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English Education 2.0: An Analysis of Websites That Contain Videos of English Teaching

Michael Bruce Sherry and Robert Tremmel

English teacher educators have long sought ways to promote their visions of quality English teaching to audiences outside their academic communities, including preservice and practicing English teachers. This challenge relates to the larger problem, shared by both English teacher educators and English language arts teachers, of how to contribute to national conversations about educational reform. However, a number of large, popular websites, which now provide access to artifacts such as videos, lesson plans, and other classroom materials from a variety of English classrooms and grade levels across the United States, may suggest one way of approaching such problems. These sites have, in some cases, developed as centers where teachers and teacher educators can pursue their own research and teaching agendas and also make contact with colleagues and audiences that in the past have been beyond reach. In this article, we address how such sites encourage user participation and what kinds of English education these sites promote or exclude. Because of our interest in the kinds of interactions involving English teachers and English teacher educators these sites might or might not allow, we selected sites based on assumptions drawn from interactional sociolinguistics as well as additional criteria that developed during our search. Our analysis focuses on the George Lucas Foundation's Edutopia.org as a central example, as well as five other sites with various similar features. Together, these six sites present vivid examples of these features and illustrate how English teacher educators might use these and other similar websites. For example, Edutopia shapes participation on its site by explicitly supplying a vision of teaching and inviting users' contributions to elaborate it, thus framing teachers and other users as partners in implementing school reform. Other sites provide more or less opportunity for users' contributions to shape emerging content, either through the Web 2.0 tools they provide or the genres of material they allow. Together, these sites promote a progressive, situated, project-based vision of English teaching, and they may serve as both venues and models for how English teacher educators who share that vision can reach a broader audience.

English teacher educators have become increasingly interested in how to promote their visions of English teaching by engaging a range of audiences, including both preservice and practicing English teachers, with situated examples of classroom practices. But recent policy initiatives such as No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top have tended to bypass both English teacher educators and English teachers, and contextualized examples have proven hard to document and disseminate. However, a number of popular websites now provide free and easy access for anyone with an Internet connection to artifacts such as videos, lesson plans, and other classroom materials from a variety of English classrooms and grade levels across the United States. Moreover, some of these sites go beyond a collection of resources, serving as networks through which users can make contact with the work of other teachers, teacher educators, and researchers, and can even study and contribute to discussions of educational practice, reform, and policy. English teacher educators may thus be interested in how to use these sites to promote their agendas and reach a broader audience.

To explore the potential of these sites, we addressed the following research questions: How do these sites encourage participation? How does that participation contribute to the organization of the sites? And what kinds of English education content are included or excluded as a result? Because our questions concern how these sites shape and are shaped by the participation of their anticipated audiences, we analyzed them using the concepts of frame, emergence, and genre from interactional sociolinguistics, a field concerned with micro-level relationships between contexts and interactions. In this article, we focus our analysis on one popular site—the George Lucas Foundation’s *Edutopia.org*—with briefer comparisons to five others. Our goal is not to provide an exhaustive catalog of similar sites. Rather, we aim to help readers understand how such sites work through examination of a few vivid examples. We hope that our analysis may be of use to English teachers and teacher educators in joining and expanding conversations about English education curriculum, reform, and policy.

Background

One of the most frequently discussed topics at the Conference on English Education (CEE) Policy and Leadership Summits in 2005 and 2007 was how CEE members and other English teacher educators might more effectively interact with audiences beyond their immediate academic community and, by so doing, increase their presence in local, state, and national discussions of educational policy. The audiences CEE members expressed particular inter-

est in reaching ranged from parents, to politicians and businesspeople, to the general public. Indeed, the 2005 summit's invitation, sent by co-organizers Suzanne Miller and Dana Fox, highlighted the need for English teacher educators to reach broader audiences as a defining goal:

Our specific goal is to assemble a collective knowledge base and a series of written products to guide the future efforts of CEE in English teacher preparation and development, and to support NCTE in its professional development initiatives and other efforts related to teacher education. In short, we seek to determine the following: *What consensus values and beliefs can CEE support that serve as a framework for the field of English education, and how can we best communicate these consensus values and beliefs to those within the field and to others (e.g. policy makers, administrators, and community members)?* [Italics in original]

The need for CEE to find ways of making contact with a broader audience also figured prominently in the agenda for the second Leadership and Policy Summit in 2007, organized by Don Zancanella and Dawn Abt-Perkins. Zancanella and Abt-Perkins called for, among other things, “a plan for how CEE, in conjunction with NCTE, might take action to reach beyond the immediate audience of English educators and NCTE members.”

Ironically, summit participants also identified their own students—preservice and practicing English language arts teachers—as an audience that they must do a better job of reaching: “[T]he last fifty years have witnessed our futile attempts to convince overworked administrators, cynical bureaucrats, and even our own skeptical preservice students that we really know valuable things about the teaching and learning of English” (Alsup et al., 2006, pp. 278–279). Since this was written, CEE and NCTE have made some progress in connecting with broader audiences. For example, NCTE's Washington office has made gains in the organization's ability to reach policymakers and to make the research of CEE members and others more widely available (Williamson, 2010). Also, individual English teacher educators (e.g., M. Moore, 2010) have found ways of reaching broad audiences through publications in general readership newspapers and magazines. And the NCTE/IRA website ReadWriteThink.org allows English teachers and teacher educators alike to contribute lesson plans and other print materials to a growing archive.

However, examples like this are still quite rare, and English teacher educators, in both private communications and professional forums such as the CEE Summit discussion list (2010; no longer available), continue to be frustrated with their lack of ability to make meaningful contact and have influence with audiences outside the boundaries of their academic com-

munity. Indeed, in September 2010, just before it was taken down in favor of the new NCTE Connected Community, there was a spirited, week-long discussion on the ceesummit2 discussion list that included this comment by Don Zancanella:

One thing I wish we (thinking of CEE) could do but haven't done is figure out a way to exploit the Internet for information sharing and action. I keep thinking that will happen on something that will work—listservs, Facebook pages, Nings, whatever—but it hasn't happened yet. (Thursday, September 2, 2010, 8:59 a.m.)

