

Storytelling & Collaborative E-Learning

Resources for Educators

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Storytelling & Collaborative E-Learning

Definitions

Collaborative E-Learning

Constructing knowledge, negotiating meanings and/or solving problems through mutual engagement of two or more learners in a coordinated effort using Internet and electronic communications.

Storytelling

The telling of a happening or connected series of happenings, whether true or fictitious; account; narration. (Denning, 2005)

Storytelling Styles for the Collaborative Online Classroom

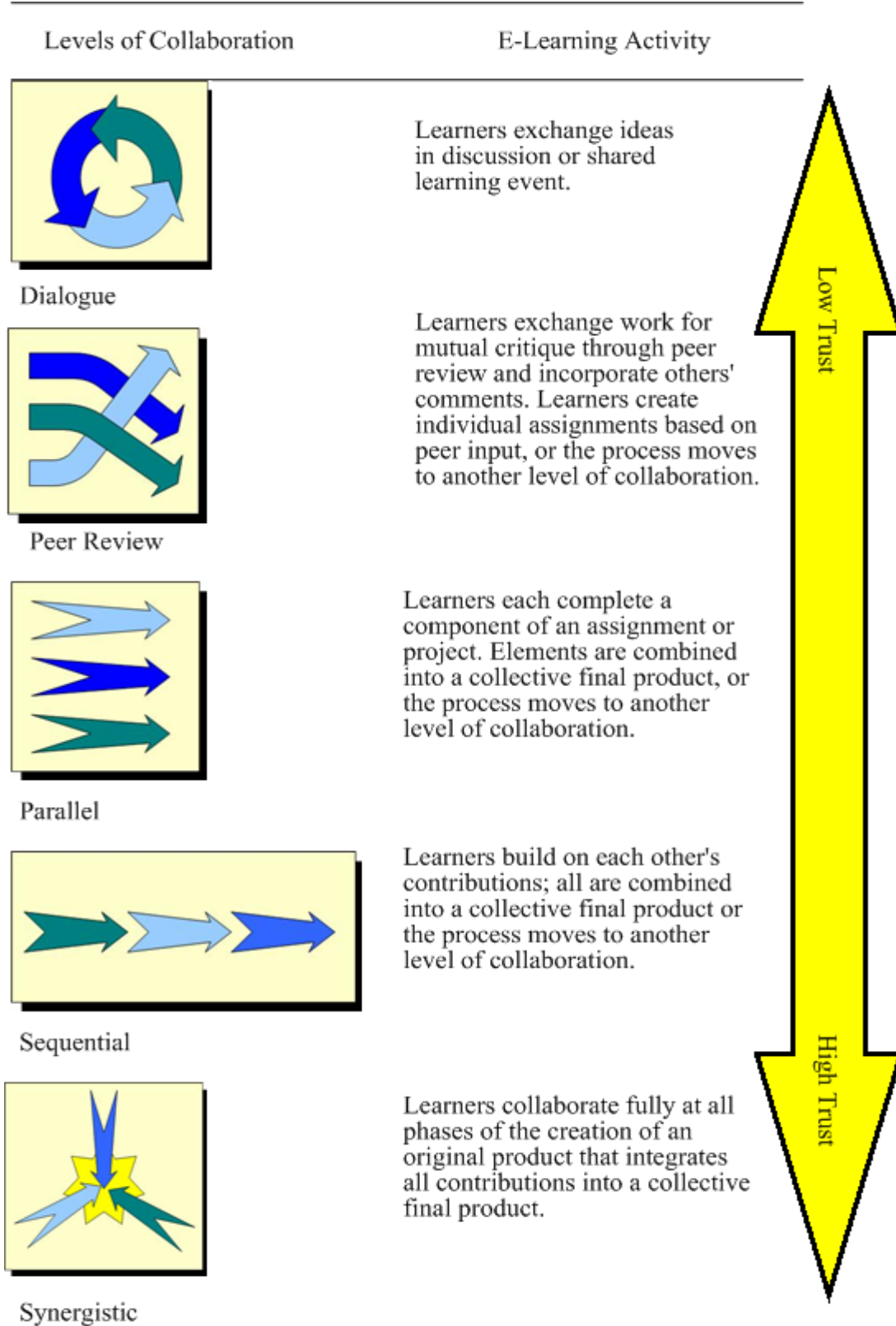
Successful collaborative e-learning requires trust: trust among participants; trust in the educational process; and trust in the process. Meaningful dialogue through storytelling can help build trust.

