

Appendix A

FIRST REFLECTION PROMPTS FOR THE CROSSROADS FACULTY RESEARCH AND STUDY PROJECT

Date: Fri, 14 Feb 1997 11:53:18

From: Randall Bass <bassr@gusun.georgetown.edu>

To: Crossroads Faculty Research and Study Project

Subject: INITIAL JOURNAL ENTRY: INTENTIONS

One of the ideas behind the journal project is to approach the use of technology in the classroom, as much as possible, as a research problem. In any research problem, there are intentions about what is to be accomplished or investigated. In this initial journal entry, could you briefly outline the basics of your use of technology in the classroom for this semester.

Initial Journal Entry:

1. What courses will you be focusing on in the journal project this semester?
Title, level, subject?
2. What technologies are you using this semester?
3. What pedagogical problems are you hoping to solve, in part, through the use of technology? That is, what are you hoping to do better than you're doing now by integrating information technologies?
4. Are there other non-technology components of the course(s) that are new to you, that are part of the ecology of the course overall?
5. How will you know if something positive is happening? (This is something we can work through together as a group, of course). Do you have any plans now to do any kind of special assessment or evaluation on this component of the course?

SECOND REFLECTION PROMPTS FOR THE CROSSROADS FACULTY RESEARCH AND STUDY PROJECT

Date: Thu, 26 Jun 1997 21:53:18

From: Randall Bass <bassr@gusun.georgetown.edu>

To: Crossroads Faculty Research and Study Project

Subject: CALL FOR SECOND REFLECTIONS

It is time to think about the next stage of reflection and synthesis.

As I noted at the beginning of the project, we're trying to encourage each of you to think

WORKS AND DAYS 31/32, Vol. 16, Nos. 1&2, 1998

of your use of technology in teaching as a “research problem”; that is, for all us, any use of technology in teaching is still a working “hypothesis” that certain things might happen in certain contexts. In this sense, we’re following in this project a basic research model of:

- “Intentions” (we’re trying something, based on assumptions)
- “Consequences” (something is going to happen when we try)
- “Meaning” (whatever happens will have some significance)

At the beginning of the semester, all of you submitted what we called the “first journal entry.” In essence, this was a statement of your “Intentions” for integrating one or more technologies into your teaching. What we would like to get from each of you by the end of June is a second reflection that completes the first: adding to your statement of intentions, we would like you to reflect on: what the consequences were, and what meaning we might make of it so far.

We would like to make these reflections “public” in that we’d like to mount them in a publicly accessible part of the [World Wide Web] site; but, we also intend them to be tentative, in-process reflections of the project. (If you feel strongly about them not being public, let us know).

This is what we’d like by the beginning of July:

(I) For each of you to reread your “first entry” that you wrote at the beginning and be sure that you’re okay with us mounting it [online] as the first part of the reflection (feel free to revise it a little if you like).

(II) Write an end of semester reflection that addresses the following questions:

1. In what ways did you incorporate technology into your course(s)? Was it as you expected? More, less?
2. What was the single most “successful” integration of technology that you made? What made it successful? What conditions would be necessary to repeat the success?
3. What was the biggest surprise or disappointment that you had in using technology this semester? What advice would be useful to someone introducing technology into their teaching?
4. How did the use of technology affect the overall ecology of the course? What choices had to be made about coverage, for example? Did it change the dynamic between you and your students in any way? Did it change the overall balance of material and process?
5. Reflect on what you learned this semester in terms of disciplinary knowledge. What critical, methodological, or theoretical assumptions about your discipline were challenged by the transformative power of technology? What conclusions (if any) can you draw about the link between your use of technology and your particular subject matter or teaching style? How will your experience with technology influence what you consider as the principle “problems” of your field?

WORKING SYNTHESIS I: FIVE AREAS OF APPLICATION AND INTEGRATION

Date: Sun, 16 Mar 1997 21:15:45

From: Randall Bass <bassr@gusun.georgetown.edu>

To: Crossroads Faculty Research and Study Project

Subject: WORKING SYNTHESIS I

Here's an attempt at a working synthesis of the conversation so far. The implications of the conversation are much bigger than my synthesis here. But I'm trying to identify and simplify a common vocabulary of ideas and applications.

