

The title of my workshop is Collaborate, Connect, and Create. It is intended for K-12 educators who are looking to enhance their instruction to see the possible affordances various Web 2.0 tools can offer or educators can use the Web 2.0 tools to expand their professional knowledge and Personal Learning Network (PLN). Greenhow, Robelia, & Hughes (2009) suggest that Web 2.0 characteristics when used in school and nonschool contexts can support the development of learners' competencies that are valued in education today. According to Zhang, (2009) the Web can help by supporting teacher learning and innovation through learning communities. This is the nature of a Personal Learning Network (PLN). At this time, such learning communities have not shown great signs of success, "yet there is incredible potential for online learning communities and the need to understand better their design, use, impact, and scaling up. Clearly, teachers are exploring these tools, but research needs to establish how they are adopted, the extent to which they are used and affect learning" (Greenhow et al. 2009 p.281). Therefore, K-12 educators would benefit from taking Collaborate, Connect, and Create.

So why choose to explore this topic? There has been a booming emergence of Web 2.0 tools today. K-12 teachers justifiably need to be a part of learning how to design and develop Web-based read-write environments in order to serve their students the most effectively. Web 2.0 technologies offer engaged learning opportunities which are grounded in social constructivist theories. Social constructivist learning is socially and culturally influenced; simply put, the community affects the way learners see the world. Web 2.0 is based upon the idea of collaboration, sharing, the exchange of ideas and knowledge within a community. Web 2.0 allows learners to contribute and share their ideas. Drexler, Baralt & Dawson (2008) tell, "This next generation Web offers unique opportunities for educational application in inquiry practice, collaboration, communication and individual expression, and literacy. These skills are important for students to acquire, so the more teachers that can be empowered by Web 2.0, the better. Web 2.0 is based upon social constructivist tenets. "According to social constructivism, meaning is culturally and socially influenced; the community around us affects the way we see the world. Today's social constructivists advocate for learning environments that are active, constructive, intentional, and cooperative, with students tending to work on performance-based activities such as collaborative problem-solving" (Cifuentes, Sharp, Bulu, Benz, & Stough, 2009 p.381). There is a lag between new technologies and technologies used in schools. This training serves the purpose to bridge the gap between technology and technology in schools.

Another theoretical reason for teaching Web 2.0 and incorporating it into educational settings is that students are already using these technologies. Dohn (2009) states "since students engage voluntarily in Web 2.0-mediated communication in their spare time, employing these same communication practices in the service of learning ought to help them enter the learning practices of the university, both in respect of their motivation and of the

skills required of them” (Dohn, 2009 p.112).

With new demands placed on learners that did not exist before, students are learning and constructing knowledge differently. This training workshop offers educators an overview of Web 2.0 and ways to incorporate it into curriculum and help students. The training can also help educators enhance a Personal Learning Network (PLN).

References

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