DEPARTMENTS

Resources on the Net:
Library Collaboration

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Building Virtual Communities of Learners

Greene, H.C. (2005, Winter).Creating connections: A pilot study on an online community of learners. *Journal of Interactive Online Learning* 3(3). Retrieved
September 30, 2007, from http://www.ncolr.org/jiol/issues/PDF/3.3.3.pdf

Greene presents the findings from a pilot study that examined the contributions of chat discussions and threaded discussion lists to support distributed learning communities in an educational psychology course for preservice teachers. An online learning community offers great advantages for preservice teacher training programmes "as it offers the highest of potential for distributed learning, with access to experienced teachers, administrators, university faculty, and a virtually endless list of possibilities for participants in such a program."

Haythornthwaite, C., Bruce, B. C., Andrews, R., Kazmer, M. M., Montague, R., & Preston, C. (2007, August). Theories and models of and for online learning. *First Monday* 12(8). Retrieved October 12, 2007, from http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue12_8/haythorn/index.html

This article presents six theoretical perspectives on new teaching and learning practices
that have recently emerged in online learning. Of particular interest is Kazmer's concept of community-embedded learning and the social environments that make this type of learning possible. Community-embedded learners are characterized as those who are "embedded in work as well as social communities, often employed in jobs that are related to the academic degree they are earning online. When students come together online to learn, they bring with them and share each remote workplace. As each workplace becomes a part of the learning community, there is also the potential for it to be shaped by that community. Students not only bring their workplace into the online class, but also bring what they learn in their courses into the community that they know well and that knows them." Kazmer also identifies five major transfers of knowledge that occur within community-embedded learning.

Shea, P., Li, C. S., Swan, K., & Pickett, A. (2005, December). Developing learning community in online asynchronous college courses: The role of teaching presence. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning*

Networks 9 (4). Retrieved October 12, 2007, from http://www.sloan-c.org/publications/jaln/v9n4/v9n4_shea.asp

The focus of this study is the relationship between online learning communities and teaching presence. Previous research revealed "the critical role that community can play in building and sustaining productive learning and that teaching presence, defined as the core roles of the online instructor, is among the most promising mechanism for developing online learning community." The authors support this claim by presenting the results of a multi-institutional study of 2036 students from thirty-two State University of New York colleges. Results indicate that there is "a significant link between students' sense of learning community and their recognition of effective instructional design and directed facilitation on the part of their course instructors."

Swan, K. (2005). A constructivist model for thinking about learning online. In J. Bourne & J. C. Moore (Eds.) *Elements of Quality Online Education: Engaging Communities*. Needham, MA: Sloan-C. Retrieved October 12, 2007 from
http://www.kent.edu/rcet/Publications/upload/constructivist%20theory.pdf

Swan provides an overview of constructivist learning theory and its potential application in designing online learning networks that are "learner centered, knowledge centered, assessment centered, and community centered." Swan also presents a constructivist model for thinking about online learning, exploring social contexts developed in online environments. The proposed model identifies the impact that "particular kinds of online interfaces, communication tools, and media mixes have on specific social interactions online, and so, the social construction of knowledge in online courses. Of particular interest may be the ways in which online communication tools support the external and collaborative construction of knowledge and how this affects learning."

Online Discussion Groups and Communities of Learners

Haythornthwaite, C., Kazmer, M. M., & Robins, J. (2000, September). Community development among distance learners: temporal and technological dimensions. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communications*. 6(1). Retrieved September 30, 2007, from
http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol6/issue1/haythornthwaite.html

This research study considers the possibility of maintaining online communities in the context of a distance learning environment. Interviews were conducted over a one year period with seventeen students enrolled in a distance option for the Master's degree in Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Successes and failures of using chat and online discussion for community building were recorded. A number of recommendations were offered for further research, including "promoting initial bonding, monitoring and supporting continued interaction and participation, and providing multiple means of communication to support the need to engage in work and social interaction, both publicly and privately." The authors conclude that "belonging to a community brings benefits to the individuals and to the program, and supports efforts by educators who strive to provide such a community for their distance learners."

Matusov, E., Hayes, R., & Pluta, M. J. (2005). Using discussion webs to develop an academic community of learners. *Educational Technology & Society* 8(2). Retrieved October 12, 2007, from
www.ifets.info/journals/8_2/3.pdf

This report investigated the instructional contributions of online group discussions. The study sought to determine whether a group discussion web in a university class of preservice teachers contributed to the development of a community of learners. A total of 1124 student and instructor web postings were analyzed. Discussion webs are not of themselves essential to the development of a community of

learners. Further investigation is still necessary but it was discovered that discussion webs can be used to "supplement other ways of communication and instruction, providing additional channels of comfort for some students, and thus facilitating pedagogical innovations."