Storytelling comes in many forms and styles. Here are two approaches you can draw from to create storytelling activities that fit the learning goals and milieu of your classroom:

1. *Align Narrative Patterns to Your Purpose*; and
2. *Exchange Online through Digital Storytelling*

The first approach, *Align Narrative Patterns to Your Purpose*, includes ideas using the Taxonomy of Collaborative E-Learning and suggestions adapted from Stephen Denning's work on storytelling in business environments and *Learn from Educational Biographies*, Pierre Dominice's work with adult learners. (Denning, 2004, 2005; Dominice, 2000) Both Dominice and Denning discuss storytelling in face-to-face circumstances. The second approach, *Digital Storytelling*, focuses on ways to exchange stories online.

Taxonomy of Collaborative E-Learning



Elements of the Taxonomy of Collaborative E-learning

The Taxonomy of Collaborative E- Learning contains three key elements: The Levels of Collaboration, Learning Activity, and Continuum of Trust.

1. Levels of Collaboration

The Levels of Collaboration describes progressively more collaborative styles of working in a group. One level is not better than another in absolute terms, but one may be better than another in relation to the learning goals, the configuration of the group, timing or other issues. The five levels are: Dialogue, Peer Review, Parallel, Sequential and Synergistic Collaboration.

Dialogue.

The foundational level of collaboration is Dialogue. In the context of this model it refers to a shared, interactive learning event, typically in the form of a discussion. Dialogic teaching draws from Socrates and Plato, who encouraged active learning through self-examination, intelligent dialogue and interactive communication. (Reid, 1998) “It all begins with dialogue,” states Ram Charan , who believes it “encourages incisiveness and creativity and brings coherence to seemingly fragmented and unrelated ideas.” (Charan, 2001 p. 2) Dialogue provides learners the opportunity to find coherence in the ideas, plans and/or tactics needed to coordinate their efforts.

Peer Review.

The second level is Peer Review. This term is used to describe a process of critique and feedback between learners. Giving and receiving feedback allows learners to practice elements essential to leadership development—assessment, challenge and support. (McCauley & Douglas, 2005) When Peer Review is structured with mutually acceptable boundaries and set criteria, learners can provide objective perspectives and learn from each other. (Guthrie & King, 2004)

Parallel.

The third level is Parallel collaboration. When an assignment is completed by a group of learners using a Parallel structure, components of the assignment are allocated among learners, and results are combined into one collective product. Parallel collaboration typically involves individual work and through a process of Dialogue and Peer Review contributions are integrated into the final product.

Sequential.

The fourth level is Sequential collaboration. When an assignment is completed by a group of learners using a Sequential structure, components of the assignment are organized into a series of progressive steps and results are combined into one collective product. Each component is dependent on successful completion of another in the series of steps. Each step typically involves individual work, and through a process of Dialogue and Peer Review learners determine how each contribution is integrated into the final product.

Synergistic.

The fifth level is Synergistic collaboration. When a group of learners use a Synergistic structure, they synthesize their ideas and work through all stages of the project to plan, organize and complete the assignment together. Their contributions are fully meshed into collective final product.

2. Learning Activity

The Learning Activity column includes simplified descriptions of the kinds of actions learners take in each corresponding level.

4. Continuum of Trust

The continuum illustrates a relationship between trust and the level of collaboration. As illustrated here, as collaboration increases, so does the need for trust. Charles Handy observed the need for more attention to trust in the virtual world in his predictive article, "Trust and the Virtual Organization." He defined trust as "the confidence that a person is competent to reach a goal and is committed to reaching it," and observed that the practice of trust "implies reciprocal loyalty " (Handy, 1995 pp. 7-8). Handy's comments are relevant to understanding the trust continuum element of the Taxonomy. Collaboration means reliance on others' abilities and integrity, and confidence that the other learner(s) can and will share your commitment toward meeting the learning goal of the assignment. The reciprocal loyalties and common purpose among learners involves trust not only among the learners, but also between the instructor and the learners.

