TechMatters: Let's Get Interactive, (Videos That Is), with EdPuzzle and Vialogues

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Video is a significant component of the modern instructional toolkit. As such, it is routinely incorporated into all types of instructional environments—from traditional classrooms to free online courses. As library instructors, we often use video to create instructional tutorials & guides to our search tools and resources. Too often, however, video is used in a passive manner with learners expected simply to watch a video with no opportunity provided for active learning.

Adding an interactive component to our video offerings provides the opportunity to increase student engagement and enhance the student experience. Interactivity can run the gamut from the simple (such as providing links to additional content sources) to the more complex (such as in-video questions and/or branched narrative content). The perceived technological barrier to adding interactive elements, however, can certainly seem prohibitive. Fortunately, a variety of both free and fee online tools have been developed to lower the entrance bar and allow instructors to more easily include interactive elements in their instructional videos. In this article, we will take a closer look at two such tools: EdPuzzle (https://edpuzzle.com/) and Vialogues (https://vialogues.com/).
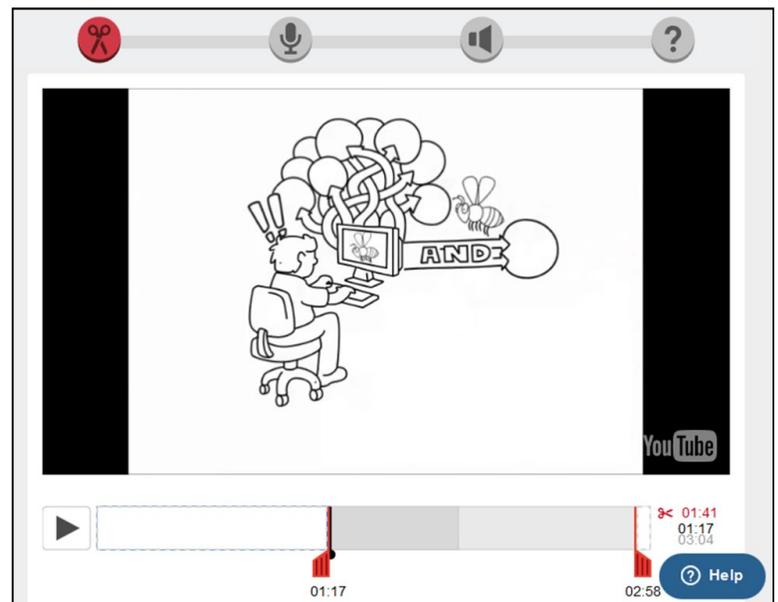
EdPuzzle
https://edpuzzle.com/

EdPuzzle is a free tool that allows you to edit and add content to videos from a wide variety of online sources—including YouTube, Khan Academy, TED Talks, and Vimeo—as well as those you upload yourself. To get started, you first need to create a teacher account by providing your name, email address, and a password. Alternately, you can sign in using a Google or Edmodo account. You will also be asked what subject you teach (e.g., Computers, Math, Other) and what school you are affiliated with (e.g., Eastern Michigan University).

Once logged in, your first step towards building a "video-lesson" is to select a video by either uploading your own or by using the built in search tool to find a video from a public source. From the search results, you can preview videos in order to determine which will best meet your needs. Once you have identified a suitable video, click the "Use it" button to add it to your content collection and begin the editing process.

Once in the editing tool, EdPuzzle provides options to crop the video, record an audio track, add audio notes, and/or insert quiz questions. Imagine you have found a great video, but it is too long and you want to include only a short section in your lesson. To do so, you simply drag the red end markers to your chosen start and end points (see Figure 1). As you proceed with the editing process, you will only see the portion of the video you have selected.