Murphy, E., Laferrière, T. (2005, April). Identifying and facilitating group-development processes in virtual communities of teacher-learners. *International Journal of Instructional Technology & Distant Learning* 2(4). Retrieved October 12, 2007, from http://www.itdl.org/Journal/Apr_05/article03.htm

Murphy and Laferrière present a case study of teachers participating in a virtual learning community. They discovered that there are varying degrees of trust and mistrust in asynchronous learning environments. The level of trust has a major impact on learners' abilities to collaborate effectively in virtual communities. The authors use group development theory to measure the development of relationships through online facilitation and web discussion. It was demonstrated that there exist "processes at work in groups which can be monitored and, it is expected, facilitated with the aim of orienting the group towards levels of trust and open communication that lead to shared goals and understandings."

Redesigning Libraries for Communities of Learners

Jamieson, P. (2005). Positioning the university library in the new learning environment. *Planning for Higher Education. 34*(1). Retrieved October 12, 2007, from http://www1.scup.org/PHE/FMPro?-db=PubItems.fp5&-lay=ART&-format=read_full.htm&-error=error.htm&ID_pub=PUB-D4lJghnUalOm1ZOXJ&t_Pub_PgNum=5&-SortField=t_Pub_PgNum&-Find

This article describes an initiative at Australia's largest university "to reinvigorate the role of the central library and to make it more pedagogically relevant through the provision of spaces designed to facilitate the creation of communities of learners." An annex was designed inside the central library and a flexible learning environment that encouraged greater interaction and collaboration amongst students was allowed to flourish. Survey data revealed that "the students perceived the environment as one where the range and quality of facilities, together with the level of comfort they experienced, created an environment that invited and sustained their diverse range of study approaches, from individual effort to collaboration within groups." This positive response encouraged the creation of two additional flexible learning environments in the central library: a café area and a lounge space.

Joint-Use Libraries

Bundy, A. (2003). Joint-use libraries – the ultimate form of cooperation. In G. McCabe & J. Kennedy (Eds.) *Planning the modern public library building*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited. Retrieved October 15, 2007 from http://www.library.unisa.edu.au/about/papers/jointuse.pdf

Bundy provides an Australian perspective to joint-use libraries. Australia is currently the world leader in joint-use libraries, with over 120 participating institutions. He focuses his attention on the most common type of combined library, the school housed public library or school community library. Bundy sees joint-use as a manifestation of cooperation, a core value of libraries and librarians worldwide, although currently it is not readily initiated or promoted in the library profession.

Fitzgibbons, S. (2000). School and public library relationships: Essential ingredients in implementing educational reforms and improving student learning. *School Library Media Research, 3.* Retrieved October 15, 2007, from http://www.ala.org/ala/aasl/aaslpubsandjournals/slmrb/slmrcontents/volume32000/relationships.cfm

This paper includes a summary of the research literature on joint-use school library media centers and public libraries. Both successful cooperative efforts and failed efforts are documented. The author explores a formula for building and maintaining successful cooperative relationships between public libraries and school library media centers in support of educational reforms and improving student learning. Successful collaborations encompass "a shared vision and common goals; a process of formal planning that involves the establishment of joint policies and procedures; commitment on the part of administrators, decision makers, staff, and the general public; active communication and interaction; and adequate funding and staffing that allows innovation and risktaking."

Georgia Public Library Service. (2007, June).*Joint-use libraries: A bibliography*. Atlanta,GA: University System of Georgia. Retrieved on October 15, 2007, from http://www.georgialibraries.org/lib/collection/jointuselibraries.pdf

This extensive bibliography of current, internationally published books, book chapters, journal articles, government reports and web sites on joint-use libraries, was compiled by the staff of Collection Development & Reference Support, Georgia Public Library Service.

Library Collaborations

AASL/ALSC/YALSA Joint Task Force on School/Public Library Partnerships. (n.d.). *School/Public Library Cooperative Activities*. Retrieved October 15, 2007, from http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/alscresources/forlibrarians/SchoolPLCoopProgs.htm

This site is a clearinghouse of information about school library and public library collaborative activities. It lists local and national models of cooperative, collaborative or partnership programs between elementary, middle or high schools and local public libraries. Excluded from the listings are items about joint-use libraries and items about cooperation between libraries and other agencies and age groups.

McNicol, S., Matthews, G., Kane, D., Lancaster, K., Thebridge, S. & Dalton, P. (2002, November). *Collaboration between libraries and education: supporting the learner*. Centre for Information Research, University of Central England. Retrieved October 12, 2007, from http://www.mla.gov.uk/resources/assets//I/id364rep_pdf_6808.pdf

The aim of this study was to investigate the impact of existing collaborative arrangements between libraries in the United Kingdom. Primary focus was on collaborative projects between public libraries and academic libraries. One of the tangible benefits of collaboration is increased access to resources. However, research indicates that these collaborative ventures are not supporting the real needs of the learner, and their impact on the learner is minimal. Before future collaborative projects are implemented, institutions must first "develop an in-depth understanding of the needs of their learners and to consider the ways in which collaboration with other institutions can help to meet these needs more effectively."

Compiler's note: Text that is enclosed within quotations marks has been taken directly from the source document.

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