Paper 41- Pecha Kucha

Designing a social computing course through the use of social computing characteristics –the medium is the message.

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Abstract

This pecha kucha presentation reports on the experience of a social computing course with a group of graduate students enrolled in an Educational Technology program. The course was designed, using a problem-based learning approach, to involve students with each other and in the community at large, with some moments of reflection on the strengths and limitations of their actions and interactions. When the students showed up at the first course, some already knew each other from studying in the same program, but some never met each other. They were told that the first thing they would have to do is subscribe to at least ten social networking sites and to keep a journal about their foray in social media. Then, they would have to initiate a tech-stewarding project, as suggested by Wenger, White and Smith (2009). By definition, technology stewards attend to the technologies that support distributed communities. While building on their expertise of the various hot research topics related to social computing, students had to find teams to moderate one of the course seminars. Finally, they would have to model how they conceptualize learning with social media. This intimidated about thirty-five percent of the students, who decided to drop out after the first session. The seven remaining students became part of an authentic community of practice during the semester. Interestingly, some students were not that experienced with social media, but they had a strong desire to learn. While going through the assignments, they built strong ties that lived beyond the course. At the end of the course, students came to the conclusion that they had become a community of practice, without even realizing it. This presentation describes the problem identified by the professor, analyzes the content versus the impressive results of the assignments, provides directions for reflection on authentic pedagogy from the students and offers transferable lessons beyond the specific social computing course.