Teachers, too, are frustrated at being bypassed by recent policy initiatives. Many of the responses of teachers and teacher educators to U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan's recent "Open Letter to America's Teachers" (2011) implied that his words "do not comport with his policies" (Resmovits, 2011). Top-down initiatives such as No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top, some responders felt, did not demonstrate that teachers' "input and leadership" was "respected, valued, and supported" (Duncan, 2011) as Duncan's letter suggested. Recently, teachers and their supporters gathered for the Save Our Schools rally on the Ellipse in Washington, DC, to give voice to their anger and frustration. This event, which featured speakers such as Jonathan Kozol, Diane Ravitch, and actor Matt Damon, culminated with a march on the White House by up to 8,000 people (Save Our Schools, 2012; Strauss, 2011).

It is significant that many teachers' responses to Duncan, as well as subsequent discussions and calls to action such as Save Our Schools, have appeared in Internet forums. Despite being isolated in their classrooms and bypassed in national policy conversations, teachers and teacher educators have found the Internet to be a place where they can share, collaborate, and speak their minds. At both the state and national levels, a growing number of popular education websites now provide forums in which users can access and comment on curricular materials (Quillen, 2011), including free, multimedia artifacts such as videos, lesson plans, and other classroom materials. In the past, situated examples of teaching practices that included multimedia, such as video, were often difficult to disseminate (Olson, 1988). Now, users of these websites can access multimedia materials from a variety of English classrooms and grade levels across the United States thanks to the advent of high-speed Internet and streaming digital video.

Indeed, the rise of the World Wide Web has made it possible for digital videos of English language arts teaching to be shared in online "social networks," allowing viewers, including teachers and teacher educators, "to see

what goes on in many different classrooms around the country” (Hatch & Pointer-Mace, 2009, p. 2). Video also serves as an important part of the professional portfolios required by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2009). Even though video is not yet a capability of NCTE-affiliated sites such as ReadWriteThink, NCTE members like Anne Gere (2011) are moving the organization in that direction by creating online and video resources for the new book series, *Supporting Students in a Time of Core Standards*. Video, we believe, will become an increasingly important part of making situated examples of English teaching available to broad audiences to help shape emerging curricular and policy reforms.

Further, aspects of some websites, associated with the “Read/Write Web” (Carvin, 2005), allow users not only to view (“read”) content as they did when the Web first originated but also to make their own contributions and responses (“write”) on sites with Web 2.0 (O’Reilly, 2007) capabilities. This means that English teachers and English teacher educators, as users of these sites, can not only access curricular content but also contribute, respond, and collaborate. Understanding how such sites work, and what kinds of contributions and responses they allow, is a first step toward participation.

In this article, we address how English teacher educators might benefit from greater familiarity with and a greater presence on these websites. Such sites have the potential to provide both models and active venues for English teacher educators seeking ways to more effectively communicate with teachers, as well as to connect their work as researchers and teacher educators to audiences and communities now beyond their reach. We believe such sites also have the potential to encourage grassroots conversations about curricular reform, as users contribute situated examples from a variety of classroom contexts of quality English teaching. In short, easily accessible public websites with features like these have the potential to change who, how, and what is involved in teacher education and to serve as vehicles that could alter immeasurably the reach of English teachers and English teacher educators. With little more than a computer and Internet access, English teacher educators can become participants—in fact, particularly knowledgeable participants—in online interactions with extensive and varied audiences involved in vetting and disseminating multimedia content associated with English language arts curriculum, instruction, professional development, and policy making. Moreover, grassroots initiatives that depend on online networks, such as Save Our Schools and the new National Center for Literacy Education, with its plans to encourage the contribution of interactive “cases” or “vignettes,” make it even more important for CEE to attend to how Web

2.0 features of sites like those we examined might shape the participation of English teachers and English teacher educators.

Despite their immense potential, little research has examined who develops and participates on these sites, what kinds of interactions such sites enable and constrain, and what kinds of English language arts curriculum and instructional content they promote or suppress. To address these questions, we describe a selection of such sites as dynamic venues that English teacher educators might use in a variety of ways to promote their agendas and reach new audiences. Through an in-depth analysis of the George Lucas Foundation's *Edutopia.org*—as well as briefer comparisons with five other sites—we attempt to identify regularities and unpack potentials in the way these sites frame participation, encourage certain types of interactions, and promote specific kinds of curricular and instructional content. In the process, we explore the ways these perspectives align (and don't align) with the perspectives of English teacher educators and suggest the potential these sites have for helping English teacher educators reach and interact with a wide range of audiences. One particular focus here will be on whether and how these sites include the progressive principles and practices, such as student interest, process, collaboration, situated learning, authenticity, and project-based learning, that have, for decades, had recognizable, though sometimes confusing and contradictory, influences on English teacher education and the English language arts (see Applebee, 1974; Dewey, 1902, 1938; Kilpatrick, 1918, 1925; Mayher, 1990; Tremmel, 2010).

Theoretical Framework

One key aspect of the situation now facing English teacher educators, which we have described above, concerns the nature of their interactions with broader audiences such as teachers and what kinds of online contexts might allow both parties more possibilities to collaborate and to participate in curricular reform conversations. To address this larger issue, we draw on assumptions and concepts from interactional sociolinguistics.

Interactional sociolinguistics makes several assumptions about how interactions relate to contexts that are important to our study. First, interactional sociolinguistics assumes that discourse, or language in use, is never quite the same from interaction to interaction (C. Goodwin & Heritage, 1990; Gumperz, 1982; Hymes, 1972; Schegloff, 1992). For example, the meanings of a question posed in several different online forums depend on its contexts. Second, those contexts include the interactions that immediately precede and follow (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986). For example, the meaning of a question

posed in an online forum depends not only on what came before it but also on the answer. Third, a discursive interaction can simultaneously respond to its contexts and reshape its contexts (M. Goodwin, 1990; Heritage, 1984). For example, a question in an online forum can arise from what came before it and also implicitly shape the possibilities for response. Based on these assumptions, we attempt to understand how interactions on the websites we examined shape and are shaped by their contexts—by the design of the site itself, and also by the participation of other users. To do this, we apply the sociolinguistic concepts of interactional frame, emergence, and genre.

The Interactional Frame

The design of a website (including its various menus and links) can influence participation on that site. In sociolinguistic terms, participation in any social interaction is shaped by “the interactional frame,” or the definition of a situation (Bateson, 1972; Goffman, 1986). That is, the interactional frame organizes participants’ experience of and involvement in that situation.

Outside of sociolinguistics, in the arena of digital communication, both videographers and Web developers also use the term *frame* to refer to the area within which certain actions are visible and possible. Our use of the term is not quite so literal and visual. Instead, we examine how the interactions among developers and users of each site “frame” participation, collaboratively proposing roles, relationships, and possible responses for English teachers and teacher educators.