Next, EdPuzzle gives you to option to record and overlay your own narration over the existing audio track. In order to use this feature, you must record audio for the entirety of the video you have cropped; you cannot record a voiceover for only a portion and then leave the remaining, original audio unaltered. Beyond using it to update videos that already have audio, another handy use for this feature is to add audio to a slideshow that you have previ-
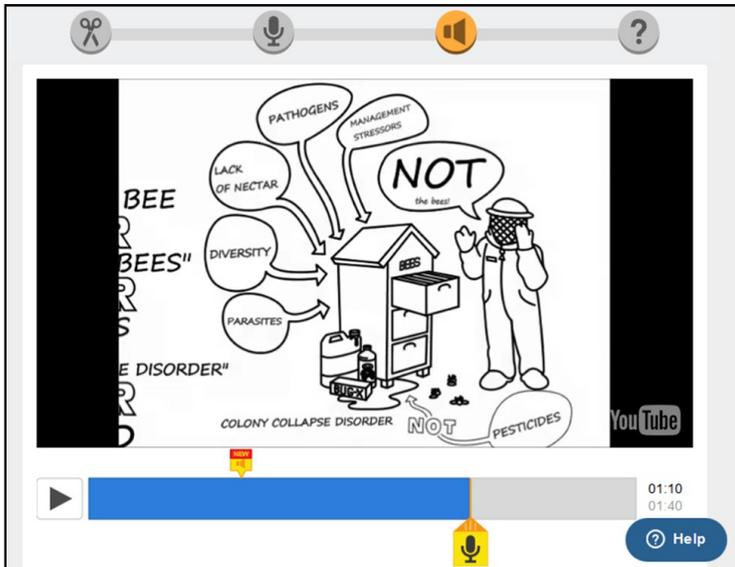
Figure 1: Drag and drop the red end markers to crop the video

ously created without narration – just save your Power-Point as a video (e.g., wmv) and then upload it to EdPuzzle. Of course, you can record narration for slideshows directly in PowerPoint, but you may prefer having all your narrated videos in one place.
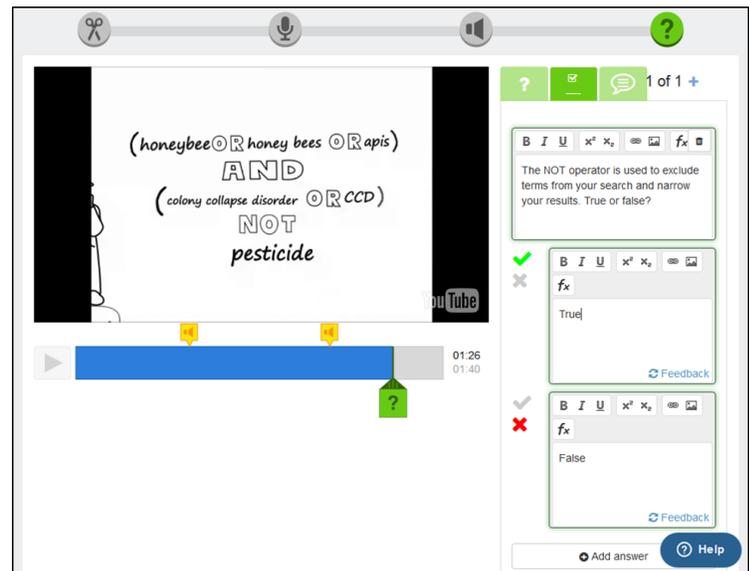
An alternate option for adding commentary for an entire video is adding an audio note, which differs from the audio track in that it does not play over the video. Instead, the video will play up until the point where the note has been inserted, play the note while the screen is paused, and then continue. You can use this feature to offer introductory remarks and/or concluding remarks, highlight a particular point, or provide additional information not included in the video. To create a note, you simply click on the yellow microphone icon (see Figure 2), record your comments (assuming you have a microphone for your computer), and then press the icon again to stop recording. After recording your note, you can adjust its location by dragging and dropping the yellow tag that appears above the video control bar. Add additional instructor notes by dragging the microphone icon to each new location and repeating the recording procedure.

