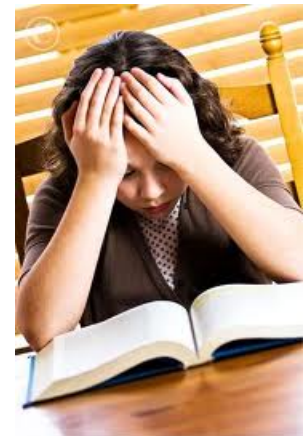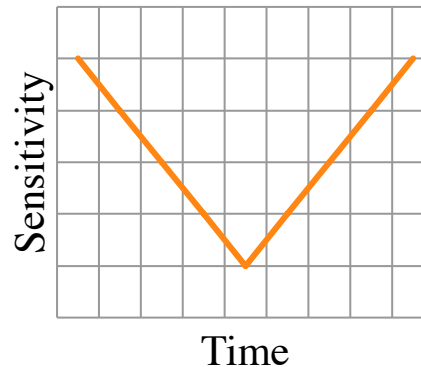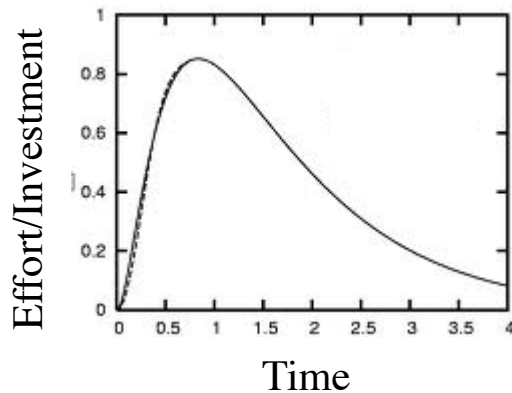# "meeting students where they are"

- Instead of this…

- We want/get this…

Leveraging Technology

- Logic: meet them at the digital interface

- Scary?
  * Learning/comfort curve
  * Schema

Justification

Digital Textbook Sales
Yearly Growth Projections

- Textbook cost/year: $1,168
  * Digital textbooks
- Technology prevalence amongst college students
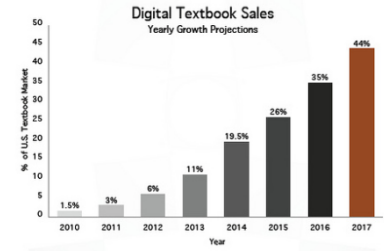
Usage:

Hours per day: > 8.5 (decreases over time)

Communication
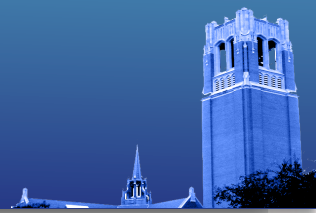
Ownership:

- Cell phone - > 95%
  - > 53% smart phone
- Laptop - 83% (desktop 41%)
- Audio player - 80%
- Digital camera - 77%

