Theoretical Framework for the Use of Weblogs in Education
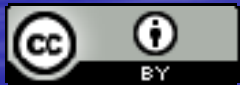
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Collaborative Technology Think Tank (CT3)

Topics

- Learning Theory & Technology
- Diverse Learners
- Internet
- Web 2.0
- Weblogs
- Academic Journals
- Academic Institutions
- Promotion of Higher Learning
- Course Management
- Integration into Instruction
- Scholarly Conversation
- Skepticism within Academe

Learning Theory & Technology

- Constructivist: (Mayer, 2003): Learning first
- Chickering & Ehrmann (1996): 7 technology principles:
  - (a) Interaction, (b) Cooperation & Reciprocity, (c) Active Learning; (d) Feedback; (e) Time in Learning Process, (f) High Expectations, & (g) Diverse Learners
- Beldarrain (2006): communication & interaction
- Connectivism (Siemens, 2004): social network of learning
- Ragan & Smith (2004): learning stages & environment
- Rogers (2002): technology effectiveness
- Pflaum (2004): learning effectiveness
- Fletcher (2004): link instruction theory & research
- D'Angelo & Woosley (2007): relevance for learning

Technology & Diverse Learners

- Oblinger & Oblinger (2005): "Net Generation"
- Oblinger (2008): Value for Learning
- Prensky (2001): "Digital Natives" & "Digital Immigrants"
- Vaidhyanathan (2008): Generational Focus?
- Kelton (2008): technology vetted for value
- Jonassen (2004): Virtual Technology for Institutions
- Kluge & Riley (2008): Virtual Technology & Learning
- Heath, et al (2005): Mobile Learning Environments
- Kingsley (2007): Problem Solving & Creativity
- Wepner & Tao (2002): Content over Technology
- Buhl (2008): Planning, Implementation, Evaluation

The Internet and Web 2.0

- Solomon & Schrum (2007): Defense & NSF
    - "isolation to interconnectedness"
- Richardson (2006): Tim Berners-Lee: "a collaborative medium, a place where we [could] all meet and read and write" (p. 1)
- Alexander (2006): Engagement
- Anderson (2007): Web 2.0: Participation, Collaboration, Information, Interactivity, Networking, & Access
- D'Souza (n.d.): importance of human thought
- McLoughlin & Lee (2007): "Pedagogy 2.0":
    - Knowledge & Information
    - Social &Technological Change
    - Lifelong learning

Weblogs: Definition & History

- "An easily created, easily updateable Website that allows an author (or authors) to publish instantly to the Internet from any internet connection" (Richardson, 2006, p. 17).

- Warlick (2007): History:
    - 18th Century?
    - Pamphlets: *Common Sense*

    - 20th Century: Electronic Media
    - Early web development
    - Content Management Systems (CMS)

Weblogs

- Goodwin-Jones (2006) Student-centered focus on:
  - Literacy skills
  - Media applications
  - Collaboration
  - Space for Creativity & Reflection

- Solomon & Schrum (2007): "nation of bloggers"

Examples

 http://www.blogger.com

Word Press   http://www.wordpress.com

    http://www.drupal.org

    http://www.classblogmeister.com

    http://www.gaggle.net

Academic Journals and Weblogs

- Nackerud & Scaletta (2008): 10 Years
  - *The Chronicle of Higher Education*
  - "forms of academic production or a vehicle for scholars to become public intellectuals" (p. 71)
  - Old media metaphors: "journals", "op-ed pieces", personalized "web indexes", and "vanity sites" (p. 71)
  - Blogging: "merges and conflates a variety of genres, motives, and audiences" (p. 71)

Academic Institutions and Weblogs

- Nackerud and Scaletta (2008):
  - University of Minnesota "Uthink" blog started in 2004
  - "the anything-goes medium at the heart of the campus" (p. 85)
  - "an official promotional front to the campus, as well as supporting individual, even guerilla, self-expression" (p. 85)
  - "valuable communication tool to all of its constituents, while capturing a fascinating historical record of university and thought that is as varied and complicated as the university itself" (pp. 85-86).

Weblogs &Higher Learning

- Richardson (2006):
  - Large audience
  - Critical, Analytical, Creative, Intuitive, Associational, & Analogical thinking
    Access & Exposure to Information
  - Solitary Reflection & Social Interaction
  - Critical reading & writing skills
- Solomon & Schrum (2007):
  - Writing thoughtfully
  - Learning from each other
  - Peer editing
  - Finding community interested in topic
  - Communication & Professional Development

Weblogs & Course Management

- Flatley (2005):
  - Stand-alone or in conjunction
  - Journal assignments
  - Announcements, quizzes, polls, links

- Goodwin-Jones (2006):
  - Student-centered
  - Connections outside of the classroom

Educational Functions

- Richardson (2006):
  - Archive and Information Portal
  - Functionality of LMS at lower cost
  - "Online Portfolio" or "Digital Filing Cabinet"
  - Collaborative Learning to Enhance Interest
  - Institutional Communication

Integrating Weblogs into Instruction

- Richardson (2006):
  - Connective writing
  - Cross disciplines and cultures
  - Instruction in other languages
- Solomon & Schrum (2007): writing instruction
  - Brainstorming, organizing, writing, revising, peer review
- Colombo & Colombo (2007): enhance science instruction
  - Expand instruction time by reinforcing concepts, strategies, review for tests, and provide enrichment
- Kaider & Bull (2004): Eighth grade language arts
  - Journaling (accessibility, audience, and immediacy)
  - Relieves intimidation of the empty page

More Integration Ideas

- Beldarrain (2006):
  - Audience for exploration
  - Portfolio and record
  - Learner-centered knowledge construction
- Flatley (2005):
  - Peer review and group work
  - Writing process reflection
  - Integrate feedback into planning
- Flierl & Fowler (2007):
  - "Digital discussions"
  - "Workplace for collaborative projects"

Weblogs & Scholarly Conversation

- Gregg (2006):
  - Cultural studies:
    - "information wants to be free" (Gregg, 2006, p. 154)
    - Knowledge: facilitated, discussed, & improved; not guarded
    - Debate & Critical Thinking

  - Graduate students:
    - Solidarity
    - Collegiality
    - Interest
    - Feedback
    - Enthusiasm
    - Motivation

Skepticism within Academe

- Gregg (2006):
  - Worthwhile and Scholarly?
  - Writing Skills & Efficiency
  - Opposing Viewpoints

- Hooks (1999):
  - "All academics write but not all see themselves as writers. Writing to fulfil professional career expectations is not the same as writing that emerges as the fulfilment of a yearning to work with words when there is no clear benefit or reward, when it is the experience of writing that matters" (p. 37).

Further Studies with Weblogs

- ED 767: Organization and Administration of Higher Education (Dr. Kathy Enger)
- Course Design:
  - Interactive Video Sessions
  - Blackboard Course Management System
  - Wimba Presentations
  - Course Discussion: reflection upon required texts
  - Course Blog: *The Chronicle of Higher Education*
- Reflection and Transformational Learning

Recommendations

- Education must begin with the learner
- Technology must be relevant
- Assess technology effectiveness
- Interaction & Collaboration

- Weblogs:
  - Access & Engagement
  - Explore role of Weblogs as LMS
  - Further study is required

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