

# Appropriate Use of Media

Media or Technology	Suggested Use	Rationale	Benefits	Limitations
<b>Text</b>	Lectures, for dissemination of factual information Instructions (assignments, navigation, etc.)	Universal format	Easy to update and maintain Appears quickly online for learners (quick download) Ensures accessibility for all learners Versatile, from instruction to engaging research activity	Quickly becomes wordy and boring in appearance
<b>Instructional graphics</b>	Illustrating concepts and procedures not easily represented by text alone	If relevant, can improve learning Needs to be based on functionality, not just surface features	Add visual interest to course; definite plus for visual learners When used with text, can make difficult concepts easier to understand	Distracting if used for aesthetic purposes only Potentially time-consuming and difficult to produce
<b>Animation</b>	Giving motion to otherwise inanimate objects, to illustrate complicated concepts and processes	Must add instructional value For ADA reasons, must not be the only source of core content	Can be fun and add entertainment value Better than still visuals for portraying concepts in which motion is essential to mastery (psychomotor skills)	Often complex and time-consuming to create (both to conceptualize and to develop) Larger file size (longer load times for learners) Typically not ADA compliant (thus requiring that accessible alternatives be created for critical course information)
<b>Audio</b>	Providing supplemental instructional material Getting instructor further into course Explaining complicated charts and graphs Role-playing, allowing learners to see correct response for particular situations	Good for auditory learners	Useful for explaining a complicated visual Good where auditory material is especially relevant (language courses, music appreciation, hearing what a correct telephone response sounds like, etc.)	Downloading and streaming capability issues Expensive to produce Can be frustrating to learners (because slower to use) if it is the only way to access certain information

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<b>Video</b>	<p>Providing supplemental instructional material</p> <p>Controlling (increasing or decreasing) the amount of time required to observe an event</p>	<p>Capable of manipulating temporal and spatial perspectives, serving both dramatic and creative ends</p>	<p>Effective demonstration, dramatization, and discovery (of processes, personalities, historical events, human interactions, etc.)</p> <p>Can document real events to bring context alive</p> <p>Illustrating sequential movement more effectively</p> <p>Allows learners to observe otherwise dangerous phenomena (eclipse of the sun, volcanic eruption, etc.)</p> <p>Allows disparate group of people to build common base of experience from which to discuss issues more effectively</p>	<p>Less effective when used for verbal presentation, intellectual arguments, or abstract (nonvisual) information</p> <p>Less effective when detailed study of a single visual is involved (map, a wiring diagram, organization chart, etc.)</p>
<b>Streaming video</b>	<p>Providing supplemental instructional material</p> <p>Controlling (increasing or decreasing) the amount of time required to observe an event</p>	<p>Capable of manipulating temporal and spatial perspectives, serving both dramatic and creative ends</p>	<p>Unlike ordinary video, doesn't need to be completely downloaded to play (because content is not stored on the computer, only downloaded in a series of small information packets, each arriving shortly before required)</p>	<p>High cost and limited capabilities of computer hardware</p> <p>Information packets can be lost or corrupted in transit</p>
<b>Software applications( simulator)</b>	<p>Providing competencies in the motor skill domain</p> <p>Requiring practice under conditions of high feedback, giving learners the feel of the action</p>	<p>Practicing skills in simulated conditions is safer and more convenient than practice in real life</p>	<p>Good for tactile learners</p> <p>Good for hands-on practice in technical disciplines (e.g., engineering)</p> <p>Eliminate possibility of loss of life and injury</p> <p>Allow significant savings of energy and other costs</p> <p>Often enjoy interface commonality</p> <p>Enable learner interactivity</p>	<p>Expense (can be time-consuming, difficult to produce)</p> <p>Can be distracting</p>

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<b>Whiteboard (when available)</b>	Explaining complex concepts by creating visual supports Brainstorming sessions and summarizing group discussions	Active learning for learners	Good for visual and hands-on learners	
<b>Chat</b>	Providing group work sessions Providing online office hours for instructors	It's an environment capable of incorporating games, educational material, audio and video communication, etc.	Interactive messaging system Enables "real-time" communication for learners and instructors	Potential for abuse, because chat room messages are spontaneous and instantly visible
<b>Case studies</b>	Providing in-depth, longitudinal examination of a single instance or event	The case study is a method for learning about a complex instance through extensive description and contextual analysis	Systematic way of looking at events, collecting data, analyzing information, and reporting the results Valuable way for sharing the experiences of others Useful for encouraging discussion about best practices and problem-solving strategies	Can generate a great deal of data that may complicate straightforward analysis
<b>Role-playing scenarios</b>	Providing relatively open-ended social interaction, by asking individuals to imagine themselves as others in particular situations	The purpose is to learn something about another kind of person or about the dynamics of an unfamiliar situation	The role-play simulation is a motivating and effective method of developing social skills, especially empathy (putting oneself in someone else's shoes) Our day-to-day social behavior tends to be governed by our assumptions about who we are, who our peers are and why they act the way they do. A potent way of challenging and thereby changing these assumptions is to experience a slice of life from someone else's perspective	

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<b>Simulations</b>	Providing interaction with other people or elements in an environment similar to real life	Simulations are active, providing realistic practice and feedback in a realistic context Most simulations include social interaction	Realistic, providing practice of real-world skills in conditions similar to those of real life No risk of injury to self or others (e.g., cardio-pulmonary resuscitation practice) Simplification (capturing essential features, avoid dwelling on details that are distracting or too complex)	Typically require more time than do expository methods (because often used with problem-based learning methods, where learners immerse themselves in problematic situations, explore different approaches) Too complicated (if incorporating too many details) Oversimplified (if failing to communicate the intended point, or if giving learners a false understanding of real-life situations)
<b>Learning games</b>	Challenge of attaining goals while following prescribed rules	Games foster creativity and motivation Players compete against themselves or against other players	Fun: learners enter an artificial environment with novel dynamics, enjoy active participation and interaction Provide the opportunity to practice content Foster pleasant and relaxed atmosphere, keep learners interested in repetitious tasks (e.g., memorizing multiplication tables)	Entail competition, which can be counter-productive for learners less interested in competing or weak in the content or skill being practiced Distracting, if learners too caught up in the excitement of play to focus on real objectives Often lacking actual practice of the intended academic skill
<b>Self-assessments</b>	Allow learners to assess themselves	It's a quick way to evaluate knowledge	Always available Quick Allows for feedback to learners Can be retaken as often as learners want	Results not always reliable and measurable

This table was adapted from the following resources:

Sharon E. Smaldino, James Russell, Robert Heinich, and Michael Molenda, *Instructional Technology and Media for Learning*, 8th ed. (Prentice Hall, 2005).

Wikipedia  
<http://en.wikipedia.org>

Whatis?com  
<http://whatis.techtarget.com/definitionsAlpha>