Online Collaborative Workspaces

Abstract: Digital tools like blogs and wikis have been used to describe online collaborative workspaces. As we investigate these collaborative tools to determine their practical uses for learning, teachers and students have can adopt these emerging technologies into learning activities. This presentation will investigate a free online collaborative tool, Zoho Notebook, which incorporates the characteristics of online collaborative workspaces with practical instructional design model. These types of tools promote student interaction, encourage convergent processing, and supports discovery. Using web applications and digital media, this collaboration tool can be used by students to facilitate group knowledge building.

Introduction

Learners construct knowledge socially within groups. Johnson and Johnson (2004) describe cooperative learning as “the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other’s learning” (p. 786). Without direction, most groups are ineffective (Johnson and Johnson, 2004). Johnson and Johnson specify five basic elements that promote effective cooperative learning including positive interdependence, individual accountability, promotive interaction, appropriate use of social skills, and effective interpersonal communication in a group is required for students to work as a group.

There are numerous tools to facilitate cooperative learning online. Zoho Notebook is one particular learning tool that enables cooperative learning, however, the tool allow does not facilitate teaching and learning. These types of tools requires teachers to examine how the technology they use influences pedagogy. (Mishra, & Koehler, 2006). “Computer-supported collaborative learning is a field where technology meets psychology and pedagogy” (Lipponen et al., 2004, p. 31). It is not the technology that changes learning, its how the technology is being used to facilitate, augment, and transform learning (Shell et al., 2005). At the heart of CSCL is the collaborative learning process. Lipponen et al. (2004) states that “technology is not used as a tool for structuring collaboration, but as a tool to support, more than to change, the already existing practices” (p. 43). Therefore, even as much of the research highlights the use of a particular technology, wikis, research does suggest that it is how this technology is integrated with an instructor’s pedagogy.

The Study

The study investigate collaborative tools to determine their practical uses for learning, teachers and students have can adopt these emerging technologies into learning activities. Synthesizing Johnson and Johnson’s elements of cooperative learning, a practical instructional design model is suggested to use with Zoho Notebook that promotes student interaction, encourages convergent processing, and supports discovery of knowledge. Attendees will get the opportunity to join as a collaborator within a Zoho Notebook and explore resources needed to develop their own notebook to use with students be facilitated. Presented will be a series of research questions that can be explored. How do learners perceive teacher pedagogy when teacher integrate Zoho Notebook? How can Zoho Notebook be used to facilitate collaborative group learning? Will students contributing to Zoho Notebook contribute to higher-level learning?

Conclusions

Using Zoho Notebook as a collaboration tool, the presentation will explore the possibilities of using Zoho notebook within a cooperative learning environment. A practical instructional design model for integrating this tool will be explained that promotes student interaction, encourage convergent processing, and supports discovery. Using the tools within the application, the attendees will investigate how this workspace can be edited by anyone just like a wiki and include metacognitive features like a blog while integrating hypermedia and digital media.
References


