







that the questions were no longer merely about the “impact of tools” on learning; the emergent findings compelled us to confront the very nature of what we recognized as learning, which in turn fed back into what we were looking for in our teaching. Over the years, faculty experienced iterative cycles of innovation in their teaching practice, of reflection on an increasingly expansive range of student learning, and of experimentation shaped by the deepening complexity (and at times befuddlement) that emerged from trying to read the evidence of that learning. From this spiral of activity developed a research framework with broad implications for the now-emergent Web 2.0 technologies. We have come to articulate this range of cross-cutting findings under the headings of three types of learning: *adaptive*, *embodied*, and *socially situated*. Briefly, by *adaptive* learning we mean the skills and dispositions that students acquire which enable them to be flexible and innovative with their knowledge, what David Perkins calls a “flexible performance capability.”<sup>7</sup> An emphasis on adaptive capacities in student learning emerged naturally from our foundational focus on visible intermediate processes. What became *visible* were the intermediate intellectual moves that students make in trying to work with difficult cultural materials or ideas, illuminating how novice learners progress toward expertise or expert-like thinking in these contexts.

Our recognition of the *embodied* nature of learning emerged from this increased attention to intermediate processes—the varied forms of invention, judgment, reflection—when we realized that we were no longer accounting for simply cognitive activities. Many manifestations of the affective dimension of learning opened up in this intermediate space informed by new media, whether it was the way that students drew on their personal experience in social dialogue spaces, or the sensual and emotional dimensions of working with multimedia representations of history and culture. In these intermediate spaces, dimensions of affect such as motivation and confidence loomed large as well. We have come to think of this expansive range of learning as *embodied*, in that it pointed us to the ways that knowledge is experienced through the body as well as the mind, and how intellectual and cognitive thinking are embodied by whole learners and scholars.

Inasmuch as this new learning is embodied, similarly is it *socially situated*. Influenced by the range of work on situated learning, communities of practice, and participatory learning, our work with new technologies continuously brought us to see the impact new forms of engagement through media had on the students’ relative *stance* to learning. This effect was not merely a sense of heightened interest due to the novelty of new forms of social learning. Rather, what we were seeing was evidence of the ways that multimedia authoring, for example, constructed for students a salient sense of audience and public accountability for their work; this, in turn, had an impact on nearly every aspect of the authoring process—

visible in the smallest and largest compositional decisions. The socially situated nature of learning became a summative value, capturing what Seely Brown calls “learning to be,” beyond mere knowledge acquisition to a way of thinking, acting, and a sense of identity.

These three ways of looking at pedagogies—as adaptive, embodied, and *socially* situated—together help constitute a composite portrait of new learning. Each helps us focus on a different dimension of complex learning processes: adaptive pedagogies emphasizing the developmental stages linking learning to disciplines; embodied pedagogies focusing on how the whole person as learner engages in learning; and socially situated learning focusing on the role of context and audience. In this sense, the dimensions are overlapping and reinforcing in any particular set of practices. For example, consider Patricia O’Connor’s work making use of Web authoring tools to lead students to engage in close reading of print fiction. Calling the activity “hypertext amplification,” O’Connor asks students to make increasingly sophisticated “associational” connections, to move from novice reading encounters with texts to more expert ones. She wants them to experience “associational thinking” on multiple levels, from the personal and emotional to the definitional and critical. Ultimately, students’ ability to engage fully along a continuum of expert practice is shaped by their knowledge that their Web pages will be public, and their presentations to their peers a social act. All three key dimensions are in play in her teaching practices, as in so many of the case studies coming out of VKP.

Nevertheless, we believe it is a valuable exercise to slow down and look closely at each of three areas, and to begin making sense of how each dimension might be better understood for its shaping influence on learning. We now explore each of these areas more fully below.

**A Note on Findings** Because faculty inquiry lives at the boundary of theory and practice, we have chosen to present the findings in two forms: as *conceptual findings* (representing the way theory informed practice, and vice versa) and *design findings* (representing some of the key claims on practice made by these concepts and values about learning). As a further response to the challenge of representing collective findings in a messy research environment, we also present each area with a set of “tags,” keywords that help associate the findings with various trajectories. Finally, at the end of each finding description we link to several relevant case studies within this volume.

