

A critique of Web 2.0 in formal education

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Overview

- The call for change
- Objections:
 - The role of formal education
 - The nature of education systems
 - Epistemological assumptions
 - The Net Gen: What do we know?
 - The genre of online discourse
- Making use of Web 2.0 in formal education

Wiley, 2006 (1)

- “Students are inside a classroom (tethered to a place), using textbooks and handouts (printed materials), they... pay tuition... (the experience is closed), talking... or working with others... is generally discouraged (each student is isolated though surrounded by peers), each student receives exactly the same instruction... (the information presented is generic), and students... do not participate in the teaching process (they are consumers).”

Call for change

Wiley, 2006 (2)

- “From [anywhere] a student connects to the Internet using her laptop (she is mobile), uses Google to find a relevant web page... While... she chats with [other friends by phone and IM who]... assist in her search (she is connected to other people), she follows links... exploring related information (the content is connected to other content), she quickly finds exactly the information she needs, ignoring irrelevant material (she gets what is important to her personally), and she shares her find with her friends by phone and IM (she participates in the teaching process).”

Call for change

Barnes & Tynan (2008)

The latest generation of undergraduates already live in a Web 2.0 world... To attract and retain these students, universities will need to rethink their operations. New social technologies mean that universities have the chance to create a new generation of student-centred learning environments, to realize the idea of a University 2.0

Call for change

The contrast

Objectionable, '1.0'	Desirable, '2.0'
Formal	Informal
Closed	Open
Didactic	Connectivist
'Sage on stage'	'Guide on side'
Consumption	Creation
Immigrants	Natives
Teaching	Learning
'Just in case' learning	'Just in time' learning
Curriculum-driven	Life as curriculum

Call for change

Daanen & Facer, 2007

- The ability to record and retrieve all experiences requires a debate on the purpose and function of education: what is its goal when all information – from facts, to skills advice – is constantly accessible?

Call for change

The role of formal education

- Curriculum to provide a *breadth* of knowledge and minimum degrees of literacy
- Certification of achievement
- Confirmed links between educational achievement and contribution to society
- Definite exposure to social and sporting opportunities
- The right to learn what is not of interest

Objections

The nature of education systems

- Rittel & Weber, 1973:
- “...there is nothing like the undisputable public good; there is no objective definition of equity; policies that respond to social problems cannot be meaningfully correct or false; and it makes no sense to talk about ‘optimal solutions’ to social problems unless severe qualifications are imposed first.”

Objections

Epistemological assumptions I

- What does it mean to ‘learn’ and ‘know’?
- Behaviourism, cognitivism, social constructivism... *connectivism*?
- Connectivism (Siemens, 2004, 2006): Learning takes place *across a network* rather than *within an individual*; knowing *where* and knowing *who*
 - Built on a foundation of knowing *what and how*
 - The *professional* assumption
 - The importance of ‘necktop knowledge’

Objections

Epistemological assumptions II

- I can access, therefore I know?
- ‘Dumbing us down’ – Bauerlein, 2008
- Power-browsing vs immersion
- ‘Wisdom of the crowd’: popular vs meaningful? – Jeanneney, 2007
- Facts vs concepts; keywords vs context
- Mash-ups vs meta-themes
- Homophily and the narrowing of horizons
- Intelligence: multi-faceted

Objections

The Net Gen: What we know

- Students are *not* demanding Education 2.0
- “...traditional methods of teacher/pupil learning seem neither hierarchical nor outmoded to them. They see personal, face to face interaction as the backbone of their learning” (JISC, 2007)
- Students use their Web 2.0 connections to *complement* their formal education

Objections

The genre of online discourse

- Blogs: 300 to 400 words, read in 60 to 90 seconds
- Wikis: content more important than style
- Comments: quips vs reasoned discourse
- Facebook: an academic seminar?
- Does Education 2.0 sacrifice depth for reach, idolize convenience over quality, mistake connection for knowledge?

Objections

Conclusion: Web 2.0 in context

- Slow waters run deep
 - Reflective, deep-learning approaches
 - 'Slow pedagogy' – Narayanan, 2007
- Subject-centred conversation
 - NOT teacher vs student-centred; subject centred!
 - Exploration and conversation
- The pedagogy of paradox
 - There are no easy answers
 - Embrace the tension!

Making Ed 2.0 work

To close: Reality in education

Objectionable, '1.0'	REALITY	Desirable, '2.0'
Formal	DYNAMIC TENSION "The broken middle"	Informal
Closed		Open
Didactic		Connectivist
'Sage on stage'		'Guide on side'
Consumption		Creation
Immigrants		Natives
Teaching		Learning
'Just in case' learning		'Just in time' learning
Curriculum-driven		Life as curriculum

Making Ed 2.0 work

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