Emergence

Websites can change quickly, especially those that invite contributions from users; in fact, user contributions can change or reframe the way others participate on a website. The establishment of implicit conventions over time through repeated reframing by users is an example of “emergence.” In sociolinguistics, emergence refers to the way the frame is reshaped by participants’ interactions in ways that cannot be reduced to precedent qualities, component parts, design intentions, or actions of individuals (Sawyer, 2005). That is, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Outside of sociolinguistics, the concept of emergence in the philosophy of science refers to the creation of unexpected new features in complex systems (Osberg & Biesta, 2007; Sawyer, 2005). In this article, we are less concerned with what features emerge and more with the sociolinguistic implications of emergence. Online written interactions like those that occur on these sites can lead to linguistic regularities (iText Working Group et al.,

2001; Selfe, 1996; Selfe & Selfe, 1994; Zuccheromaglio & Talamo, 2005). Over time, types of communication “emerge” that condition, but do not determine, subsequent interactions. In our analysis of websites, emergence means that for both developers and visitors, engaging in the rhetoric of these sites may involve surrendering some measure of control over preexistent intentions and purposes. Also, not all websites contain opportunities for users to upload content or post comments and thus differ in this regard as to how emergent they are. The sociolinguistic concept of emergence thus allows us to distinguish among the sites we address by examining their implicit conventions and how those conventions might shape, and be shaped by, the participation of English teachers and teacher educators.

Genre

Within and across websites, interactions over time create patterns. These patterns emerge from repeated reframing by users over time. In sociolinguistic terms, typified communicative practices, or “genres,” form through repeated social action (Bazerman, 1997; C. Miller, 1984, 1995). Framing and emergence are part of the process; genres are the result.

Outside of sociolinguistics, the concept of genre has at times been used to refer to a fixed set of rules for textual forms (Freedman & Medway, 1994; Swales, 1990). However, we do not address genre this way. In keeping with sociolinguistics, we hold that form and content are interrelated and situated. Genres can vary in how they enable, constrain, and promote certain practices in a community (Devitt, 1993; C. Miller, 1984; Paré & Smart, 1994; Zuidema, 2011). Because communication occurs in particular contexts, identifying stable features of genres is problematic (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995). Online genres may be especially dynamic because of the speed and collaboration made possible by the Internet (Breure, 2009; Crowston & Williams, 1997). Regardless, in our analysis of websites, we are not interested in formal features but in how genres that appear within and across websites enable and constrain certain kinds of participation by English teachers and teacher educators, as well as certain kinds of English education content.

Above, we have explained the sociolinguistic assumptions and concepts of our study. We believe the concepts of framing, emergence, and genre are useful in understanding how the websites we studied frame the possible roles, relationships, and responses for developers and users; what genres have emerged within and across these sites that enable and constrain repeated forms of interaction; what kinds of English curriculum, instruction, and professional development are thus promoted or suppressed; and what the

implications are for English teacher educators to promote their agendas to a broader audience of preservice and practicing English teachers.

Methodology

In this section we first describe how our methods differed from other approaches (sociolinguistic and otherwise) and why, given the online contexts of our study. Next, we explain the criteria we developed and applied during our initial selection of websites, as well as why we chose to write about only five (see Table 1).

Table 1. Criteria for Selection of English Teacher Education Websites

Website (and Sponsor)	English Language Arts (ELA) Focus	Videos of English Language Arts (ELA) Teaching	Web 2.0 and Other Interactive Features	Usefulness to English Teacher Educators (ETEs)
Edutopia (George Lucas Foundation)	Significant focus on ELA teaching contextualized in Edutopia's Core Strategies.	Approx. 270 videos with ELA content contextualized across entire video library.	Blogs, social media, Edutopia Community Groups.	Broad research base. Many videos useful for methods classes and professional development. Opportunities to contribute content and appear in videos.
Apple Challenge-Based Learning (CBL) (Apple)	Challenge-Based Learning framework adaptable to ELA.	ELA teaching contextualized in videos demonstrating CBL.	\$ Limited to sale of Apple products.	CBL framework is a useful structure for teaching and developing project-learning techniques.
Carnegie Gallery (Carnegie Foundation)	ELA-focused units and programs, including a focus on professional development of ELA teachers.	Videos of ELA teaching embedded in video gallery and <i>Inside Teaching</i> .	No longer accepting multimedia "records of practice."	Videos and materials useful for methods and professional development. Limited connection to research base.
INTIME (U.S. Dept. of Education PT3 grant: Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology)	Videos searchable by subject matter, including ELA.	Twenty-four case study videos featuring ELA teaching.	Users can upload videos and use them to build their own case studies.	ETEs can use INTIME's video case studies or build their own case studies.
Teacher Tube (Run by former teachers Jason, Jodie, and Adam Smith)	Videos searchable by subject matter, including ELA.	Great range of contributions from users, including videos depicting ELA teaching.	Users contribute, rate, and respond to videos.	Various videos might be useful to ETEs. No research base.
Annenberg Learner.org (Corporation for Public Broadcasting)	Twenty-one workshops focused on ELA and literature as well as links to expired resources.	Videos embedded in units and workshops.	No.	ETE research cited as related reading.

In traditional sociolinguistic discourse research, one might generate written or oral discourse data in the form of observational field notes, interviews, and transcripts. However, websites of the kind we study here are not physical research sites; they are virtual spaces, and they often change more quickly than actual spaces, such as classrooms (Gatson, 2011; Howard, 2001; Rheingold, 1993/2000). Indeed, with a few clicks by developers or by browsing users, one site may be linked to another, thus blurring the distinction between a single- or multi-sited study (Celeste, Howard, & Hart, 2009; Marcus, 1998). Moreover, the interactions among the thousands of users often cannot be documented in traditional ways; for instance, many visitors view pages and follow links in a site without leaving an inscribed trace (Fine, 1995). However, we are not primarily interested in the boundaries of individual sites or the logic of individual users, but rather in the inscribed interactions around English education content allowed by the dynamic, virtual architecture of these kinds of sites.