Having read through all of the journal entries we've received so far, as well as the subsequent posts, I've tried to organize the many ways that people are engaging information technologies in their courses into a few primary categories. It seems important to have a focused number of areas that we're talking about (even if they are overlapping and fluid). Eventually, I hope that one of the outcomes of the project will be to produce some suggestions for "good practice" that apply to each of the primary areas.

The five areas (explained more fully below) are:

1. Using Online Discussion Tools for Engaging Student Learning
2. Using the Web and Internet for Research Purposes
3. Using the World Wide Web as a Platform for Staging a Course
4. Using Presentation Tools for Rendering Multiple media in Hypermedia
5. Using tools for Constructive Learning: Student Authoring of Multimedia, Hypermedia, and Hypertext

So, let's try these on for size. Let me know how they seem. Do they encompass all of your activities? Can we work with them as categories, within which we might develop "genres" of use, guidelines for application, possible contexts and scenarios for impact on the field?

General Goals for Integrating Technology

Naturally, there are certain principles and goals that cut across two or more of the areas. These goals are generally shared with most disciplines and are part of the common core of assumptions about the value of experimenting with interactive technologies. However, all of these came up in your initial posts and I think they bear separating out here. I see these general goals or motivators for using interactive technologies as being (at least):

- engaging students as active learners;
- leading students to be producers, not merely consumers, of texts;
- getting novice learners engaged in the same kinds of activities as "expert learners" in the field;
- expanding the boundaries of the classroom (time and space) - another tool for teaching reflexive/critical thinking; and
- improved access to resources (human resources, research materials) - facilitating collaborative learning (group and team approaches), as well as contexts for student to student learning.

Each of these goals can cut different ways and have varying levels of impact on a learn-

ing context, or even a curriculum. They also correspond to most principles of good teaching as any of us would define them, irrespective of technology. And that certainly seems right. (Reference for example the “Seven Principles of Good Practice for Undergraduate Learning,” Chickering, et. al.). They also bear on our conversation so far regarding the degree and kind of impact that interactive technologies have on teaching and learning.

Different, Better, Radical Departure?

Nothing could be more central to our inquiry than the questions that have come up about the extent and nature of the transformation taking place in technology-enhanced teaching and learning. Whether we’re doing traditional things better, or engaging in new kinds of teaching/learning altogether; whether certain technologies merely facilitate conventional information delivery or whether other kinds of technology usage facilitates wholly transformative activities or activities “indigenous” to new media: these are what I consider “ecological” questions (to invoke a term from the first entry). What I hear in most of your posts is that no use of information technology can be deeply new or transformative except in an “ecological context,” in which the use of new media is accompanied by new approaches of other kinds, or where it catalyzes a series of other changes in teaching/learning, theory and method.

I think one of the broader goals of our project will be to identify the “affinities” (context by context) between the capabilities of information technologies and other dimensions of theory, method, and content in American Studies and related fields. The overarching question for me is this: Do new paradigms require new pedagogies? And where are those new pedagogies and paradigms served by the ways that information technologies “can” reconstruct the learning environment and make malleable (and accessible) the primary materials of the field? In what kind of contexts, under what circumstances, and through which scenarios, can the values of revised and reconstructed cultural studies (over the last 25 years) be better realized with the application of information technologies than without them?

These are long term questions of course, and the conversation so far is opening these questions up beautifully.

Five Areas of Application/Integration:

Here again are the five broad areas I hear that people are working in, along with a set of “hypotheses” about their potential benefits or enhancements. I use the term “hypotheses” because I believe that is how we should be treating each of these possible benefits, no matter how deeply each of us individually might feel about their truth. The nature of our research project is to test these hypotheses and ask how true each of them is and under what circumstances.

Again, as we move forward, and if we can agree on the categories and potential benefits, then we can slowly and collaboratively build a set of proposals about genres of use, guidelines for making the technologies work in different contexts, and lessons learned for avoiding pitfalls and overhead in adoption. Please make suggestions for augmenting and altering.

1. Using Online Discussion Tools for Engaging Student Learning

(Includes email, Web-chat, listservs, discussion groups online; or networked 'real-time' environments like the Daedalus Integrated Writing Environment, MOOs and MUDs.)