- Technology
  - 19x/day friends; 5x/day family
- In-person
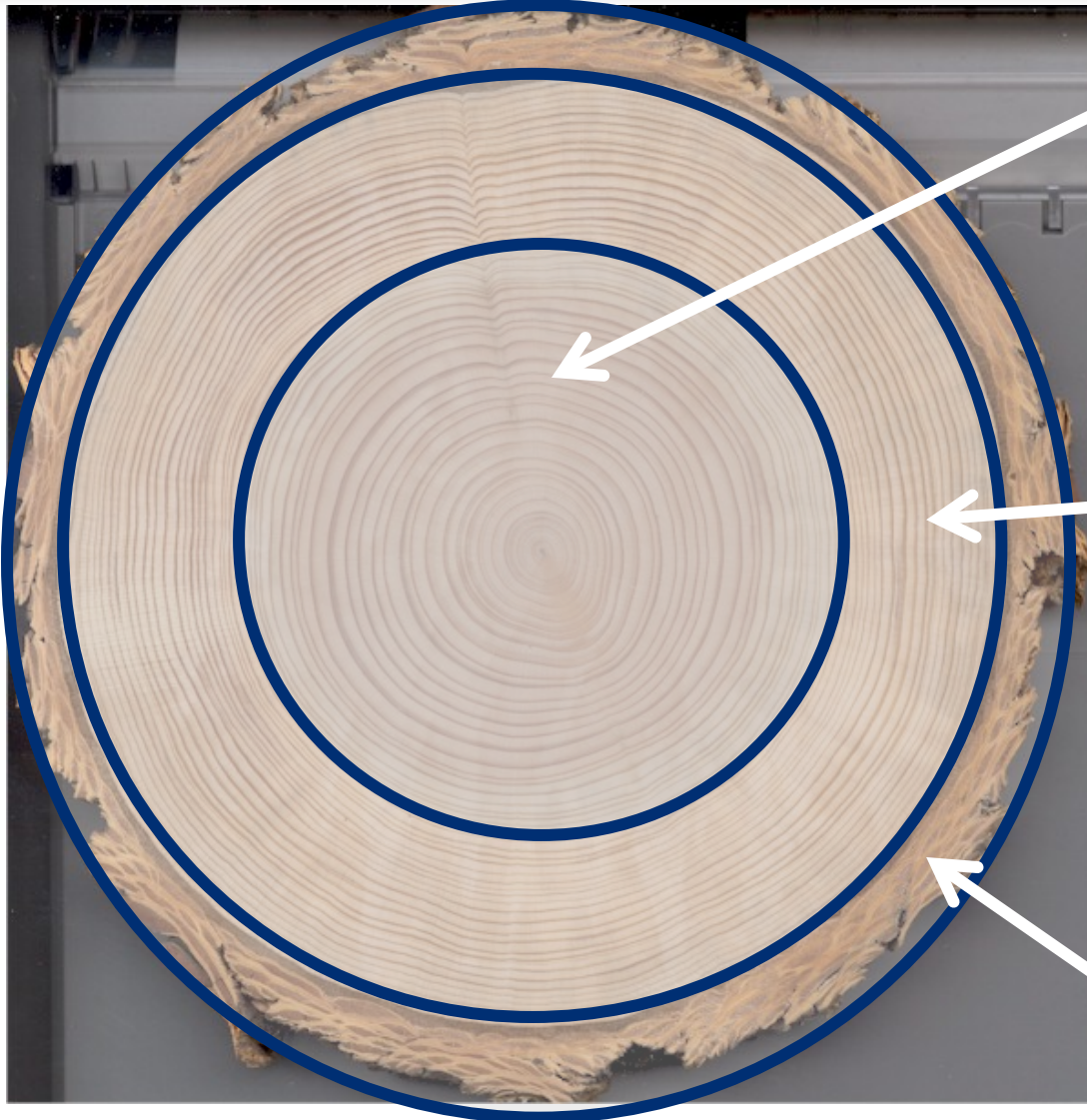 - 10x/day friends; 1x/day family

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
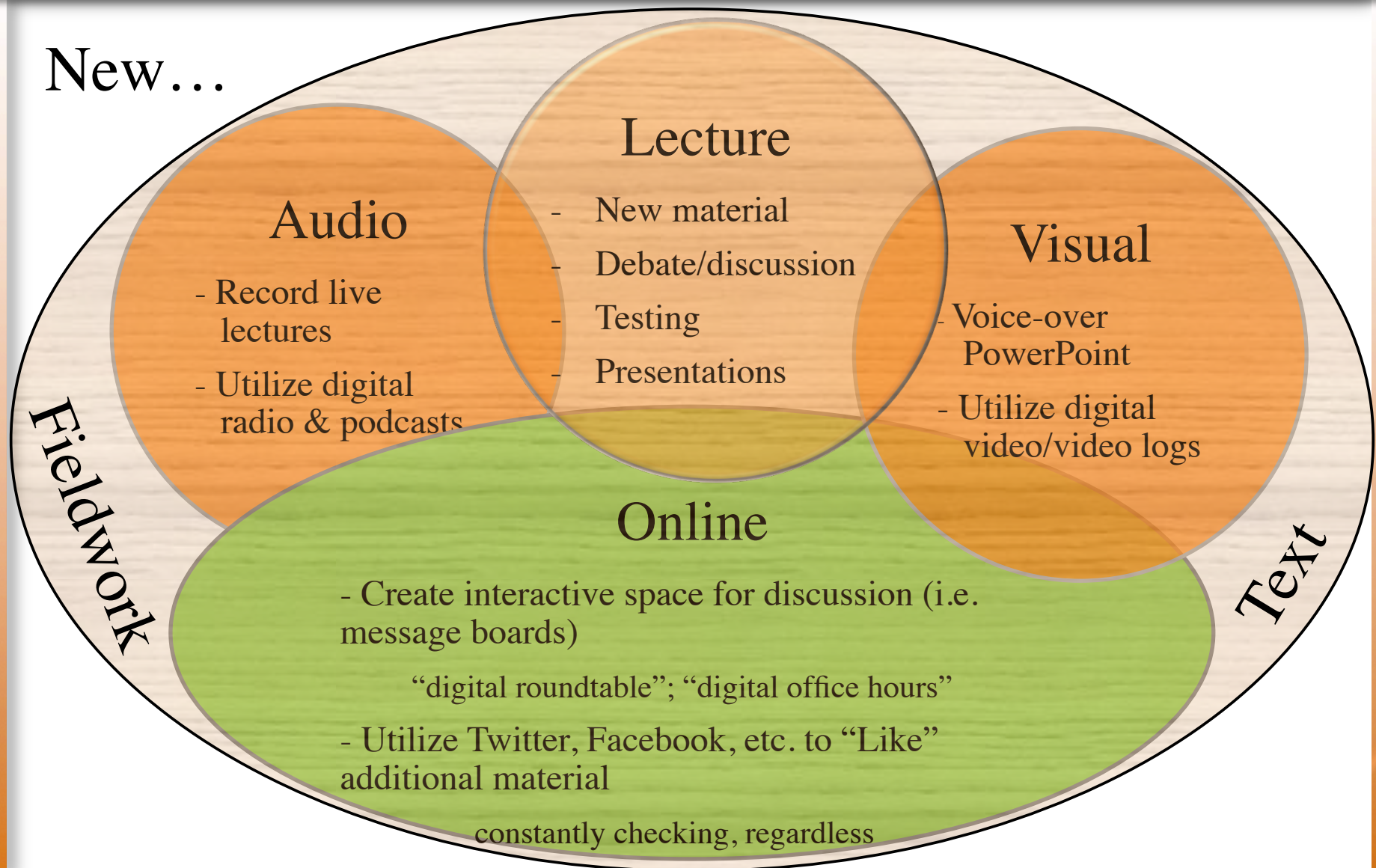   2. Rethinking course requirements/expectations/outcomes