The Taxonomy of Collaborative E-Learning: Storytelling Flow

1. Beginning a collaborative process.



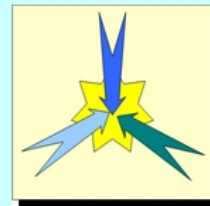
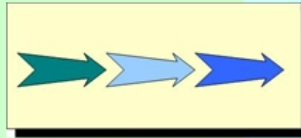
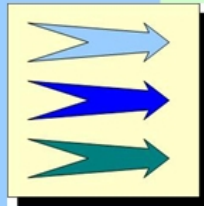
Responding to each other in initial dialogue.
Getting acquainted.
Forming the team or group.
Organizing the work, establishing roles and procedures.

2. Telling each other stories.



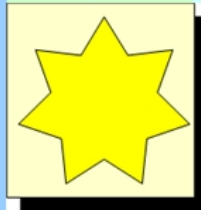
Producing private constructions.
Establishing the basis for trust and collective identity.

3. Getting the work done.



Working individually or collectively to complete various parts of the collaborative project assignment.

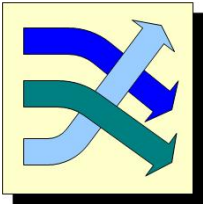
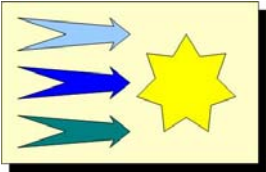
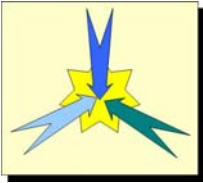
4. Combining elements and creating a collective outcome.



Producing common constructions.
Establishing basis for trust and collective identity.

Janet Salmons, Vision2Lead, Inc.

Align Storytelling Activity to Collaboration Skills Development

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>1. Peer Review Learners exchange stories for mutual critique through peer review.</p>  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trust others to be respectful. 2. Give constructive criticism 3. Use criteria or assignment goals to assess someone else's work. 4. Compare and contrast own ideas with others'. 5. Work within protocols for timing, coordination, communication styles, etc. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use shared document tools to enter comments and track changes. 2. Work with attachments. 3. Post comments in forum or send comments using email. 4. Organize and integrate information into classification scheme provided in assignment. 5. Evaluate and make judgments about the quality and relevance of information. |
| <p>2. Parallel Learners individually complete a component of a story, which is combined into a collective narrative.</p>  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine shared goal or purpose. 2. Develop protocols in terms of timing, coordination, performance, communication styles, and other expectations. 3. Create agreement for combining individual contributions into collective work. 4. Develop mutual accountability; deal with underperforming team members. 5. Prevent or resolve conflicts. 6. Achieve goals with combined efforts and mix of skills. | <p>All of the above, plus:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create scheme to organize, manage and integrate information from multiple inputs. 2. Generate new information or knowledge by adapting and integrating multiple parts into collective whole. 3. Create document, website or media as collective project documentation. |
| <p>3. Synergistic Learners collaborate fully in creation of a narrative that meshes each one's contributions into a collective story.</p>  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interact with team members at all stages of project. 2. Practice participatory decision-making. 3. Balance individual interests with group purpose. | |

Align Narrative Patterns to Your Purpose

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>To Spark Action, tell a story about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful projects from the past; • What we can accomplish together that we couldn't do alone. | <p>“Just imagine...” “What if...”</p> |
| <p>To communicate who you are, tell a story about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal, academic or professional needs, dreams and aspirations; • Contrast between experience in current e-learning milieu and previous academic or learning experiences; • Special and unique skills and talents you bring to the collaboration. | <p>“What you don’t know about me...”</p> |
| <p>To share knowledge, tell a story about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other successful projects or collaborations; • Times you felt confident about your expertise; • Important lessons through trial and error. | <p>“What do we need to know...”</p> |
| <p>To leading others into the future; tell a story about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vision for the project; • What the collaboration can accomplish; • Why it is important. | <p>“Where should we go...”</p> |

Adapted from (Denning, 2005; Dominice, 2000)

Use Discussion Questions to Stimulate Meaningful Exchange

Knowledge: Exhibiting previously learned material by recalling facts, terms, basic concepts and answers.

