Ways to present content in an online course...

One of the most effective ways to present content in an online course is through a combination of concepts, activities, and technologies. Use many of the ideas below to help meet the objectives of each unit and to construct layers of content that meet the course objectives. These are just a few examples! Please email online@uwlax.edu should you want to discuss these items, need more ideas or examples, or have additional ideas that you would add to this list.

- ## Demonstrations
  Demonstrations can show a process such as solving a problem or navigating a technology to complete a task. Some technologies, such as Jing or screencast-o-matic.com, allow for video screen capturing allowing for audio voiceover while video recording what is happening on the creators computer screen (movements, mouse clicks, etc.) Example 1, Example 2, Example 3
  NOTE: Examples 1 and 2 were made in-house using a free software available called Jing by TechSmith. Jing is available for download at http://www.jingproject.com/.

- ## PDF (Portable Document Format)
  PDFs are favored documents because they cannot be altered by the end-user and they retain formatting guidelines no matter what computer on which the PDF is viewed. In addition, PDFs load directly in D2L which saves the user time from having to open another program for viewing. PDFs can be created (printed or saved) from a file created with Microsoft Office and read using a free reader that is available for download at http://get.adobe.com/reader/. If you aren't able to create PDFs from your computer download Adobe Professional from this site: https://software.uwlax.edu/ (faculty/staff only) Learn more about the features available through PDF here: http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/adobepdf.html   Example 1, Example 2

- ## PowerPoint
  PowerPoint files are intended to aid a presentation. When sharing a PowerPoint in an Online course, be sure you assess the value of the PowerPoint to an audience that cannot hear you speaking while giving the presentation. PowerPoint is often most effective when combined with other content areas. Consider adding notes to your PowerPoint that highlight the key talking points you would share in a face-to-face presentation and/or adding audio files to the PowerPoint using a program like brainshark.com, Camtasia, Adobe Presenter, or the built-in audio tool in PowerPoint (be careful of large file size).

- ## Multimedia
  Multimedia technologies are often time consuming to make but can offer an additional way to present content to students. Multimedia is especially useful for different learning styles. Please always consider the accessibility of the files and add text versions whenever possible.
  Audio Files: Many great audio files exist on the internet, often in the form of podcast. In addition, you can create your own audio files using a program such as Audacity, a free download (for directions click HERE).
  Example
  MediaSite: A technology that allows for synced content slides with audio. Example (*NOTE: Terry Wirkus in ITS*

can help faculty/staff set-up and record MediaSite presentations.)
Videos: Many great videos exist on the internet also. You are encouraged to use existing videos to present course content. [Example](#)

- ## Websites and Webquests
  In an online course, linking to educational websites is easily accomplished. Many websites present information, views, ideas, etc. that may parallel or intersect other materials presented in your online course. Using such easily accessible sites (either generic sites or specific articles/pages) can add an additional angle to course content presentation. You can also consider creating Webquests with some websites that are in line with your course content. According to [Webquest.org](#), Webquests are "…an inquiry-oriented lesson format in which most or all the information that learners work with comes from the web." [Example 1](#), [Example 2](#), [Example 3](#), [Example 4](#)

- ## Lecture Narrative
  A lecture narrative is a written form of the important content, concepts, examples, etc. that you would present in your face-to-face course. Lecture narrative can come in various forms such as in PowerPoint, PDF, Word, or contained within D2L, though D2L files and PDF are the advised formats as they keep the students within D2L. It is important that your lecture narrative is more than just notes so that online students that read the narrative understand what you, the instructor, believe to be the important content for the unit. [Example 1](#), [Example 2](#)

- ## Ask the expert / practitioner
  While lecture narratives provide information about what you, the instructor, believes to be important, the addition of a guest expert or practitioner can help students gain a different perspective. An "ask the expert/practitioner" activity in an online course can be presented as a static interview document, linked to on the internet, completed with a colleague expert/practitioner via video or audio or "Online Rooms"(web conferencing), or done asynchronously through a discussion forum in D2L. [Example 1](#), [Example 2](#)

- ## Case study
  Case studies are often a powerful way to present content in a different yet practical and applicable way. Cases can be found within textbooks, in external resources such as [Harvard Business Cases](#), or from online searchable learning repositories (such as [Merlot](#) or [Wisc-Online](#)). Case studies can be used as a point of reference, shown as example, used in conjunction with an assignment and/or group discussion in which an in-depth investigation is carried out by students to explore real-world scenarios in a given subject area. [Example 1](#), [Example 2](#)

- ## Glossary
  A glossary provides a list of course terms and definitions, and, when possible, links back to the place in the course where that term and definition was originally discussed. D2L has a built-in glossary tool that can be used to present this information (click [HERE](#) for information on how to create a glossary in D2L). [Example](#)

- ## Articles and Textbook Chapters

Articles and textbook chapters are important for providing a basis of information for the module or unit. Because many students learn from reading and exploring a concept, these resources are best combined with other ways to present content and activities.

- ### Discussion Forums
  The discussion area is for asynchronous conversations in which, for example, one student can post a message in the morning and someone else can respond in the afternoon. All posts are in one central location ("Discussions") and can be read and re-read at any time. Discussions are best used to present content when the instructor creates and poses initial questions that require students to state their thoughts, formulate opinions, or synthesize information from various sources, not simply stating information back in the forum. Carefully crafted discussion questions can create a thoughtful exchange of ideas as students often have more time to reflect on posts from instructor and peers, and craft an appropriate response in a time that is appropriate for him/her. Remember, posed discussion questions can present content and engage learners in exploring the content by comparing information from various content sources. Example

- ### Self-Assessments A self-assessment tool or activity helps students assess their own learning, often through reflective writing. Often self-assessments can be found online. These created assessments are often most effective online when paired with a reflective writing assignment or a discussion board to analyze results. Example 1, Example 2, Example 3

Helping students construct knowledge (constructivist learning theory) is a very effective approach in an online course and can be accomplished by using a combination of means in which to present content through information and activities. A basic way to think about presenting modules or units of content is to give students (1) some resources, (2) a way to collaborate with instructor and/or peer, (3) an activity to apply the knowledge, and (4) a way to evaluate each module/unit of content. Overall, remember that a combination of many approaches is very effective in the online classroom!