

## SCREENCASTING FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

Although it's no longer in its infancy, screencasting is still a largely unknown, or at least misunderstood, education commodity. Today, most people know screencasts as videos—an imprecise, albeit practical, designation for an online tutorial created by recording a computer screen or slide show and, in most cases, narrating the recording.

In effect, screencasts are interactive lessons. The almost ineffable, yet beautiful, quality of the screencast is its ability to remove the teacher from the front of the classroom. “Not only can screencasts be used to ignite remarkable five-minute instruction they can also become part of a growing web-based archive of brief videos that students can access at any time” (Barnes, 2013, p. 18).



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## JING

I made my first screencast video the day after seeing Chris Carman's presentation in 2008, using a free software tool. Jing Software, from TechSmith, a company that creates numerous screencasting and video editing tools, allows users to create up to five-minute videos, which is the perfect length for interactive teaching and learning. For years, I spent countless hours in my home office, recording slides, websites, videos, designs, and anything I believed might enhance classroom instruction. Eventually, I posted the videos on my classroom website, which comprised an ever-growing library of educational videos for students, parents, and other educators to see. It took a few more years for me to realize the power of screencasting as a global

learning tool. Unlike other web-based video production services, Jing is downloadable software, which must be housed on a computer's hard drive. The simplicity of Jing makes it an excellent choice for teachers and students who have little or no experience with screen capture video creation. Other tools described in this chapter offer either web or mobile app versions, and some include both.

## ANIMOTO AND OTHER SCREENCASTING TOOLS

I was teaching the literary term flashback to seventh graders in 2010. During my transition away from traditional teaching to a student-centered classroom, I produced one screencast after another, improving my technique each time. The length of the videos was always five minutes or less, and I added as many graphics and annotations as possible to engage young, often distracted, learners. To capture the essence of flashback as a device for understanding fiction, I found a brief video of a movie character remembering an event from earlier in his life. I recorded this movie moment using Jing and I narrated the video explaining key points of flashback, as the movie clip played. I could discuss the power of this instruction ad nauseam, but I prefer to share an anecdote from class, when I showed the flashback video. Students watched the expertly crafted video in silence, and I assumed they would all be able to teach the literary element when the screencast ended. The second the video stopped, an eager student's hand shot up. "How did you make that video?" the inquisitive 12-year-old asked. "Do you think I could do something like that for my project?" Only somewhat aggravated that the question wasn't about flashback, I explained how I created the video using a screencasting tool called Jing. "What's screencasting?" another student wondered out loud. Although few students were thinking about flashback at that time, what educators call a teachable moment occurred. Going to our classroom website's library of instructional presentations, which contained plenty of YouTube and TeacherTube videos,