[A complete version of this essay, including the two remaining parts, may be found at [www.academiccommons.org](http://www.academiccommons.org) under the Creative Commons License. —The editors.]

**Notes** 1. Sam Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001).





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2. Many good resources exist on the scholarship of teaching. Two essential resources can be found at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (<http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/CASTL/>) and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning tutorial at Indiana University, Bloomington (<http://www.issotl.org/tutorial/sotltutorial/home.html>).

3. In all, more than seventy faculty from twenty-two institutions participated in the Visible Knowledge Project over five years. Participating campuses included five research universities (Vanderbilt University, the University of Alabama, Georgetown University, the University of Southern California, Washington State University, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology), four comprehensive public universities (Pennsylvania's Millersville University, California State University (CSU)--Monterey Bay, CSU Sacramento, Ohio's Youngstown State University, and participants from several four-year colleges in the City University of New York system, including City College, Lehman, and Baruch), and three community colleges (two from CUNY--Borough of Manhattan Community College and LaGuardia Community College, and California's Cerritos College). In addition to campus-based teams, a number of independent scholars participated from a half dozen other institutions, such as Arizona

State and Lehigh University. The project began in June 2000 and concluded in October 2005. We engaged in several methods for online collaboration to supplement our annual institutes, including an adaptation of the digital poster tool created by Knowledge Media Lab (Carnegie Foundation), asynchronous discussion, and Web-conferencing. For more detailed information, see the VKP galleries and archives at <http://crossroads.georgetown.edu/vkp/>.

4. Cathy N. Davidson, "Humanities 2.0: Promise, Perils, Predictions," PMLA 123, no. 3 (May 2008): 711.

5. John Seely Brown, "Foreword," in *Opening Up Education: The Collective Advancement of Education through Open Technology, Open Content, and Open Knowledge* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008).

6. For a broader discussion of the "teaching commons," see Pat Hutchings and Mary Huber, *The Advancement of Learning: Building the Teaching Commons* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005).

7. David Perkins, "What is Understanding?" in *Teaching for Understanding: Linking Research with Practice*, ed. Martha Stone Wiske (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 39-58

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NEFDC EXCHANGE • SPRING 2009 11







## YouTube in Your Classroom

***Kristine Larsen, Professor of Physics and Astronomy;  
Director of the University Honors Program,  
Central Connecticut State University***

We've all noticed the change in the student population over the past decade. Between the sight of fingers deftly flying over the tiny keys of their cell phones in a mad flurry of text messaging, the increasing appearance of laptops in the classroom, and the ever-increasing tension between faculty and students over citing text versus internet sources, it's clear that we faculty are not in proverbial Kansas anymore. Instead, we find ourselves immersed in the sometimes bewildering cyberworld of the Millennial Generation, or Net Geners, as they are often called. Those born between approximately 1980 and 1994 have often been described as impatient, technology-savvy, multi-taskers. They view more and read less, seem to have short attention spans, and are always looking for more efficient ways to get the most done in the shortest period of time, which some have suggested is an artifact of their over-scheduled childhoods. Proper spelling is sacrificed in the name of brevity (e.g. gr8 instead of great) and acronyms such as LOL (laughing out loud) and WOW (World of Warcraft) are assumed to be understood without question. The library is often seen as a glorified coffee house (or a location with strong wireless signal) rather than a bastion of books and other research materials. For example, 36% of Americans aged 18-24 get their science information from the internet as opposed to 28% who report getting such information from television and even fewer from books or magazines (National Science Board, 2008). Time magazine drew attention to the increasing importance of online communities when it awarded its 2006 Person of the Year designation to "You" – as in YouTube, MySpace, and the like. Yet while it appears on the surface that NetGen prefers interacting across a firewall as opposed to across a table, Facebook, Twitter, and text-messaging augment rather than replace personal interactions. Distance-learning and online courses leave many of these students cold, as they still appreciate personal contact – but on their own terms.