Key words: cite, define, identify, label, list, match, name, quote, recite, reproduce, state

Questions:

What is . . . ? How is . . . ?

Where is . . . ? When did _____ happen?

How did _____ happen? How would you explain . . . ?

Why did . . . ? How would you describe . . . ?

When did . . . ? Can you recall . . . ?

How would you show . . . ? Can you select . . . ?

Which one . . . ? Who was . . . ?

Comprehension: Understanding what is being communicated; able to grasp the meaning of material presented.

Key words: alter, change, convert, depict, describe, explain, illustrate, interpret, paraphrase, relate, rephrase, represent, restate, reword, substitute, translate, vary

Questions:

How would you classify the type of . . . ?

How would you compare . . . ? contrast . . . ?

Will you state or interpret in your own words . . . ?

How would you rephrase the meaning . . . ?

Which statements support . . . ?

Can you explain what is happening . . . what is meant . . . ?

How would you summarize . . . ?

Application: Using abstractions in particular and concrete situations.

Key words: apply, classify, compute, demonstrate, direct, discover, employ, evidence, prepare, present, relate, show, solve

Questions:

How would you use . . . ?

How would you solve _____ using what you have learned . . . ?

How would you organize _____ to show . . . ?

How would you show your understanding of . . . ?

What approach would you use to . . . ?

How would you apply what you learned to develop . . . ?

What other way would you plan to . . . ?

What would result if . . . ?

Can you make use of the facts to . . . ?

What elements would you choose to change . . . ?

What questions would you ask in an interview with . . . ?

Analysis: Examining and breaking information into parts by identifying motives or causes; making inferences and finding evidence to support generalizations.

Key words: analyze, associate, conclude, designate, determine, diagnose, diagram, differentiate, discriminate, dissect, distinguish, divide, examine, find, infer, outline, point out, reduce, separate

Questions:

What are the parts or features of . . . ?

How is _____ related to . . . ?

What motive is there . . . ?

What inference can you make . . . ?

What conclusions can you draw . . . ?

What evidence can you find . . . ?

What is the relationship between . . . ?

Can you make a distinction between . . . ?

What is the function of . . . ?

What ideas justify . . . ?

Synthesis: Compiling information together in a different way by combining elements in a new pattern or proposing alternative solutions.

Key Words: build, choose, combine, compile, compose, construct, create, design, develop, estimate, formulate, imagine, invent, make up, originate, plan, predict, propose, solve, solution, suppose, discuss, modify, change, original, improve, adapt, minimize, maximize, delete, theorize, elaborate, test, improve, happen, change

Questions:

What changes would you make to solve . . . ?

Can you propose an alternative . . . ?

Can you invent . . . ?

How would you adapt _____ to create a different . . . ?

How could you change (modify) the plot (plan) . . . ?

What could be done to minimize (maximize) . . . ?

What could be combined to improve (change) . . . ?

Suppose you could _____ what would you do . . . ?

How would you test . . . ?

Can you formulate a theory for . . . ?

Can you predict the outcome if . . . ?

Can you think of an original way for the . . . ?

Evaluation: Presenting and defending opinions by making judgments about information, validity of ideas or quality of work based on a set of criteria. Making a judgment about the value of material or methods for a given purpose or situation.

Key Words: defend, justify, recommend, interpret, prioritize, prove/disprove, appraise, conclude, critique, deduce, judge, weigh

Questions:

How would you prove . . . ? disprove . . . ?

Can you assess the value or importance of . . . ?

Would it be better if . . . ?

What would you cite to defend the actions . . . ?

What choice would you have made if . . . ?

Based on what you know, how would you explain . . . ?

What information would you use to justify the view . . . ?

What data was used to make the conclusion . . . ?

