Re-Imagining Dewey for the 21st Century

Learning in/for the Digital Age where engagement matters even more

Hmmm, perhaps we need to rethink what we need to learn, how we actually learn.

A 21st Century Challenge: preparing students for a world of constant change!

leveraging how the net-generation thinks, works, learns, socializes – might social media also be our friend?
Cartesian View of Learning

Knowledge as substance

And pedagogy as knowledge transfer

If we think of learning like this... change will be resisted

"The delivery model: I teach - you learn"

"Cultivate the neat rows of disciplinary knowledge"
The Social View of Learning

we participate
therefore we are

understanding is socially constructed

Suggesting we view learning more like this

“We learn in and through our interactions with others and the world”
Nothing Beats Collaborative Study Groups – especially around homework & exam preparation. The social construction of understanding is real.

And this works virtually as well! as if together

21st Century Study Group

In their rooms but all connected via IM, ichat, SL,…
Why can’t we turn everyone into being both a learner & a teacher?

Nothing clarifies ideas better than explaining them to others.

And in social networks across communities/friends

Blogs – Facebook – MySpace – SecondLife, …

Now study groups or just plain bull sessions can naturally extend to peer groups galore inside and outside of school.
Beyond textbook learning:

learning-about ===> learning-to-be

Explicit

Learning about

Tacit

Learning to be

dimensions of knowledge

(Michael Polanyi)

Reversing the Flow

Learning-about

Explicit

Learning-to-be

Tacit

Productive Inquiry: I get stuck, need to know more.

Learning on demand
So what kind of learning is in tune with the net-gen and Dewey?
Life in the Digital Age –
A culture of participation:
Building, Tinkering, Remixing & Sharing

Creating meaning by what I produce
and others build on – a remix, open source culture.

Mix, Remix & Mashup
creative tinkering & the play of imagination

But it can also be ‘creative reading’ like in fandom – fans filling in the back story in highly imaginative ways.

Ah, creating meaning by integrating their imagination with that of the ‘author’ in remix.
Tinkering as a learning platform and its death and rebirth as remix, mashups, etc

Noun 1. tinker - a person who enjoys fixing and experimenting with machines and their parts.

tinkerer as experimenter: a person who enjoys testing innovative ideas;
“she was an experimenter in new forms of poetry”

The Art and Expressiveness of Remix

Matrix Reloaded Trailer
Remix of Matrix using Naruto anime series
Genres of Participation Afforded by New Media

DML: Mimi Ito, Connie Yowell, …

**Friendship Driven** (hanging out)
- MySpace
- Facebook
- Twitter
- SMS
- Second life
- Neo-pets
- Pokémon

**Interest driven**
- messing around
- geeking out

**Competencies**
- Math
- Literacy
- Science
- Social Studies
- Sciences
- Critical inquiry
- Collaboration
- Problem solving
- Peer-learning
- Creativity
- Imagination

SPECTATE, PERFORM
PRACTICE
LEVEL UP

YouMedia
A Place where Youth can Hang Out, Mess Around & Geek Out

The Long Tail in Learning: leveraging the vast resources on the net

Moving beyond limited “shelf space” and local communities of practice

Supporting the rise of an ecology of learning/doing niches

Ah, I am passionate about this niche topic. I want to learn/do more!
**MicroObservatory Network**  
(Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics)  
5 self-contained, weatherized reflecting telescopes with CCDs deployed around the world.

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**Lagoon Nebula.**

*Dimock Community Center*

dimension, for example, is 110 light-years in that if you were traveling at the speed of light, it would take some 110 years to travel from one side of the galaxy to the other.

Along with the Orion nebula, the Lagoon is a diffuse nebula faintly visible to the naked eye in the...
The Rise of the Pro – Amateur Class

amateur __________________________ professional
from Latin – amator : lover

Dobsonian 10" f/4.9

+ Internet
  Blogs
  BBSs
  Yahoo groups
  Data bases

PC164C ccd camera

Niche communities of co-creation, learning and sharing:
  passion-based learning

Learning as Curation/Narration
story telling & play lists hits the galaxies
Bugscope
virtual laboratory accessed via the net by kids
educating future scientists by providing
access to virtual instrumentation

Tokay Geckos

Virtual Scanning Electron Microscope

Tokay Gecko
A key thrust here is a sense of doing history as an act of uncovering... “ask what got uncovered rather than what got covered”
Ok, jsb – remix, user generated content, blogs and co-creation but where is there any guarantee of quality and a seat of authority??

Authority vs. Timeliness (in a rapidly evolving world)

But that finesses the question of quality.

Key: new reading practices are called for!
Learning Network

- Museums
- Libraries
- After-School
- Schools
- Home
- Online

Connie Yowell
A Blended Epistemology

Homo Sapiens
(hu)man as knower
Tools as instrumental

Homo Faber
(hu)man as maker
Tools as productive inquiry

knowing

Homo Sapiens
man as knower
(knowledge)

Homo Faber
man as maker
(objects)

tinkering
(physical & abstract)
Casual vs. Deep Tinkering

Casual Tinkering – a form of messing around

Deep Tinkering
- know how/what can be pushed around, rearranged, repurposed, modified
- intimate familiarity with material at hand
- embodied immersion
- instinctual, not accidental
- deeply situated

Deep tinkering ==> indwelling ==> constructing the tacit dimension

Deep Tinkering
- developing a gut ‘feeling’ for systems
- know how/what can be pushed around, rearranged, repurposed, modified
- developing an intimate familiarity with material at hand
- embodied immersion
- developing an instinct
- deeply situated
- (attending from vs. attending to)

Deep tinkering ==> indwelling ==> constructing the tacit dimension
Extending the Blended Epistemology

\textit{homo sapiens} \quad \textit{homo faber}

\textbf{knowing} \quad \textbf{making}

\textbf{playing}

\textit{homo ludens}

\textbf{homo ludens}

\textbf{a highly nuanced concept of play}

\begin{itemize}
  \item as in freedom to fail, fail and fail again and then get it right: think of extreme sports…
  \item as play of imagination – poetry
  \item as in an epiphany – suddenly falling in place as in solving a riddle.
\end{itemize}

Learning as “riddles” leading to a reframing or registering the world
A Simple Reframing

A black dog is sleeping in the middle of a black road that has no streetlights and there is no moon.
A car coming down the road with its lights off steers around the dog.
How did the driver know the dog was there?

The Learning Challenge for 21st Century

In a world where the infrastructure continues to advance exponentially
We need to shift from learning-to-be to learning-to-become over and over again.
And to being able to regrind our conceptual lenses.
The New Golden Triangle

imagination

a sense of awe

intuition

inspiration

supported by

homo sapiens + homo farber + homo ludens

When recreation becomes an act of re-creation/remix & productive inquiry

Culture of Learning
a culture that thrives on participatory life long learning and perhaps the ultimate sustainability model.
Thank You

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