Numerous educational researchers have warned us that this generation is easily bored with the traditional classroom strategies, and that they have little patience for material that does not seem relevant to their personal lives or future goals (e.g. Carlson, 2005; Roberts, 2005; Barnes et al, 2007). This is especially a challenge to faculty who are teaching general education courses, which students often treat as nothing more than a hoop to jump through on the way to graduation. Reaching this new breed of students requires meeting them where they live – in cyberspace – but with conditions. As with any technology or pedagogical technique introduced into the classroom, there will be successes, abuses, and failures. Here we describe how to successfully use one of these Web 2.0 applications – YouTube – in the college classroom.

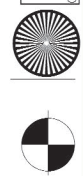
YouTube is a free video-sharing website that allows users to participate in a variety of ways. Many users merely

view videos, either based on the recommendations of others or by searching for particular topics, while others leave comments and ratings under the videos they've viewed (the Net's version of Siskel and Ebert). The most dedicated users upload their own videos, a high-tech version of the old "show and tell." Users are responsible for assuring that what they upload is their own intellectual property, but copyright violations do occur. For example, some users upload segments of television series or films (including some educational videos) while others combine copyrighted images and songs to make their own song videos on a particular topic. If a complaint is filed against a particular video for copyright infringement, it is pulled from the site, or in the case of music, the visual part of the video remains but without the audio soundtrack.

As with any creative technology, the quality of the results varies widely. Some videos are clearly amateurish (some intentionally so) while others rival professional quality. Videos made by both school children and their teachers, as well as college professors, can be found. Just as the qual-

**Wedding customs,  
funeral rituals, and  
religious ceremonies  
from myriad cultures  
can become an instant  
source of wonder and  
reflection within  
the confines of the  
classroom.**

ity of production varies widely, so does the intellectual value of the content of these videos. Lev Grossman noted in the Time cover article (p. 40), "Web 2.0 harnesses the stupidity of crowds as well as its wisdom. Some of the comments on YouTube make you weep for the future of humanity just for the spelling alone." Eyewitness videos of









# Using Blackboard to Meet the Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education

**Tom Thibodeau,**  
*Assistant Provost and Director of the Center for Distributed Learning,  
New England Institute of Technology*

**Stephanie Ferriola, Faculty Resource Coordinator,**  
*New England Institute of Technology*

A recent forum thread on the Chronicle of Higher Education website posed a very interesting question to all of us in faculty development: Are we successful at what we do if very few of our faculty like what we do? The forum thread suggests that we only succeed when (and rarely) we are direct and to the point and don't take up much of the faculty member's time. Sentiments like this certainly make our job "a tough room to work." In this article we would like to share an idea that is fast, to the point, and is receiving positive feedback from our faculty.

New England Institute of Technology is an open admissions college. Our mission is to "... provide specialized

development activities on the use of Blackboard, but after the initial surge most of our sessions are poorly attended so we decided to try something different.

Starting with the winter quarter of 2006, the Center for Distributed Learning and the Faculty Resource Center initiated a weekly program for our faculty to help them expand their use of Blackboard while practicing good pedagogy. The design of the program was very simple. Using "The Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education" (Arthur W. Chickering and Zelda F. Gamson) as our pedagogical structure, we sent out weekly emails to all full time and adjunct faculty that provided a few easy "tips" for the faculty member to use or try. These tips also tried to follow the rhythm of the quarter. For example, week 1 would give ideas for connecting with and getting to know students, and week 5 suggests students print out the grade summary page, then sign and return it as a mid-quarter progress report. Since our calendar is composed of four, ten-week quarters per year, we decided to concentrate on one principle each quarter. Therefore, our first quarter focused on the first principle: Good Practice Encourages Student-Faculty Contact. Each week we emailed strategies for using Blackboard to meet this principle and asked faculty to choose one or more of these tips to try in their classes. We invited them to send us feedback about some of the ideas they tried or to share new ideas with us. Here are the tips we used for the first quarter. Please feel to use or adapt this in any way that fits your campus. We would appreciate any experience or feedback (good or bad) that you could share with us at [tthibodeau@neit.edu](mailto:tthibodeau@neit.edu).