Figure 2: Add audio notes by clicking on the microphone icon

Finally, EdPuzzle allows you to add quiz questions and written comments into the video. Just as with the audio notes, the video will play up to the insertion point and then pause to allow students to read and/or respond before continuing on with the video. It is important to point out that there is no way to require students to provide a response, so you will need to emphasize the importance of doing so if you plan to use this feature as a formal assessment tool. Questions are added by clicking on the green question icon (see Figure 3), choosing the type of

Figure 3: Add quiz questions by clicking on the question mark icon

question (open-ended, multiple choice, or an instructor comment that seeks no student response), and then filling in your question and answer(s) or feedback.

Once you finish editing and adding content to your video-lesson, you must assign it to a "class" in your ED-Puzzle classroom in order to make it available to your students. When you do so, you may set options to prevent students from skipping ahead in the video past unwatched content, and/or set a due date for the assignment. You will also need to "invite your students" to join the class which you can do by sending them a link or providing them with the class code to enter when logged in to their own EDpuzzle account.

In the EDPuzzle classroom, you can monitor which students have watched the video, when they did so, and how they performed on any quiz questions for which you required an answer. If you would like, you can export this data as a .csv file, so you can easily view it on a spreadsheet, such as Excel.

Vialogues
https://vialogues.com/

The Vialogues tool, developed by the EdLab at the Columbia University Teachers College, allows you to add a slightly different type of interactivity to videos by providing a platform for dialogue, in a controlled environment, between those who have watched or are watching. To begin, you will need to "Create an EdLab Account" which requires only your name, an email address, and a password.

Once you activate your account by clicking on the confirmation email, you can begin your work by clicking on the "Create" option on the Vialogues menu. As with EdPuzzle, you may either upload your own video, or use a video from a third-party source: YouTube, Vimeo, or videos contributed and made public by other Vialogues users. Step 2 is to "Define Your Vialogue" by providing a title and a description, and selecting permissions for participation ("public" allows anyone to participate while "selective" requires moderator permission; you can also "disable comments" to close your Vialogue to further comment). You are then ready to hit the "CREATE VI-ALOGUE" button.

When you are ready to invite students to join the Vialogue in order to view the video and begin contributing comments, you can do so by either embedding the video on the web page of your choice or by sending them a system-generated link that you will find under the "SHARE" tab in the management console; you can easily modify the link if you want the video to start at a different point than the very beginning (e.g., 20 seconds in). In order to add comments to the Vialogue, users must be logged into a Vialogues account. To add a comment, users may simply type their thoughts into the comment box below the video and click the "Post" button. The comment will appear in the discussion panel on the right attached to a time code location in the video (see Figure 4).

Participants in the Vialogue may either create new comments or they may reply to the comments of others. To reply, click on the red arrow beside the comment and type your response. Users may delete or edit their own comments, but only up until the point when another user replies. After that, the original comment cannot be changed, only deleted entirely. When a comment is deleted, all of the replies associated with that comment will be deleted as well.

In addition to comments, moderators have the ability to add questions into the discussion panel in order to survey, poll, or quiz participants (see Figure 4). This is done by clicking on the "Q&A" button beneath the video, entering the question text, selecting either "Multiple Choice" (single response) or "Check All That Apply" (multiple response) as the question type, and then providing the possible answers. Once posted, the question will appear in the discussion timeline and viewers may respond (again, as with comments, the user must be logged in). Moderators can view responses by selecting the gear icon and then navigating to the "Polls" tab.

Conclusion

Video content is regularly used by librarians to enhance instruction both in the traditional classroom and online. Adding interactivity to this content affords us the opportunity to further increase student engagement by stimulating attention, motivating discussion, and facilitating active learning. Although each offers slightly different features, EdPuzzle and Vialogues are two free tools that will allow you to add interactivity to your videos without the need to master complicated video editing software. Give them a try and you will see that they offer a quick and easy way to begin experimenting with interactive elements in your instructional videos.

Figure 4: Time-coded comments and questions appear alongside the video in the Vialogues interface