

Using Collaboration Tools in Teaching

by

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Abstract

This research investigates the use of collaborative activities in teaching. Collaboration is the process where two or more people work together to accomplish a common goal. Teaching by its nature is a collaborative process. Group projects are a common ways students must collaborate with each other. Many new technology tools make collaboration easier and cheaper than in the past. Google Docs, Email, Calendar; Facebook; Microsoft Live; Dropbox; Twitter; and others make time and place less important than any time in the past. How do new tools change the nature and way teacher and students collaborate. This exploratory study will examine how these collaborative tools impact the teaching/learning process.

Introduction

By its very nature, teaching is a collaborative process. Professors collaborate with students to teach and ideally, professors collaborate with each other to exchange ideas and make certain the connections they make with students are as effective as possible. The desire to create synergic learning where students are engaged, motivated, and fun.

Technological advances offer unparalleled opportunities for collaboration, but among both faculty and students using new technology is often treated like a trip to the dentist.

This research will explore attitudes towards technology and offer solutions for making it accessible for hesitant students and faculty alike.

Many collaboration tools are available to students, such as WebCT/Blackboard, Microsoft's SharePoint, Google docs, and others on the internet. It is imperative that instructors learn the capabilities of these tools and how they can be used in teaching, if we are to prepare our students for life in the 21st century.

What tools are available and how are they being used for teaching?

Definition

"Collaboration is a recursive process where two or more people or organizations work together intersection of common goals — for example, an intellectual endeavor that is creative in nature—by sharing knowledge, learning and building consensus. Collaboration does not require leadership and can sometimes bring better results through decentralization and egalitarianism. In particular, teams that work collaboratively can obtain greater resources, recognition and reward when facing competition for finite resources" (Wikipedia).

Literature Review

Investment in collaborative software tools to enhancement productivity is at the top of the list for IT investment for many firms in 2009. For example, Microsoft SharePoint, Microsoft's premier collaboration tool, is the fastest growing program in Microsoft's history, with an estimated 300 million users worldwide, and a whopping 67% growth in 2008. "SharePoint is the fastest-growing ECM solution in the world and in fact is Microsoft's fastest-growing product ever." (Rodcray, 2008)

The "Collaboration Convergence" taking place in today's enterprise is creating high stakes opportunities and serious risks that can profoundly transform your organization for better or worse. Learn how real businesses are using a new generation of unified collaboration solutions from Oracle to improve productivity and competitiveness. Understand why your existing collaboration technology may be exposing you to runaway infrastructure costs, regulatory risk and organizational chaos. Oracle Beehive, the only unified collaboration system built for the enterprise, can help you master the "Collaboration Convergence" , cut your hard dollar costs and foster the best-in-class performance your organization needs to cope with these challenging times. (Oracle Web Cast)

Research Questions

How can these tools be used to enhance the teaching and learning process?

The following table lists the types of resources and web sites where they are available.

Topic	Title	Address
Blogs	Free Blog Hosting	http://okayblog.net/
Blogs	Google Search	http://www.google.com/search?q=free+blog+hosting&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&aq=t&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a
Blogs	Blog.Com	http://blog.com/
Blogs	Aeonity	http://www.aeonity.com/
Blogs	Google's Blogger	http://www.blogger.com/
Blogs	WordPress	http://wordpress.com/
Blogs	Wikipedia Description	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blog
Calendars	Google Calendars	https://www.google.com/accounts/ServiceLogin?service=cl&passive=true&nui=1&continue=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2Fcalendar%2Frender&followup=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2Fcalendar%2Frender
Calendars	Yahoo Calendars	http://calendar.yahoo.com/
Calendars	Windows Live Calendar	http://www.windowlive-hotmail.com/calendar/default.aspx
Cloud Storage	Live Drive	http://www.livedrive.com/
Cloud Storage	Mozy - 2GB free	http://mozy.com/free/?ref=0811cfe9&gclid=CJKf8dqzzJsCFQxM5QodSS10MA
Cloud Storage	Windows Live - Sky Drive - 25GB	http://login.live.com/login.srf?wa=wsignin1.0&rpsnv=11&ct=1247269606&rver=5.5.4177.0&wp=MBI&wreply=http%3A%2F%2Fmail.live.com%2Fdefault.aspx&lc=1033&id=64855&mkt=en-US
Discussion Boards	Quick Topic	http://www.quicktopic.com/
Discussion Boards	Google Groups	http://groups.google.com/
Discussion	Pro Boards	http://www.proboards.com/

