Using Web 2.0 Tools to Design Collaborative Learning Environments

Learning communities, collaboration, interactivity – all of these are learning strategies we strive to include in our online courses. These strategies allow students to share information, learn to work as teams, guide their own learning, and shape their own skill sets. As technologies continue to evolve, we have more sophisticated tools available to use in online environments. We now have Web 2.0 tools that allow wonderful collaboration among students. Students can post information in a blog, work collaboratively in a Wiki, share conversations in podcasts and video casts, interact in virtual worlds, or create mashups of electronic resources.

What are effective techniques and strategies for incorporating these Web 2.0 tools into our online classes? How do we facilitate collaborative projects? How do we guide our students as they work with these tools? What types of projects can be incorporated into synchronous learning environments? In this Best Practices session we will present real examples of how teachers and students at Bloomsburg University in Pennsylvania use these Web 2.0 tools to create wonderfully dynamic collaborative projects. We will share our “tried and true” techniques for setting up collaborative teams, interacting in virtual worlds like Second Life, establishing professional blogs, and building collaborative eBooks with a wiki. We will include the time management and communication protocols we have designed, the customized learning environments we have created, and the most effective teaching strategies that work in this Web 2.0 world. Real examples, case studies, and links to our web sites will be included in this presentation.