Seriously, what the heck are these?  
An introduction to QR codes

QR stands for “quick response,” and if you use them correctly, that’s what you can give to your students. Just as a bar code at the grocery store immediately sends a product’s information to the cash register, a QR code can send information to your smartphone or iPad. So for those of you who are looking for an interesting way to use these devices, this is for you.

How can you use this in your classroom?  Put QR codes in your PowerPoint slides to link to pictures of historical figures, molecules, exotic locations... Post QR codes around the room to serve as a Content Scavenger Hunt that gets students out of their seats. Use them like flashcards, where students can scan the code beneath a question to visit a website that will help them answer it. Link the code to a YouTube video reviewing how to work a particular math problem or use a piece of equipment.

Most of these strategies have low-tech alternatives that you might already use, but QR technology can make it happen faster and can deliver more information for the students. Take advantage of the mobility of so much resource material and the ability to send it to students exactly when they need it.

Getting started: For one thing, you don’t have to create anything. Googling “QR code education” will give you a ton of results. If you do make your own codes, I recommend the Azon Media Code Generator. It is simple to use, and it lets you personalize your code, even putting a picture or logo in the middle of it.

Make sure you test your codes before you deploy them. I use the “Scan” app for my iPad and “Upcode” for my Droid phone.

If you have a cool QR code activity, I’d love to hear about it. And visit my blog or website to see some more QR resources.

Introduce yourself
Even if it is a little bit late

A big drawback to both students and instructors of distance courses is the disconnect that comes from the lack of face-to-face interaction. If your students don’t know you, much of the personality that you put into your typing is lost. Along with it is the chance to motivate students by simply being someone whom they like and whom they want to please.

Until hologram technology improves, and unless you want to spend the cash on a giant road trip to personally meet all of your distance students, the best way to show your students what a wonderful person you are is to create a short introduction video at the beginning of your course.

Yes, I know I’m late with this, but I wanted to make different tutorials for the different user needs in this area. Now that they’re available to help you, don’t miss the chance to do this, and to create occasional videos throughout your course. Try giving students feedback in video form instead of through text. Do a video review of information. There are lots of options.

For start-to-finish tutorials on how to make a video with an iPad, digital camera, or with Panopto, and how to post it for your students, look at the resources on my website and blog.

There’s more on page 2:
Using Google Drive in your class...
New workshop series announcement and link...
What to do with Google…

One great way to use Google Apps to help your class communicate

As announced last week, ESU has equipped students and faculty with some of the Google Apps suite of tools. So how can they help you?

Well one tool, Google Drive, can help your students communicate with you and can help them collaborate with each other in ways that can streamline some procedural classroom processes and can eliminate a lot of the frequent headaches that come with distance education group work.

- Share spreadsheets and forms with students, which allow them to easily sign up for meeting times or call “dibs” on a research topic
- Create surveys or self-graded assignments that report results into a spreadsheet
- Eliminate the problem of having multiple versions of a report floating around. Everyone in a group can edit the same online document. Nobody needs to compile the versions into one “official” version to turn in.
- Students are able to chat online while editing the documents, so they can communicate about the changes being made. This is a spectacular capability for distance students who normally have to wait hours or days for feedback from each other.
  - Track the changes in each document, so you can see which students made which changes. You can hold each student in a group accountable for his or her individual productivity.

To help you get started, I’ve made a tutorial video on the basics of using Google Drive... creating or uploading a Google document, collaborating with a partner, and tracking the changes. Find the link to this on my website or blog.

The new track-based workshop series starts soon!

To preview the tracks and workshops, click the link @ www.emporia.edu/tcs.