

TEACHING TIP OF THE MONTH

Theme: Open Access Applications for Student Engagement

Tip 1: Wheel of Names

As many faculty continue teaching virtually, we look for ways to engage students in class. One open-access tool is [Wheel of Names](#), a randomizer that enables you to enter names, questions, words, or images to a wheel. With one click, the wheel spins and randomly chooses an entry. Instructors can use the wheel to randomly call on students, generate discussions about images, or prompt students to answer pre-selected questions. The app gives you the option to remove entries once they have been selected or (in advanced mode) hide them if you plan to reuse the same wheel. In addition, you can customize the wheel by changing the colors, sounds, the duration the wheel spins, and the message that displays when the wheel stops spinning. You do not need an account to create and use a wheel; however, setting up a free account enables you to save and access multiple wheels. View this [tutorial](#) for how to set up a wheel and for more ideas on ways to use Wheel of Names.

Tip 2

If you want to engage students in text analysis, consider exploring [Voyant Tools](#). This application is a free, open-sourced text analysis tool created by Stefan Sinclair (McGill University) and George Rockwell (University of Alberta) to help students, digital humanities scholars, and others “see through your text.” To use the tool, upload documents, paste links or type directly into the [tool’s box](#). The tool generates a visual analysis of the documents’ contents (individually or as a corpus of texts) in various outputs such as word clouds, frequencies bubbles, correlations, word connections, sentence lengths, and other trends. These visual outputs can be analyzed and manipulated on the spot or exported for later analysis. Voyant has been used in higher education courses to [formulate research questions](#), [make text comparisons](#), and [engage in close reading](#). It can be used for other tasks such as reflecting on one’s writing over time. Students can use the tool independently to analyze documents, or instructors can share the tool on-screen to engage students in text analysis in real-time.

For more questions about these tips, contact angela.lanier@montgomerycollege.edu

More Info on Teaching Tips

“Teaching Tips of the Month” began as a project of Program for Active Learning in STEM (PALS) and Teaching to Increase Diversity and Equity in STEM (TIDES) grants. Many thanks to Ray Gonzales and Alla Webb, who served as Principal Investigators of the TIDES grants. You can view archived Teaching Tips of the Month on [The Hub](#). We welcome feedback and invite you to submit ideas for this publication to Angela Lanier, angela.lanier@montgomerycollege.edu

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