Education in the Digital Age

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What is “Learning”?  

The act, process, or experience of gaining knowledge or skill, through schooling or study. Process of acquiring modifications in existing knowledge, skills, habits, or tendencies through experience, practice, or exercise. Learning includes associative processes (see association; conditioning), discrimination of sense-data, psychomotor and perceptual learning, imitation, concept formation, problem solving, and insight learning.
Electronic Learning, or E-Learning

E-Learning is a general term that is used to refer to computer-enhanced learning. It is used interchangeably in so many contexts that it is important to be clear what one means when speaking of 'E-Learning'.

In many respects, it is commonly associated with the field of advanced learning technology (ALT), which deals with both the technologies and associated methodologies in learning using networked and/or multimedia technologies.
Technology Enhanced Learning

Provides socio-technical innovations (also improving efficiency and cost effectiveness) for learning practices, regarding individuals and organizations, independent of time, place and pace.

The field of TEL therefore describes the support of any learning activity through technology.
Blended Learning

Blended Learning is the combination of multiple approaches to learning.

Blended learning can be accomplished through the use of 'blended' virtual and physical resources.

A typical example of this would be a combination of technology-based materials and face-to-face sessions used together to deliver instruction.
In Olden Times...
The Printing Press changed everything...
University was a privilege...

... if you weren't male and wealthy.

- Sophia Jex-Blake & The Edinburgh Seven In 1869, she campaigned for the right to study medicine.

She went on to found two medical schools for women.

“Dr Sophia Jex-Blake has made the greatest of all contributions to the end attained. I do not say that she has been the ultimate cause of success. The ultimate cause has been simply this, that the time was at hand. It is one of the lessons of the history of progress that when the time for reform has come you cannot resist it, though if you make the attempt, what you may do is to widen its character or precipitate its advent. Opponents, when the time has come, are not merely dragged at the chariot wheels of progress - they help to turn them. The strongest forces, whichever way it seems to work, does most to aid. The forces of greatest concentration here have been, in my view, on the one hand the Edinburgh University led by Sir Robert Christison, on the other the women claimants led by Dr Sophia Jex-Blake.” - Sir James Stansfeld
University was a privilege...

Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin studied at Cambridge, completing her studies, but she was never awarded a degree.

Cambridge did not grant degrees to women until.............

1948

She later went on to write “undoubtedly the most brilliant Ph.D. thesis ever written in astronomy” at Harvard.
Then computers came along

Moving the classroom online

- Computer-Assisted Learning - CAL
- Learning Management Systems: Moodle, Sakai
What about taking control?

- Blogs, e-portfolio
- Using and contributing to wikis
- Object-centred social network platforms: YouTube, Flickr, delicious, CiteULike, Slideshare
- Social networks for finding peers and mentors (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter) and sharing your content
Controlled Environment

- You are being taught
- You are expected to learn
- You are expected to be able to ask questions, and to be able to answer them

But you can, and should:
- apply what you learned in projects
- work on topics you choose
What should change?

You should follow your interests and feed them

You should have fun!
What tools can help?

- Finding people who are interested in the same things - Google Scholar;
- Subscribing and keeping up-to-date with them - using a service like Feedly;
- Writing your own learning diary – evolving toward a portfolio - WordPress.org, Blogger.com;
- Getting involved in a community of interest - (LinkedIn, Meetup, Open Source, Twitter);
More tools...

Codeacademy

Lynda.com - excellent resource

Podcasts

Wikipedia

Coursera, iVersity, EdX

iTunes University
How to keep track of information?

Delicious for bookmarks

Flickr/Picasa for photos

Zotero, Mendeley & EndNote for papers, books & general research

SlideShare for presentations

YouTube, Vimeo for videos
A few points for discussion...
Format

What is wrong with the lecture-based format? The vessel metaphor vs. the ignition metaphor

Socrates: “Education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel”

Mark Twain: “College is a place where a professor's lecture notes go straight to the students' lecture notes, without passing through the brains of either.”
Content

How appropriate is the content taught in 3rd level education to the challenges encountered after graduation in the real world?
E-Learning

You are enrolled in a formal university course. What are the differences between this situation and self-directed learning, where you choose the content, the format and the pace of your learning?