Boards		
Email	Gmail	mail.google.com http://mail.google.com
Email	Others	http://email.about.com/od/freeemailreviews/tp/free_email.htm
Email	AOL	https://my.screenname.aol.com/
Email	Yahoo Mail	https://login.yahoo.com/
Email	Hotmail	http://login.live.com/login.srf?wa=wsignin1.0&rpsnv=11&ct=1247269606&rver=5.5.4177.0&wp=MBI&wreply=http:%2F%2Fmail.live.com%2Fdefault.aspx&lc=1033&id=64855&mkt=en-US
Free Courses	Stanford	http://itunes.stanford.edu/
Free Courses	University of California, Berkeley	http://webcast.berkeley.edu/courses.php
Free Courses	ccLearn Creative Commons - Find Educational Resources -ccLearn is a division of Creative Commons dedicated to support open learning and open educational resources. Our mission is to minimize barriers to the creation, sharing, and reuse of educational mate	http://learn.creativecommons.org/education-search-engines/
Free Courses	MIT Open Courseware - Over 1900 Free Courses by the summer of 2009	http://ocw.mit.edu/
Free Courses	Education-Portal - List of Universities with the Best Free Online Courses found the articles, information, and resources.	http://education-portal.com/articles/Universities_with_the_Best_Free_Online_Courses.html
Free Courses	Utah State University	http://ocw.usu.edu/
Free Courses	Carnegie Mellon University	http://oli.web.cmu.edu/openlearning/
Google Docs	Google Docs	http://docs.google.com/
Google Docs	Windows Office Live	http://www.officelive.com
Instant messaging	MSN	http://mail.live.com/mail/MSNWebIMDecomm.aspx
Instant messaging	MySpace	http://www.myspace.com/
Instant messaging	AIM	http://www.aim.com
Instant messaging	Google Gmail	http://talk.google.com
Instant messaging	Meebo - Login to multiple IM sites	http://www.meebo.com/
Libraries	The Internet Public Library	http://www.ipl.org/
Libraries	Qyestia - Subscription Based	http://www.questia.com/Index.jsp
Libraries	The Online Book Page	http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/
Libraries	Google Books - Free online books	http://books.google.com/
Libraries	The Gutenberg Project	http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main_Page

Mash ups	Netvibes - Combine news, RSS feeds, search results, etc. into your personalized web portal.	http://www.netvibes.com/
Online White Boards	Scriblink is a free digital whiteboard that users can share online in real-time. Sorta like pen and paper, minus the dead trees, plastic, and the inconvenience of being at the same place at the same time.	http://www.scriblink.com/
Online White Boards	SKRBL - Simple and easy online multi user whiteboard, start skrbl, give out your URL & start working together.	http://www.skrbl.com/
Online White Boards	Dabbleboard is an online collaboration application that's centered around the whiteboard. With a new type of drawing interface that's actually easy and fun to use, Dabbleboard gets out of your way and just lets you draw.	http://www.dabbleboard.com/
People	Will Richardson, "Learner in Chief" at Connective Learning and the author of Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts and Other Powerful Web Tools for Classrooms	http://weblogg-ed.com/about/
People	Don Tapscott - Author of Wikinomics	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don_Tapscott
People	David Wiley - Chief Open Content	http://davidwiley.org/
People	Clay Shirky - author of Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clay_Shirky
People	Rick Weible - creator of this web site	http://www.rwe1.com
Photo Sites	Flickr is a huge, diverse bunch of people masquerading as a photo-sharing website.	http://www.flickr.com
Photo Sites	Picasa - Looking for a simple way to get photos from your camera and computer on the web? Picasa Web Albums provides 1 GB of free storage that makes sharing your photos quick and easy.	http://picasaweb.google.com/
Photo Sites	Photolava.com is a photo and image hosting service that allows you to easily upload, link and share your photos and images on MySpace, eBay, Xanga, LiveJournal, blogs and message boards.	http://www.photolava.com/
Photo Sites	Image Shack	http://imageshack.us/
Photo Sites	Photo Bucket - Upload all your photos, videos, and images for free. Make photo slide shows to share pics with friends. Host and share videos with us - we are one of the most popular video hosting sites in the world. Plus, find and share the best MySpace i	http://photobucket.com/