**Using "The Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education" (Arthur W. Chickering and Zelda F. Gamson) as our pedagogical structure, we sent out weekly emails to all full time and adjunct faculty that provided a few easy "tips" for the faculty member to use or try.**

## **Good Practice Encourages Student-Faculty Contact.**

### **Tips for Week 1**

1. Use the Announcement or email section of Blackboard to send out a warm welcome to students before the first class.
2. Create a student profile form or background knowledge survey that students can fill out as an assignment or first class activity to learn more about their educational background, work history, or interests.
3. Use the Staff Information page of Blackboard to introduce yourself to students with a short Bio and ask students to write their own bios on the student pages of Blackboard.
4. During the first class or as an assignment, ask

associate and bachelor degree programs which prepare students for technology careers." Our faculty members are primarily concerned with teaching, as there is no research or publishing requirement involved in their yearly duties. Our students come to us from varied educational backgrounds with varying levels of success. One of our goals is to expand the classroom so that students spend "real time on task" with the content of their courses. We are increasingly relying upon Blackboard to help us facilitate this process. We have tried to hold training sessions and other





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students to email you three questions they have about the syllabus. Summarize the questions asked and write a response to the whole class via Blackboard email so everyone will get your responses to all the class questions.

5. In addition to the course syllabus, post other class documents on Blackboard—such as assignments, project requirements, class notes, and rubrics-- to encourage students' independence in course content sections.

#### Tips for Week 2

1. Send a weekly email message to students that reinforces the previous week's key concepts and builds anticipation for the upcoming week's class.

2. Post a class agenda or lesson plan with the specific lesson objectives prior to each class as a daily announcement.

#### Tips for Week 3

1. Use the Announcement function before the first exam or first major paper or assignment to remind students about posted study guides, sample problems, and project or paper requirements that you have available on Blackboard.

2. Use Blackboard's Course content section to provide solutions and explanations to difficult problems as a tutorial.

#### Tips for Week 4

1. Use External Links in any content section of Blackboard to link students to online resources that might provide clarification of difficult concepts.

2. Post supplemental materials for tutorials or challenge in the course documents section.

#### Tips for Week 5

1. Share your suggestions, or tips from other students who have attained success with a particular study method, in the course document section. You can also start a discussion forum on the topic.

2. Use the survey function in Blackboard to collect

student feedback about how the class is going.

3. Require the students to access their grades from Blackboard for your class. Have them print out the grade summary page, sign it, and return it to you and use it as a Mid Quarter Progress report.

#### Tips for Week 6

1. Provide feedback to students on overall results of exams, assignments, or in-class activities by using the gradebook function.

2. Encourage students to email you with specific questions they have about the exams or assignments. You can then respond to the whole class by creating a course FAQ site in the course documents section.

#### Tips for Week 7

1. Use Blackboard to conduct online office hours using email, discussion forums, or the online chat function.

2. Use External Links in any section of Blackboard to connect students to resources for career opportunities and professional organizations.

#### Tips for Week 8

1. Post a question or problem of the day or week to prepare students for upcoming finals, using announcements, email, or course documents.

#### Tips for Week 9

1. Use an un-graded quiz from the test manager that allows multiple attempts to post sample problems or questions so students can practice for final exams.

#### Tips for Week 10

1. Use the survey function to ask students to assess the class by offering their candid (and anonymous) reflections on the strengths and weaknesses of the class. What should change and what should stay the same for the next class?

### YouTube in Your Classroom Continued from page 13

ineffective "survival" tactics promulgated by the film. Students in peace studies, communication, political science, U.S. history, chemistry, and physics classes will easily find direct relevance to their course material -- and their lives -- in this film.

Web 2.0 continues to infiltrate myriad aspects of our lives, including the classroom. Keeping in mind the basic concepts of good pedagogy, college instructors can find YouTube to be another aspect of Web 2.0 that can be successfully adapted to the classroom. With YouTube, we see yet again that when instructors meet students on their technological turf, it can be a remarkable learning experience for all involved.

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