



SEARCHLIGHTS AND SUNGLASSES

LEARNING LAYER

Using the New Tools

Teaching students to be proficient in this new environment means that sometimes you will have to learn along the way. It is common for teachers to know less about the latest technologies than their students. How might this change the rules of how you think about teaching?

Activities at three levels:

Flashlight: Try a reverse mentoring experiment. In a lab setting, ask each student to find a web site, digital tool or game that he or she thinks a teacher should know about. Divide the students into five or six “stations.” Invite a group of teachers to your class and ask them to rotate from station to station and hear the students explain why the resource they are demonstrating should be used in class.

Spotlight: Ask students to create a [WordPress](#) blog to discuss how digital and interactive news outlets are in your community (including student media). Divide the outlets up among the students and have them write critiques online. Before they write, however, ask them to send the questions they seek to answer out through their own social networks. Do the outlets attract students? What techniques do students want that the news organizations are failing to provide? What are they doing well?

Searchlight: Cover a story yourself. Create a demonstration of how you think a story could be done using whatever digital tools you have available. Evaluate the results as a class. Did the story have a wide audience? Did it engage a community? Did anything change because of it? If you used your personal networks to do and share the story, was its impact limited because of the size and demographics of your networks?