(Barton, 1994; Eanes, 1997)

Types of Critical Questions

1. Questions of clarification:
Examples —Could you give me an example?
—Is your basic point ___or___ ?
2. Questions that probe assumptions:
Examples —You seem to be assuming ___
—How would you justify taking this for granted?
—Is this always the case?
3. Questions that probe reasons and evidence:
Examples —How could we go about finding out whether that is true?
—Is there reason to doubt that evidence?
4. Questions about viewpoints or perspectives:
Examples —How would other groups or types of people respond? Why? What would influence them?
—How would people who disagree with this viewpoint argue their case?
5. Questions that probe implications and consequences:
Examples —What effect would that have?
—If this and this are the case, then what else must also be true?
6. Questions about the question:
Examples —To answer this question, what questions would we have to answer first?
—Is this the same issue as ?

(Lamb & Johnson, 2004)

Exchange Online through Digital Storytelling

What is Digital Storytelling?

Start with the art of storytelling. Add the use of technology and storytelling goes digital! There are many forms of digital storytelling that may combine any of the following elements: text, image, sound, voice and moving images, in a coherent story. It is the interplay of these elements, each of which plays a unique role that gives this medium its power. (Brear, 2006)

Digital Storytelling –A resource for students and educators

<http://www.wsd1.org/digitalstorytelling/>

Elements of Digital Storytelling

<http://www.inms.umn.edu/elements/>

Telling Your Story- a handbook for putting the story into digital (and traditional) storytelling.

<http://www.jasonohler.com/pdfs/storybook11-v2.pdf>

The Visible Knowledge Project

<http://crossroads.georgetown.edu/vkp/newsletter/0902/resources.htm>

Webliography on Collaborative E-Learning

Collaborative learning environments sourcebook

A resource for developing collaborative learning environments

<http://www.criticalmethods.org/collab/>

Cooperative Learning This site provides definitions and suggestions:

<http://www.stedwards.edu/cte/resources/cooperative.htm>. *A Demonstration of Cooperative*

Learning is posted here: <http://www.stedwards.edu/cte/resources/cooplearn.htm> and a Sample:

<http://www.stedwards.edu/cte/resources/cooplearnsa.htm>.

Crafting Questions for On-line Discussions

http://tlt.its.psu.edu/suggestions/online_questions/

Exploring Collaborative Online Learning (research article)

An analysis of the differences between conventional face-to-face collaborative learning and what occurs in an asynchronous, networked environment.

http://www.aln.org/publications/jaln/v5n1/v5n1_curtis.asp

Experiential Learning on the Web

<http://reviewing.co.uk/research/experiential.learning.htm>

Facilitating and Online Discussion

<http://www.learner.org/courses/rfts/om5web.htm>

Fostering Participation, Interaction, and Community in an Online Environment

<http://itc.boisestate.edu/tltr/disc01.htm>

Interacting Online - Tips to Promote Interaction

http://www.ion.illinois.edu/Present/presentations/021107/sloancALN/HowtobeInteractive_files/frame.html

Moderating and Pedagogy

<http://www.textweaver.org/pedagogy.htm>

Professional and Collaborative Decision-Support: Many Ways to Improve Decision-Making (article)

<http://www.opencl.org/ml/dsupport.php>

Surviving the Group Project: A Note on Working in Teams

<http://web.cba.neu.edu/~ewertheim/teams/ovrvw2.htm>

Structure and Management of Online Collaboration

http://www.ion.illinois.edu/Present/presentations/021107/sloancALN/collaboration_files/frame.html

The Use of On-line of Synchronous Discussion Groups

www.ncolr.org/jiol/ARCHIVES/2002/2/04/Index.pdf

Also see: *The Journal of Interactive Online Learning* www.ncolr.org

Virtual Labs and Field Trips (Science)

<http://www.umuc.edu/virtualteaching/module1/vlabs.html>

Web Quest

<http://webquest.sdsu.edu/>

WWW Collaboration Projects

<http://www.hypernews.org/HyperNews/get/www/collaboration.html>

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Retrieved July 7, 2004, from <http://eduscapes.com/tap/topic69.htm>