While researchers typically learn from members of a particular community as outsiders, we approach these sites as insiders: The means of entry and navigation are familiar, even if the specifics of the content may not be (Gatson, 2011). Our position as members of the community of users is common in this kind of online research (Gatson, 2011; Turkle, 1995). Indeed, our goal is to explore the possibilities of these sites for users like us—English teacher educators. As such, our analysis of how the sites shape user interactions is both supported by, and limited to, our own experience of them, as well as observations of how other users seem to participate. We do not pretend to get inside people's heads, as even the explanations of developers and of other users might be suspect (Grimshaw, 1987, 1990); we are not interested in how individuals think about these sites, but rather in the possibilities the sites seem to provide for certain kinds of participation.

Because we approach these sites as insiders, concerned with how other English teacher educators, like us, might make use of these sites in their efforts to better interact with various audiences, especially an audience of teachers, we do not use the methods associated with content analysis (Daniels, 1997; Fields, 1988), in which the researcher “imposes his or her own predetermined categories and theory on the text and/or is not concerned with what . . . [it] means to the people who create it or read it” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 64).

In selecting sites for our analysis, we used a two-tiered approach, considering at each stage the interests of potential audiences. In the first tier, we considered criteria related to relevance. Did the site contain English education content? In what media was that content delivered? Here we eliminated sites that focused primarily on other disciplines than English education, as

well as sites that did not include multimedia (and particularly video). We also chose not to address sites whose content came from other countries. For example, based on these criteria we did not focus on ReadWriteThink (though it clearly contains relevant content) because at the time of writing it did not include video. And we did not choose TeachersTV, whose English education content comes in the form of multiple media but from the U.K. Edutopia, by contrast, contained approximately 270 videos with English language arts content and is based in the United States.

Another first-tier criterion of relevance concerned the breadth of each site's audience. Here we eliminated the many state curriculum depositories (e.g., Florida's Orange Grove, Kentucky's Learning Depot), opting to focus on sites whose users come from across the nation. Indeed, most of the sites we retained received more than 100,000 visitors per month and ranked among the top 100,000 most visited sites in the world, according to online web analytics.¹ However, the popularity or "reach" of a website can be measured in a number of ways: by the number of visitors (both "unique" and repeat visitors), by the demographics of visitors, by the number of page views, and by the number of other sites that link to or mention that site, to name a few. The funding sources of the site are also worth noting. For example, Challenge Based Learning (CBL), which we address below, is hosted by Apple. Web analytics report that it receives millions of unique visitors and rank it the 37th most visited site in the world. This ranking is well above all the other sites we examined, but it was not possible for us to distinguish how many of these visitors were teachers posting classroom materials and how many were kids buying iPods. In contrast, Carnegie's Gallery of Teaching and Learning ranks far lower, but since it has no ostensible commercial interests and is funded by a philanthropic foundation devoted to education, nearly all of its visitors may be teachers.

In a second tier, we considered the possibilities for participation each site provided. What options for browsing, organizing, and linking content did each site include? Could users contribute, and if so, in what ways? We did not apply the concepts of frame, emergence, and genre from our theoretical framework to this stage of selection as one might in a more deductive approach, like content analysis. But we did consider aspects of the sites related to these concepts (as we use them here), such as what explicit menu or browsing options a site provided and whether users could upload, respond to, or rate the website's content. For example, Edutopia does not allow users to upload videos but does allow users to rate and respond to them, as well as encouraging contributions to its many blogs and community forums. In the end, we chose to retain some examples of sites that do not have any Web

2.0 capabilities, such as Annenberg's Learner.org, and some that have many, such as TeacherTube.com.

In our search, we used Google and Alta Vista, looking for combinations such as "teaching, video," "teacher, video," "English, video," "language arts, video," and "instruction, video, English language arts," as these search terms seemed likely to lead us to various multimedia representations of English language arts teaching. However, because of the dynamic nature of the Web in general, and these kinds of sites in particular, these combinations will perhaps no longer produce the same results. For example, Teachers Network (teachersnetwork.org), which has operated for nearly 30 years, recently lost its funding and can no longer accept contributions though it remains available as an archive. We include these search combinations not for the

purposes of replication, since this is a qualitative study, but rather to suggest how English teacher educators might find the kinds of sites we address in our subsequent analysis.

In keeping with Creswell's (2007) criteria, we chose to focus on Edutopia as a central case with which to address our research questions. We chose Edutopia not because it is the best or even the most popular site in terms of number of visitors. Rather, Edutopia provides a combination of

We chose Edutopia not because it is the best or even the most popular site in terms of number of visitors. Rather, Edutopia provides a combination of features and opportunities to address certain themes we also noted on other sites.

features and opportunities to address certain themes we also noted on other sites. Other sites share some of these features and at times they exemplify them better than Edutopia. However, they do not share all of them, and thus Edutopia provided the best unifying example. In addition, we include reference to other sites alongside our central example not to show how the various themes related to our research questions are *generalizable*, in the sense that concept is commonly used by quantitative researchers (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Rather, since not all sites like the ones we examined function in the same way, our goal is to suggest ways the theoretical criteria and the themes we identified in our analysis will be *generative* for readers in examining and using other, similar sites. In Table 1, we summarize the criteria by which we selected websites for analysis and for representation in this article.

Findings

Framing Curricular Reform

How do the sites we examined define and encourage participation by various stakeholders? To address this question, we first examined how Edutopia.org

frames interactions among developers/users of the site. Because the intentions of developers can condition the framing of interactions on a website, we began with the site's "About Us" pages. Who is behind Edutopia, and what is its agenda? On the About Us pages, filmmaker George Lucas draws on his own experiences as a student who was "often bored" by schooling that seemed irrelevant to real life and disconnected from "resources and experts outside of the classroom." From this perspective, the site's purpose is elaborated in the following way:

[I]n light of extraordinary advancements in how we interact with each other and the world, our system of education has been frustratingly slow to adapt. The George Lucas Educational Foundation was created to address this issue. Our vision is of a new world of learning. . . . And we provide not just the vision for this new world of learning but also the leading-edge interactive tools and resources to help make it a reality.

There are two parts to the reform proposed by the About Us pages: first, a vision related to the potential of technology to transform teaching across the curriculum (and beyond the classroom), and second, a forum that both collects and provides resources for teachers to elaborate that interdisciplinary vision. This twofold vision frames site users, including teachers and teacher educators, as participants in elaborating curricula that contrast sharply with the traditional, discipline-specific, print-based curricula of American schooling, as well as with the forms and structures of standards education.