What do you think about the Coursera model of self-directed learning, where you choose your courses and do all the work online?
Grading

What combination of grading would work best, in your opinion?

Tutor grading? Self grading? Peer grading?
Lifelong Learning

Lifelong Learning is the "ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivated" pursuit of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons.

What do YOU want to learn?

Who do YOU want to be?
Using Online Portfolios & Social Media Channels to build your Professional Profile
Outline

• The role of a portfolio
• From portfolios to ePortfolios
• Building an online presence
• Using Social Media channels effectively
• Creating your portfolio online
What is a portfolio?

Definition: “a collection of authentic and diverse evidence, drawn from a larger archive representing what a person or organization has learned over time on which the person or organization has reflected, and designed for presentation to one or more audiences for a particular rhetorical purpose”.

Learning and Professional Portfolios

While learning:
- Collecting and selecting.
- Sharing
- Reflecting
- Collaborating
- Annotating
- Presenting.

As a practitioner (or fresh graduate, or student applying for an internship), it displays evidence for:
- Professional skills
- Quality and standard of work
- Experience acquired in past projects
- Preferences and interests
From portfolios to ePortfolios

“An electronic portfolio, also known as an e-portfolio or digital portfolio, is a collection of electronic evidence assembled and managed by a user, usually on the Web. Such electronic evidence may include inputted text, electronic files, images, multimedia, blog entries, and hyperlinks. E-portfolios are both demonstrations of the user’s abilities and platforms for self-expression, and, if they are online, they can be maintained dynamically over time. Some e-portfolio applications permit varying degrees of audience access, so the same portfolio might be used for multiple purposes.”
(Wikipedia on ePortfolios)
Benefits of ePortfolios

- Accessibility
- Storage (not only text, but also video, audio, photos and sketches)
- Easy to create
- Easy to share
- Sociability (harnessing the power of Social Media)
- Gives a boost of professionalism to one’s online identity
- Allows for more freedom, creativity and breadth then just a cover letter and resumé
Why maintain an ePortfolio?

- As a learning diary
- For marketing and self-promotional reasons, while looking for a job
- For professional and creative self-expression
- For networking with peers and establishing a professional identity
- For performance appraisal and promotion in an existing job
Building an online presence

"It feels so good to get away from it all and just think about how to revamp my online identity."
Using social media effectively

• Creating an online presence – a website, a blog; buying your own domain name
• Creating and maintaining a Linkedin profile
• Joining professional communities: LinkedIn groups, Academia.edu
• Joining Twitter, Instagram
• Joining Facebook and liking specific Pages and Groups
• Using Delicious or Diigo, CiteULike, Zotero, Mendeley
• Joining YouTube, SoundCloud, SlideShare

What would a Google search expose to a potential employer?
Branding

- Try to use the same name and profile picture everywhere.
- Don’t join unless you’re planning to use it!
- Decide what’s your favourite channel and make content flow through it (this might change over time!).
- You can’t be everywhere, 24/7.
- Be good at one thing at the time!
- Network, network, network!
Challenges

- Information needs to be kept up-to-date
- Relationships have to be maintained
- Having a coherent online presence requires spending time – finding the right balance
- Embarrassing information can be discovered by potential employers
- Any little mistake in an online artefact can have huge implications!
Creating your online portfolio

Sites that could host your portfolio, providing both the software and the hosting space for free:

Google Sites (10Mb) (http://sites.google.com/)

Blogger.com (1Mb) (also owned by Google)

WordPress.com (3Mb)

Weebly.com

Wix.com

If you buy a domain name you can redirect from your portfolio site!
ePortfolio Resources

A presentation on Classroom 2.0 - Helen Barrett
https://www.slideshare.net/eportfolios/classroom20

A TEDx talk by Dr. Helen Barrett
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ckcSegrwjkA