Not an ONLINE course!!!!

UF Department of Tourism, Recreation & Sport Management
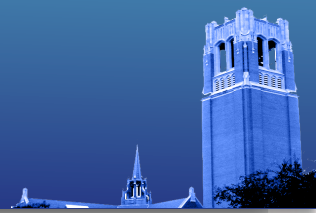UNIVERSITY *of* FLORIDA

Traditional

Lecture (heartwood)

Text & fieldwork (sapwood)

Extras (cambium/bark)

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UF

New…

Lecture

- New material
- Debate/discussion
- Testing
- Presentations

Audio

- Record live lectures
- Utilize digital radio & podcasts

Visual

- Voice-over PowerPoint
- Utilize digital video/video logs

Fieldwork

Text

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

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
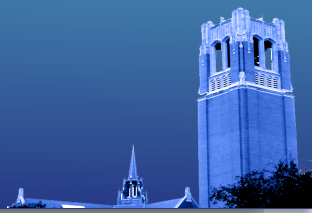
Challenges

- Setting limits
  - * Access
  - * Effort/Investment
- Finding a balance
- Learning curve
- Pace of change
- Ensuring privacy (two-sided)
- Source reputability (ahhh, Wikipedia)
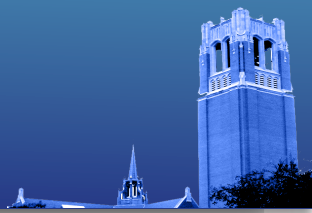
Opportunities

- 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
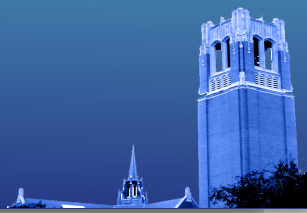
- Greases the wheels to information

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!!
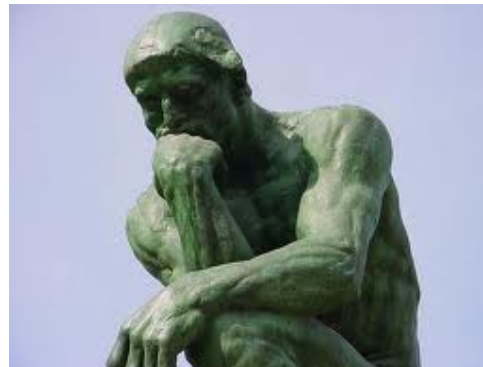
Questions/Comments

- Text the Mob
- Twitter
- Verbal

Thank You

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Dissertation project website: http://www.flseagrant.org/boating/projects/solves/