This twofold purpose is borne out by the organization of the site, which is primarily structured around six "core strategies": comprehensive assessment, integrated studies, project learning, social and emotional learning, teacher development, and technology integration. These six concepts are each explained in separate pages, and they appear in menu options for navigating the site. For instance, menu bars that appear at the top and bottom of each page include "Core Strategies" as one of their permanent headings, and the six strategies help to organize artifacts such as videos, research articles, and interviews throughout the site. In short, these six interdisciplinary strategies form the basis of the reformist curricular "vision for this new world of learning" proposed by Edutopia.org. This vision, with its progressive focus on learning in communal contexts—social/emotional, project-based, and across/beyond classrooms—should be of particular interest to English teacher educators who value educational reform based on flexible principles rather than linear, reductive, decontextualized lists of standards.

Edutopia's six core strategies also appear in (and are thus elaborated by) the aspects of the site that invite public, collaborative participation from

users. The menu bars on the site also include stable headings for “Blogs,” “Community,” and “Schools That Work,” all of which provide forums for users to contribute to the site, and all of which include subheadings in drop-down menus that relate to the core concepts. Two example blogs are *Social and Emotional Learning*, run by Maurice Elias, and *Project-Based Learning*, run by Suzie Boss. Among the discussion forums that appear under the menu heading “Community” are two called “Project-Based Learning” and “Assessment.” The menu option “Schools That Work” includes sub-headings for “Online Learning” and “Project Learning.” Even the menu option “Videos” leads to a searchable archive that is organized not only by discipline and grade level but also by the six core strategies. The six core strategies also shape the content of some of the less permanent features of the site, such as regular polls that ask questions like “Should tech training be required for all current teachers?” (pertaining to teacher development and technology integration) and “Should sex education happen in class or online?” (pertaining to technology integration and social and emotional learning).

In short, the six strategies shape the choices users make as they navigate the site, and user contributions affirm and elaborate the core concepts Edutopia proposes. As its “About Us” pages suggest, Edutopia thus frames interactions on its site by providing the vision, in the form of these core strategies, as well as the technological tools by which user interactions can elaborate that vision, casting teachers and other site participants as partners in creating and evaluating curriculum rather than merely implementing it, the role they have long been relegated to in both traditional and standards-based education.

Edutopia’s twofold purpose—to furnish a vision and the tools by which users elaborate it—provides a basis for comparison to several of the other sites we examined. Another site, Integrating New Technologies into Methods of Education (INTIME), similarly proposes on its “About” page to improve student learning across content areas through the use of “contemporary technology, high quality conceptual models, [and] online streaming videos.” This interdisciplinary, technological vision proposed by a “consortium of 30 higher education institutions with a strong commitment to teacher preparation” takes the form of a “Technology as Facilitator of Quality Education” (TFQE) model. Similar to Edutopia’s core concepts, INTIME’s model contains seven elements, which not only structure the site’s sequences of lesson plans, activities, and video clips but also organize the site’s search options and provide a basis for user-generated “case studies.”

Similarly, Apple’s Challenge Based Learning site, noting, like Edutopia, that “traditional teaching and learning methods are becoming less effective

at engaging students and motivating them to achieve,” proposes a vision for reform on the basis of “an engaging multidisciplinary approach to teaching and learning that encourages students to leverage the technology they use in their daily lives to solve real-world problems.” This multidisciplinary, technological vision gives rise to “Six Design Principles of the 21st Century High School,” as envisioned by Apple Classrooms of Tomorrow, Today (ACOT²), principles that shape users’ multimedia contributions to the site, as well as annotations and responses to those contributions.

Even though several of the sites we examined propose a cross-disciplinary, project-based, technological vision of curricular reform whose principles shape both the structure of the site and the possibilities for user participation, INTIME includes as part of its model standards based on National Content Standards and the Core Knowledge Sequence (famously associated with E. D. Hirsch Jr. and the idea that there is certain knowledge that “every student needs to know”). Apple’s CBL—like Edutopia—explicitly does not include standards in framing how users might elaborate the vision for curricular reform proposed by the site. In addition, numerous text and video selections incorporated into Edutopia argue strongly against the current program of government-enforced standards and high-stakes assessments. Such examples may serve as models for how English teacher educators might intervene in curricular reform conversations by creating similar online spaces outside the narrow margins of government-sponsored standards to elaborate a vision through the participation of thousands of online users.

The absence of state and national standards among the core strategies and design principles of the interdisciplinary, technology-based curricular reform proposed by Edutopia and Apple’s CBL site is especially striking given the contrast between Edutopia’s slogan, “What Works in Education,” as well as its central heading, “Schools That Work,” and a prominent, similarly named website related to education, the “What Works Clearinghouse,” sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. Whereas Edutopia makes its case based on the work of the six core strategies in schools and classrooms around the country, and privileges the practices and contributions of teachers, the “What Works Clearinghouse” is based primarily on standardized, “scientific evidence for what works in education,” using a single randomized, comparison group research model. Edutopia’s and Apple CBL’s capacity to disseminate and promote dialogue about situated examples of “what works in education” quickly to thousands of online users via the Internet and digital video may thus be useful for English teacher educators concerned with how to shift the topic of discussion to include more situated examples

of good English teaching practice rather than to remain confined in narrow conversations about standards and curricular reform.

We also note the presence across these sites of project-based learning not only as a ubiquitous aspect of the content being promoted but also as part of the framing of user interactions on the sites. The project method, in which learning occurs in relation to a contextualized, interdisciplinary, compelling problem or set of problems that cross the boundaries of classrooms, was developed in the early twentieth century by Kilpatrick (1918, 1925) and other progressive educators. Numerous references to this method appear on the sites we have already mentioned: in Edutopia's core strategy, "Project-Based Learning," in INTIME's "Principles of Learning," and in Apple's "Challenge-Based Learning"; it also appears in the workshop model of Annenberg's Learner.org and as a template on Carnegie's Gallery of Teaching and Learning. But in addition to promoting a project-based approach to teaching English language arts, many of the sites we examined also exemplify this approach in the ways they frame interactions for users. Edutopia, in particular, focusing on "Schools That Work," presents videos that portray local, project-based responses to common educational problems, and invites users to elaborate its core strategies with examples from their own classrooms, thus framing teacher education and development as occurring through the collaborative unpacking of situated problems of practice.

