Chapter 19
Applying Web 2.0 Technologies to Traditional Teaching

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ABSTRACT

Through out the years, teaching has evolved with each passing generation and adapted to the new technologies and new ways of instructing as the latest research is published. For example, once typing was taught with manual typewriters, then electric typewriters. Now, the courses are called keyboarding and they are taught on computers. Currently, the teaching platform is evolving into a virtual world with collaborative, interactive web technologies. Addressing teaching from a learner-centered approach, this chapter will discuss the evolution of teaching as new generations of adults enter the learning environment and examine a case study of one instructor's journey in incorporating new Web 2.0 technologies into courses.

INTRODUCTION

When thinking of traditional teaching, the image might be a classroom with neat rows of desks, a white board, a screen, and a podium or stand for an instructor to lay his/her materials. In this image of traditional teaching, the instructor might lecture and the students quietly take notes and raise their hands if they have a question. However, for this chapter, the image of a traditional classroom needs to be modified slightly. In this traditional classroom, the tables and chairs are set up in a U-shape, the instructor takes on the role of guide, and the adult students participate in lively discussions and group activities. What do these two images have in common? If you think about the most core use of a classroom, it is to facilitate and share knowledge between two entities, typically teachers and students.

Similarly, what is the function of the Web 2.0 technologies? Web 2.0 technologies have changed the way knowledge is created and shared (Funk, 2009). "The real significance of …Web 2.0 technologies is the way in which they organize people

and activities, not simply the way in which they create and distribute information" (Staley, 2009, p. 38). Collaboration within the classroom has been the educational movement over the past 20 years. The Web 2.0 technologies hallmark is their collaboration capabilities across time and space. For today's instructor how is teaching in the classroom different or similar to teaching via Web 2.0 technologies?

What is an instructor to do? First, examine the learning created by both face-to-face classrooms and online Web 2.0 technologies. Second, think about what is the best means to accomplish the learning objectives in the time period given for the course. In all courses, there is the content, the environment, the students and how they learn (using their experience, discussion, and collaboration), and the development of higher cognitive skills (i.e., critical thinking). What is the best tool or activity to use to accomplish the learning objective with this population? Third, look at the student population. Who are the students? What generation do they represent? Are they Millennials or the Net Generation, GenXers, or Baby Boomers? We know that all three approach technology in different ways. The Millennials "have lived their entire lives surrounded and defined by information, technology, sophisticated expectations, and immediate feedback" (Salkowitz, 2008, pp. 18-19), and have been defined as digital natives (Prensky, 2001). Many of the GenXers and Baby Boomers have been defined as digital immigrants. Digital immigrants have adopted aspects of the new technology, because the world has changed around them. The technical world is foreign and new which means they are in the process of learning a new language (Prensky, 2001). Learners from each generational cohort approach learning slightly different.

Back to the question: What are instructors to do? To answer that question, the author must share her own bias. As each instructor brings his/her philosophy of education to the classroom, so this author brings her philosophy of education to this chapter. One belief held firmly by the author is that teaching should be learner-centered. Who are the learners? What is the best means to help them learn this content, develop critical thinking skills, and prepare them for their own future endeavors? These two key questions focus the development of each course. Therefore, this instructor believes that 'traditional' teaching is always evolving. Traditional teaching changes with the student population being engaged and the tools available. For instance, with a computer available, there is no need for typing on a manual typewriter. For that reason, this chapter will discuss the evolution of teaching as new generations enter the learning environment and examine a case study of one instructor's journey in incorporating new Web 2.0 technologies into courses.

BACKGROUND

The classroom for the adult learner has evolved over the past 30 years. In the 1970s, Paulo Friere (1994) was writing about the need to move away from the "banking approach" to education. The instructor would simply pour the knowledge from their head into the students' heads. There was no discussion or incorporation of the students' experiences or previous knowledge. The student was just a passive partner in the event of learning. Friere (1994) believed the learning should instead involve the learners and engage the learners in what they wanted to learn or needed to learn. For him, the learning must resonate with the learners' culture, not the instructor's.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Malcolm Knowles (1980) arrived at some assumptions about teaching adults. He believed that adults were self-directed learners; seeking out the information that they wanted to learn. Another assumption was that adults are self-motivated; they do not need the external motivations present in a classroom with

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