Reference Sites	Technorati was founded to help bloggers succeed by collecting, highlighting, and distributing the global online conversation. Founded as the first blog search engine, Technorati has expanded to a full service media company providing services to the blogs	http://technorati.com/
Reference Sites	The Top Ten Internet Collaborative Tools	http://lone-eagles.com/collab.htm
Reference Sites	Collaboration Tools in Online Learning Environments - Jim Clark	http://www.aln.org/publications/magazine/v4n1/clark.asp
Reference Sites	ERIC ? Education Resources Information Center - World's largest digital library of education literature	http://www.eric.ed.gov/
Resources	Social Media Classroom - The Social Media Classroom (we'll call it SMC) includes a free and open-source (Drupal-based) web service that provides teachers and learners with an integrated set of social media that each course can use for its own purposes—int	http://socialmediaclassroom.com/index.php/download
Social Networks	LinkedIn	http://www.linkedin.com
Social Networks	MySpace	http://www.myspace.com
Social Networks	Facebook	http://www.facebook.com
Social Networks	Twitter	http://www.twitter.com
Tagging	Delicious	http://delicious.com/
Telephone Calls	Skype	http://www.skype.com
Videos	Thomas L. Friedman - speaks at MIT on his book - The World is Flat	http://mitworld.mit.edu/video/266
Videos	Dan Tapscoff on Wikinomics 2007-02-26 at Cambrian House	http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=5065262745272895737
Videos	YouTube	http://www.youtube.com
Videos	Christine Borgman - lead investigator for the Center for Embedded Networked Systems (CENS) at the National Science Foundation (NSF) and chaired the NSF's Task Force on Cyberlearning. - Columbia University Libraries - Scholarly Communications Program	http://scholcomm.columbia.edu/scholarship-digital-age-information-infrastructure-and-i

Videos	CouchSurfing: What one website reveals about the future of the net Daniel Hoffer, Founder and Chairman of CouchSurfing, is peppered with questions by Berkman Faculty Co-Director and Professor of Law Jonathan Zittrain, along with a provocative audience	http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/mediaberkman/2009/04/08/couchsurfing-what-one-website-reveals-about-the-future-of-the-net/
Videos	Clay Shirky - Discusses his book, Here Comes Everybody, spoke at Harvard Law School	http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/mediaberkman/?s=shirky
Videos	Stephen Wolfram discusses Wolfram Alpha: Computational Knowledge Engine	http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/mediaberkman/2009/04/29/stephen-wolfram-discusses-wolframalpha-computational-knowledge-engine/
Wikis	Wetpaint	http://www.wetpaint.com

IDEAS

Students sharing Power Points

Student combined exam key

Student Blogs

Student groups papers on Wiki

Student videos on YouTube

Student make map of subject and use photos on flickr, video on youtube, padcasts and audio to connect map to topics

Make a video to place subject in perspective – fly in from outerspace.

Make video to summarize topic

Use cell phones

Use video conferencing

Use second life

Use skype

MUOnline/WebCT/Blackboard features

Tools

Organizational Tools * Calendar * Search * Syllabus	Communication Tools * Announcements * Chat * Discussions * Mail * Roster * Who's Online	Student Learning Activities * Assessments * Assignments * Goals	Content Tools * Learning Modules * Local Content * Media Library * SCORM * Web Links	Student Tools * My Files * My Grades * My Progress * Notes
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