A Spectrum of Emergence

Next, we examined the emergent quality of the interactions framed by Edutopia. To what extent are the roles, relationships, and responses made possible by the site dynamically shaped by the contributions of visitors, and to what extent do those contributions, in combination with the influences of the site's designers, create emergent patterns? Like all texts, Edutopia constrains user interactions in some ways while nevertheless remaining open to reinterpretation. As noted above, the six core strategies structure many of the aspects of the site that involve user choices, including the browsability of the video library and the content of blogs and discussion groups to which users can contribute. However, emergence is not synonymous with interpretation. As a Web 2.0 site that encourages users not only to read but also to write content, Edutopia allows user contributions that, when taken together, change the site to some degree in ways for which no individual quality or intention is directly responsible. Below, we address these aspects of the site—and how they compare to other sites we examined—with regard to emergence.

Like other sites whose content is often updated, Edutopia highlights recent additions to its video library, blog posts, and groups. At the time of writing, a box at the top right previewed “latest blog posts,” and a “video pick of the week” figured prominently in the center of the homepage. Edutopia’s emphasis on recent user additions to its blogs is fairly typical of other blogs and websites whose content is shaped primarily by user contributions (Alexander, 2006). Indeed, on Edutopia’s blogs, as on other sites we examined, the most recent posts and responses appear first, while others are archived. This structural feature emphasizes the importance of recent contributions to an ongoing curricular conversation (Applebee, 1996), and it contrasts with other kinds of (print and digital) archives in which new content is added in more traditional chronological order at the end of what preceded it. This reversal is not only consistent with framing teachers and other users as important contributors, but it also means that the emergent content of the site is shaped by users as well as by site developers.

However, Edutopia does not take this approach to restructuring as far as a site such as TeacherTube does, relying on user contributions not only to elaborate categories related to curriculum and instruction but also to form them. On TeacherTube’s “About” page, creators Jason and Jodie Smith, both American K–12 schoolteachers for 14 years, ask, “Why can’t teachers, students, and schools utilize the power of the Read/Write Web for learning?” Accordingly, uploaded videos, documents, audio, and photos coalesce into categories as a collective result of the tags, annotations, and evaluations of users. For instance, one can add several keywords to categorize an uploaded video, one can comment on one’s own or another’s upload in a blog-style post that appears below it, and one can rate an upload with up to five stars. Together, these annotations, as well as the number of times uploaded content is viewed or commented on, produce categories such as “Writing” and “Classroom Management” as well as “Most Popular,” “Most Viewed,” and “Most Discussed.” Like Edutopia, TeacherTube’s menu bar thus contains stable headings such as “Channels,” “Community,” and “Blogs”; but unlike Edutopia, channels, groups, and blogs are not tied to anything like core concepts furnished by the site’s developers. Rather, they emerge from the collective participation of site users.

In this respect, TeacherTube, like Edutopia, frames users as developers of the site’s content; however, because TeacherTube relies entirely on site users to develop the content of the site, videos such as Karl Fisch’s “Shift Happens” (which lent its name to the 2008 NCTE Annual Convention) can be categorized alongside a birth announcement video and a how-to for making posters from Excel spreadsheets. In short, English teachers and

English teacher educators visiting TeacherTube will find content relevant to current conversations in the field if they do not mind wading through unrelated contributions.

In contrast, Edutopia's "video pick of the week," another dynamic feature of the site, is chosen by site developers rather than users. In this respect, Edutopia more closely resembles sites that existed before the "Read/Write Web," offering regular broadcast news updates for users to read but no options to write or to contribute such content. For example, the videos of English teaching available at Learner.org, a collaboration between the Annenberg Foundation and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, are programs initially produced by this collaboration for TV and later distributed with coordinated Web and print materials. These videos organize materials for browsing by discipline and grade level and can either be watched in order or individually. However, aside from these browsing options and a general "search" box, Learner.org provides no opportunities for users to contribute, to respond to, or to dialogue about the materials it contains on the site (though it does provide email lists to which a user can subscribe to engage in dialogue about some of the workshops). Thus, while the videos related to English teaching will be of high interest to teachers and teacher educators—they include techniques and commentary from famous authors such as Amy Tan, researchers such as Judith Langer, and master teachers such as Joan Cone—English teachers and English teacher educators are framed as receivers rather than developers of content. That is, because of the way the site frames possible online interactions there is little opportunity for collective categories to emerge from conversations among users.

Looked at this way, these three sites demonstrate a continuum of three distinct approaches that affect emergence. At one end of the continuum is the Annenberg site, which affords little or no contributions from users and reduces the likelihood that emergence will take place. At the other end of the continuum is TeacherTube, which to a significant extent is driven by user contributions. This raises the likelihood that emergence will take place, but since there is minimal editorial authority guiding the content of the site, exactly what will emerge and what its value and purpose will be is left to the "wisdom of crowds" (Surowiecki, 2004). Between these extremes lies Edutopia, where user contributions and interactions are governed and guided by the site's designers and chosen representatives, including bloggers and individuals informing and appearing in the videos. Because there are many points of access to the site, as well as multiple voices coming from both inside and outside the Lucas Foundation, and because of the site's focus on interdisciplinarity, there are numerous opportunities for emergence to

take place. But because the designers' hands are always guiding and selecting content, the nature of that content is not simply left to chance or tied to what might be most popular or most viewed. Further, the site's emphasis on project-based learning provides a unifying inquiry and models how it can still allow for the whole to be greater than the sum of its parts. In short, what emerges on Edutopia can to a large extent be brought under the influence of the site's generally progressive agenda and program for American education, and that is what makes it so interesting as well as potentially useful to English teacher educators, who, we argue, have promoted many aspects of that same agenda and program.

Enabling Genres

Having above addressed the ways interactions are framed and how that framing enables and constrains the emergence of certain content, we now turn to the genres, or types of communicative practices, that appear on Edutopia and the other sites we examined. In particular, we address the way these genres emerge from participation on these sites as framed by developers and as elaborated by users. We also address the way these genres are shaped by other (usually offline) genres that preceded them. Analysis of the nature of these flexible genres, where they came from, and what kinds of English teacher education they enable or constrain may suggest to English teacher educators ways of both using and contributing to these sites.