Hypotheses about benefits: Class discussion extended and reinforced through student to student learning; facilitate dialogue about class materials; provide a forum for reflection on course issues; motivate students who participate less in class; give students writing practice and practice enacting ideas about "texts" in conversation; a forum for bridging individual and group response to issues and materials. Create flexibility for students, especially commuting and adult learners; enhance (and to some extent ameliorate) larger courses by introducing a discussion intensive component not possible in the classroom itself.

2. Using the Web and Internet for Research and Reference Purposes

(Includes the Internet, World Wide Web, online library resource databases; on the Web and Internet, also includes primary resources from online archives, as well as locally downloaded "harvested" archives for teaching and learning purposes.)

Hypotheses about benefits: Enlarge and extend possible research resources for the study of culture and history; benefit in and of itself to train students how to use and access new electronic resources; another method for teaching critical thinking through questioning and identifying quality and nature of electronic resources; help teach students electronic literacy; online primary resources provide simulated "archival" environments (especially for "novice learners") enhancing teachers' abilities to assign significant learning activities with primary materials closely related to inquiry and research.

3. Using the World Wide Web as a Platform for Staging a Course

(Includes using the World Wide Web to mount syllabus and course materials; using course Web pages as focal point for an online course; using the Web for a "dynamic syllabus" where the course materials are growing and changing over the course of the semester and beyond, including the creation of simple student homepages. This area verges into #5 when students are significantly contributing with constructive projects.)

Hypotheses about benefits: Organize course materials (assignments, readings, exams, paper topics, discussion prompts, reading questions, lectures, etc); link course topics to sources on the World Wide Web or materials mounted locally; complement a syllabus and course readings with the construction of an "electronic library" providing a harvested and tailored archive of contextual materials; help make one focus of the course the teaching of HTML and web development skills; heighten student engagement with course materials by providing them a "spatial" environment through which to explore (recursively) particular course questions and themes; help demonstrate (and construct) the fluidity and relevance of course questions and themes by building electronic links to related resources and other scholars/learners.

4. Using "Presentation" Tools for Multimedia and Hypermedia

(Includes all tools that can be used for bringing together multiple media into an integrated "hypermedia" environment used for presentation purposes (as opposed to networked student learning or student authoring); these include PowerPoint or other presentation software tools; using the World Wide Web or CD-ROMs as a presentation environment;

appropriate for multimedia equipped lecture halls, use of 'smart carts', and other single station multimedia setups).

Hypotheses about benefits: Give students multiple ways of "seeing" materials; enhance the ability of teachers to make sophisticated presentations of cultural materials; enhance the ability of teachers to represent interdisciplinary connections for students; enables teachers to make more stimulating presentations of materials to facilitate class discussion; enhance (and to some extent ameliorate) large lecture format courses.

5. Using "Constructive" Tools for Student Authoring in Multimedia, Hypermedia, and Hypertext

(Includes tools for student authoring (and collaborative student/teacher authoring) in non-traditional, electronic forms: the World Wide Web, writable CD-ROM, hypermedia programs like ToolBook and HyperCard, and hypertext authoring programs like StorySpace.)

Hypotheses about benefits: Help make students active learners by engaging them in constructive projects that both model work of expert learners and leave a meaningful legacy of the learning experience; help students connect individual learning to group learning and team learning approaches; provide multilinear, nontraditional environments for students to map connections across course content, better approximating interdisciplinary paradigms; enhance student retention of materials by providing engaging projects that combine creativity with disciplinary form and rigor.

A Final Note:

There are a couple of areas missing here that are becoming increasingly common to technology enhanced work in the humanities. One includes the whole gamut of technologies that are being used by teaching of composition and writing for peer editing, collaborative critique, and process writing pedagogies. (These include technologies such as Norton Connect, Daedalus [of which the DIWE component was mentioned above], CommonSpace, and so forth.). The second area includes the more elaborate distance learning technologies, such as two-way interactive video teleconferencing, one-way video/two-way audio teleconferencing, video tape, cable TV, and other methods for distance delivery of education. Neither of these areas plays a big role in the materials exchanged in the Research Project so far. But I mention them because I think they will eventually serve to round out the picture we're compiling above. If there is an additional category or expansion of present ones that should be adjusted to accommodate these technologies, I'd be interested in hearing from people.

