

Organizational & Social Aspects of Learning Technology Design

Office: 15-255 Sry

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Tuesdays, SUR 3050, 16:30-20:20

Class #8936

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Course Description:

This course looks at the design of learning technologies from a socio-cultural perspective. It is based on the idea that the ultimate success of today's learning technologies depend not only on how "good" the products are with respect to traditional criteria of engineering, content coverage, and cognitive engagement, but on how the technologies are taken up and used within the broader context of an organization or social group. This refers both to challenges of technology adoption, but also to the fact that the learning enabled by the technologies occurs in a social context. Understanding these issues is especially important given the current explosion of "Web 2.0" applications such as online communities, wikis, and multi-player games which emphasize online sharing and collaboration over the centralized distribution of information.

This raises several important questions for learning technology designers and scholars:

1. What makes a particular technology for teaching, learning, or knowledge development "fit" a social or organizational context—such as a workplace, school, or university?
2. How can we practically come to understand such contexts in ways that will help us design effective learning technologies?
3. What role do "social" elements play in learning and how can we design learning environments that promote desired kinds of interactions?

We will explore these questions through readings, class discussion and hands-on projects. Students will collect real-world data to analyze a context for learning and use design software to create a prototype for a social learning website.

Learning Outcomes:

In this course you will:

1. Develop an understanding of the rationales for considering learning technology design from a social / organizational perspective and how these views have evolved.
2. Become familiar with a variety of approaches for understanding organizational contexts and designing for them including perspectives from the fields of Education, Anthropology, Human-Computer Interaction and Organizational Management.
3. Gain competency with several analytic tools for looking at and designing learning environments from a social / organizational perspective such as Activity Theory and Community of Practice Theory.
4. Gain competency in creating high-fidelity web prototypes.

Evaluation:

- Class discussion and activities (20%)
- Dreamweaver labwork (15%)
- Activity theory analysis (30%)
- Social learning web design rationale & prototype (35%)

Readings:

Required Textbook:

McFarland, D. S. (2007). Dreamweaver CS3: The Missing Manual (1st ed). O'Reilly Media.

ISBN 10: 0-596-51043-8. ISBN - 13:9780596510435

Available at a good price online at <http://oreilly.com/catalog/9780596510435/index.html> or through <http://www.chapters.indigo.ca>. Please bring the book with you to the first class meeting.

In addition to the textbook, photocopies of required articles will be distributed by the instructor in class, and a reading fee charged. Students should make payment for readings by cheque payable to Simon Fraser University.

Sample Articles:

Liu & Schwen (2006) Sociocultural Factors Affecting the Success of an Online MBA Course: A Case Study Viewed from Activity Theory Perspective. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, 19(2), 69-92.

Wenger, E. (1988). *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning & Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (selections)

Required Software:

Adobe Dreamweaver CS3 Professional (the Dreamweaver authoring software included in Adobe Creative Suite 3)