An Implicit Vision: Shaping Form and Content through Genres

In the previous section, we described how Edutopia's dynamic, Web 2.0 features allow users to elaborate a vision shaped by the site's core strategies and thus by the site's developers. These aspects of the Edutopia site thus enable contributions on various topics suggested by users, in contrast both with Learner.org, which allows users to participate only in email discussion lists established by the site, and with TeacherTube, which allows the creation of an unlimited number of groups, on any topic, that live or die by user participation alone. However, while these three sites differ significantly with regard to their approach to user contributions and how they affect emergent content, they are more similar with regard to the form those contributions can take. For instance, Edutopia's blogs and groups resemble the discussion forums found on many other sites: users may type words into a box and post either a new comment or a reply to someone else's; these contributions appear in threads or lists of related comments that stretch down a page. This format is not significantly different from Annenberg's email discussion lists, in which

users can email new messages or reply to others, creating similar lists of messages on a single topic. And the only difference TeacherTube provides is the possibility of posting different kinds of media—video, audio, photo, or document—to which others can then respond in a similar threaded discussion. Thus these sites differ with regard to the emergence of content but are remarkably similar with regard to the genre, or type of communication, they make available to users. That genre encourages a series of responses (often across teaching contexts) to a single contribution: for example, several teachers might respond to a video clip showing a particular activity. The genre of the threaded discussion thus implicitly shapes the way teachers and other participants can elaborate the vision proposed by the site’s developers.

Comparison with another, similar site, the Carnegie Gallery of Teaching and Learning, illustrates how an online genre that differs from the threaded discussion shapes user contributions in ways that allow for different kinds of content and interactions. In some ways, Carnegie’s Gallery of Teaching and Learning resembles the sites mentioned in the previous paragraph: it allows users to submit contributions (and also “vets” them before inclusion, like Edutopia does new blogs and groups). However, the Gallery includes no explicit vision in the form of enumerated strategies, principles, or elements like some of the other sites we have addressed above. Instead, the Gallery provides a “toolkit” that teachers and teacher educators can use to create their own “cases,” a toolkit that was developed over time through in-depth, in-person conversations among teachers and developers at the Knowledge Media Laboratory. The Knowledge Exchange Exhibition and Presentation (KEEP) toolkit guides users “through framing questions, directions, . . . rubrics, [and] templates [that] help them organize materials . . . such as course materials and artifacts, student work examples, audio, image and video files.” As a result, certain similarities of form and content appear.

For example, though Renee Moore’s “Culturally Engaged Instruction: Putting Theory into Practice” (2009) and Marsha Pincus’s “Double Double, Toil and Trouble: Engaging Urban High School Students in the Study of Shakespeare” (2009) might seem only slightly related by their focus on secondary English and marginalized student populations, both of these cases appear similar in their layout, language, and organization. In both cases, each page is bounded by an inverted-L menu with similar links along the vertical axis on the left and along the horizontal axis at the top (see Figures 1 and 2). The similarities in the inverted-L layout, the language used to describe context, practice, and student work, and the organization of the case into three “beginning, middle, and end” chapters arise not only from the topic

of the cases but from the toolkit provided by the developers of the site. In particular, the KEEP toolkit template implicitly shapes the case contributors' reflections on the contexts and consequences of their teaching practices over time: for example, a teacher might reflect on how the school context shaped the design of an activity, and on the student work that resulted from it. Thus the tools and templates provided by the site shape the online genre of the cases created for the Carnegie Gallery.

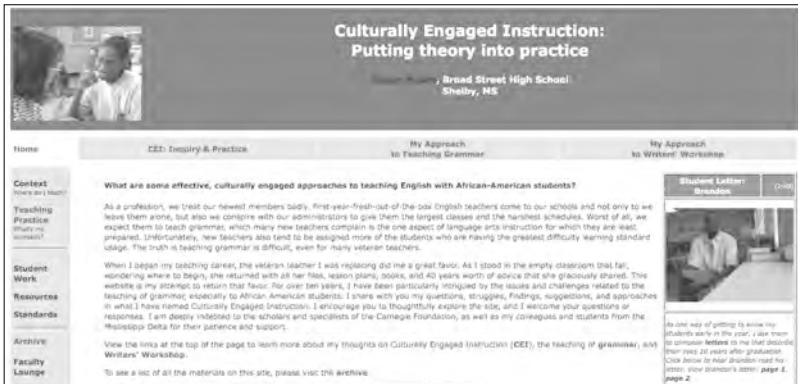


Figure 1. Homepage of a “case” created with the KEEP toolkit, with inverted-L layout and horizontal, three-chapter organization.



Figure 2. Another page from a “case” created with the KEEP toolkit, with inverted-L layout and horizontal, three-chapter organization.

By showing the similar tendencies of these online teaching genres, we do not mean to suggest that they impose rigid constraints on the teachers who contribute to them. On the Carnegie Gallery site, there is also the possibility of variation among cases created with the KEEP toolkit template. For

instance, Terry Judson's (2006) case on developing English language learners' oral language skills includes diagonal cascades of video clips that lead a reader/viewer down a page and through the steps of his class's slideshow presentation project. But this case also includes an inverted L with links to context, approaches, and reflections along the vertical axis, and links to chapters of the unit along the horizontal (see Figure 3). No such inverted L appears in Yvonne Hutchinson's (2009) case about capitalizing on her students' African American language practices, but it does include a "class anatomy" with three "before, during, and after" sections, each with embedded videos of classroom practice and samples of handouts or student work (see Figure 4). Thus the tools provided by the site developers on Carnegie's Gallery of Teaching and Learning and the elaborations of the English teachers and teacher educators who use them give rise to a flexible genre that allows for a wide range of cases but also a certain consistency with regard to their focus on context and student work.

That this relative consistency of form and content can be accomplished through the nature of the tools provided by the site should suggest a wide range of possibilities to those English teachers and English teacher educators wishing to use or create such sites for reaching an audience of teachers. Carnegie's KEEP toolkit provides a "Snapshot tool" for including "key objects" from one's teaching, a "Stitch tool" for relating those objects

The image shows a screenshot of a webpage template for a teaching case. At the top, there is a navigation bar with icons and labels: "9TH & 10TH GRADE GLOBAL STUDIES", "ONE PROJECT", "4 STUDENTS", "ASSESSMENT", and "RESOURCES". Below this, the main title is "POWERPOINT PRESENTATION PROJECT ON RELIGIOUS BELIEFS". The page is organized into two main sections: "Step 1: Introduction to Project" and "Step 2-3 : Research Topics & Create Powerpoint Presentations".

On the left side, there is a vertical menu with the following links: "Project: Powerpoint Presentations", "Project Outline", "Project Description", "Teacher Reflections", "Printable PDF of this page", and "Order DVD".