WORKING SYNTHESIS II: LEARNING AND TECHNOLOGY: SIX CONNECTIONS

Date: Mon, 1 Sep 1997 16:25:44
 From: Randall Bass <bassr@gusun.georgetown.edu>
 To: Crossroads Faculty Research and Study Project
 Subject: WORKING SYNTHESIS II

Below I've attached Working Synthesis II, an attempt to capture the collective experience of the faculty in the project in a different form from Working Synthesis I. In the earlier working synthesis, I proposed five areas of application of information technologies and their respective "benefits" in teaching and learning situations. In Working Synthesis II, I'm trying to shift the proportion of emphasis from the technologies and their applications to the kinds of learning that can be well served by particular technologies.

I have tried to rework the tenets of what we might call "new media pedagogy" to conform to the experience of faculty in this project. Based on all that I've seen and heard from faculty using new media, and what I read in the reflections in this project so far, I suggest that there are six kinds of learning (or learning goals) that new media, in the right context, serve well:

Distributive Learning

By distributive learning, I mean several things [it's possible this is more than one category]. First, whether through electronic mail, discussion lists, or searchable electronic resources tailored for guided inquiry, information technologies can facilitate the distribution of the responsibility for making knowledge among the students in a particular class, shifting a teacher-centered environment to a more learner-centered one. So, distributive learning means both "active" and "collaborative" learning. Distributive learning also implies that new multimedia technologies can provide students multiple ways to access and understand material, thereby distributing the sources for cultural knowledge more diversely than before. The two meanings seem closely related because the goal of "multiple points of access" to materials seems complementary to the goal of each student taking a more active role in constructing knowledge in the classroom.

Authentic Tasks and Complex Inquiry

Simulated archives of electronic primary materials (on both the World Wide Web and CD-ROM) provide new ways of enabling novice learners to engage in authentic research tasks and complex inquiry assignments that would either be impractical or impossible without the vast storage and retrieval capabilities of information technologies. The ability to arrange and represent complex ideas in multiple ways in electronic environments further sets the stage for the creation of inquiry assignments that approach the level of complex thinking that faculty often seek.

Dialogic Learning

Interactive technologies, such as email, electronic discussion lists, and teleconferencing, provide new spaces for student conversation and dialogue. Such spaces are powerful across all disciplines, of course, in providing the opportunity for students to engage with each other's ideas at their own pace and perhaps in smaller, less threatening communities than the entire class meeting face to face. The use of interactive or dialogic technologies in culture and history has the additional dimension of providing spaces for students to engage in difficult cultural issues, such as interculturalism, or to converse with students (at a distance) representing a wider diversity of viewpoints than they have in their class or on their own campus.

Constructive Learning

Faculty are increasingly finding that technology environments like hypertext authoring programs and the World Wide Web are tools for students to engage in constructive learning, building projects over time, making interdisciplinary and intellectual connections concrete through electronic linking and multimedia, and making their constructions available as real products for people to utilize.

Public Accountability

One of the most powerful benefits of using particular information technologies in teaching is the public nature of participation. Whether they are asked to write their ideas to a class electronic discussion list or asked to mount their constructive projects on the World Wide Web, students who think of their work and ideas as public tend to take their work more seriously and engage in issues more thoroughly.

Reflective and Critical Thinking

All of the kinds of learning above contribute to the complex and elusive process of teaching students to be reflective and critical thinkers. Information technologies can make a specific contribution to this process in a variety of ways: through technologies such as multimedia and hypertext packages, which present information and pose questions to students through multiple kinds of literacies and evocative juxtapositions; through technologies that are constructed to offer students multiple paths, the negotiation of which requires strategic choices in light of methodological issues; through technologies that facilitate group process, revision, and provide flexible writing spaces for both reproducing knowledge as well as reflecting on it.

In composite, I propose that information technologies can serve learning that is distributive, authentic, dialogic, constructive, public, and reflective. Of course, all of these dimension require rich contexts to be effective, and technology by itself could never be responsible for making these things work. But these are six areas of quality teaching and learning that information technologies, in culture and history, seem well adapted to serving.

[Note: There is an expanded version of these materials online at the volume's supplemental site: <http://www.georgetown.edu/crossroads/ctl/>.]