The "Step 1: Introduction to Project" section contains three video thumbnails with captions: "1. CLASS OPENS REARRANGE FURNITURE, SET STAGE FOR DISCUSSION.", "2. MR. JUDSON GUIDES STUDENTS THROUGH DISCUSSION OF ISSUES WITHIN THEIR OWN RELIGIONS.", and "3. MR. JUDSON EXPLAINS PROCEDURES FOR PREPARING POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS.".

The "Step 2-3 : Research Topics & Create Powerpoint Presentations" section contains two video thumbnails with captions: "1. MR. JUDSON'S INTRODUCTION: CONTINUE TO RESEARCH WORLD RELIGIONS AND START CREATING POWERPOINT SLIDES." and "2. MR. JUDSON HELPS STUDENTS TRANSFER THEIR RESEARCH INTO POWERPOINT SLIDES.".

Figure 3. A variation on the KEEP toolkit template, with inverted-L layout but a vertical three-chapter organization.

A Friend of Their Minds: Capitalizing on the Oral Tradition of My African American Students
CLASS ANATOMY
TYONNE DIVANE HUTCHISON
 MARLBOROUGH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
 LISBON, MA

Tyonne Divane Hutchison is a National Board certified teacher who has focused for many years on developing strategies to engage all her students in substantive discussions of literary texts and the issues those texts raise for their own lives. In this approach, she builds on the oral traditions of her students African-American and Latino cultures and seeks to support the development of their literacy skills through high standards, explicit expectations, and rigorous literature experiences.

Her online "class anatomy" - a documentation and analysis of one instructional period - juxtaposes video clips with commentary and samples of classroom documents. In the video clips, Hutchison reflects on her expectations for the class, a student orally presents the "class scribe" notes from the previous day, the students engage in small group and large group discussion about a racially charged literary selection that had been assigned the night before, and after the class, four students reflect on their experiences in Hutchison's classroom, and how her rigorous approach and emphasis on dialogue and diversity prepares them for other academic work.

Context and Reflections

1. Learning Objectives
2. Student Goals
3. Student Goals
4. Video and student reflections on the previous day's lesson and the current day's lesson

Materials and Activities

1. Narrative: "Class Anatomy" Lesson
2. Student Goals
3. Student Goals
4. Student Goals
5. Student Goals
6. Student Goals

Video

Class Anatomy (10:14)
 Class Anatomy (10:14)

How they got here:
 The beginning of the school year
 1.5.5.5

Class Anatomy Timeline
 Class Session: June 2002

1. Setting Goals for the Class Session
2. Describing the Previous Day's Work
3. Engaging in Small Group Discussion

Where they went next:
 The following school year
 2.2.2.2

Figure 4. Another variation on the KEEP toolkit template, without inverted-L layout but with a similar horizontal, three-chapter organization.

together via links, and templates such as “Course Transformation” and “Problem-Based Learning” that provide relatively standard ways of choosing, relating, and organizing key objects from one’s teaching. The template for “Problem-Based Learning” is notable for its similarities to “Project-Based Learning,” “Principles of Learning,” and “Challenge Based Learning” that appear explicitly as a “core strategy” or “design principle” on Edutopia, Apple’s CBL, and INTIME. As in those prior examples, the Carnegie Gallery thus both promotes and exemplifies a situated, project-based approach to teaching English language arts. But unlike the other sites, the Carnegie Gallery promotes this progressive, project-based learning vision implicitly, through the tools it makes available to users and the flexible genre to which they give rise.

Genre Contact: Prior Genres’ Influence on the Sites

Having described some of the types of communication that have arisen on the sites we examined, and how those genres implicitly shape and are shaped by user contributions, we now address the influence of prior (and even offline) genres on them. These influences are worth noting because they carry with them commitments associated with other communicative interactions, which may or may not be appropriate to those framed by the site. That is, these online genres may carry vestiges of offline genres that shape the way users can contribute, but that are no longer desirable to English teacher educators.

Above, we suggested that Annenberg’s email discussion lists, Edutopia’s blogs and groups, and TeacherTube’s multimedia groups shared similarities. In fact, these three sites might be seen as illustrating the evolution of a

single type of Internet communication, or online genre, which began with the emailing of messages to a group of people with a common interest, continued with the development of blogs and online discussion forums that made it possible to archive those messages publicly on a single site, and eventually allowed the embedding of other media into a message. The linearity of this threaded discussion genre seems especially useful for responding to preexisting content, but less suited to arranging that content in new ways (as on other social networks that allow collaborative editing, for example).

The videos that appear on Annenberg's Learner.org, Edutopia, and INTIME also share generic similarities that shape the ways they portray English teaching and teacher education. On these three sites, videos appear to have been filmed and edited by professionals (e.g., they include high-resolution clips smoothly arranged into sequences, often interspersed with interviews or with accompanying text titles, music, or voice-over). The production quality of the videos on these sites compares to that of the genres of TV broadcasts, documentary films, and instructional videos. Similarities to these other genres may be related to the production histories of these videos: Learner.org began as a series of TV programs associated with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting; Edutopia's George Lucas began his career teaching documentary filmmaking techniques; and INTIME's videos are also available on DVD for use in teaching methods courses. The production quality of the videos on these sites contrasts with that of the mostly lower-resolution, minimally edited videos available on TeacherTube. This, too, is unsurprising: As its name suggests, TeacherTube (a cousin of YouTube) allows users to upload amateur videos whose home-movie quality is balanced by the variety and immediacy of their content. Like the prior genres of TV and film from which they arise, the videos on these four sites do not tend toward long, in-depth shots of contextualized interactions among teachers and students. Rather, they provide an experience whose aesthetic quality is meant to persuade and provoke a response in viewers. Such video genres seem suited to dialogue about teaching issues that arise across contexts, but less suited to reflection on the application of techniques in particular situations.

By contrast, the videos that are part of the cases that appear on Carnegie's Gallery of Teaching and Learning do situate practices in a particular context. Indeed, the three cases mentioned above all provide links, materials, and video dedicated to describing "Context: Where Do I Teach?"; for example, Yvonne Divans Hutchinson's "A Friend of Their Minds: Capitalizing on the Oral Tradition of My African American Students" includes separate pages and videos devoted to "How they got here" and "Where they went next," which contextualize her work with a particular group of students over time.

Attention to context is one of several similarities between these cases and the offline (written and video) versions of this case genre often used in both research and professional preparation. However, there is no accompanying blog or discussion forum for each case where users can respond and dialogue. This lack of opportunity for discussion is surprising given that offline cases are often used in teacher preparation to provoke discussion of teaching dilemmas. Thus the Carnegie Gallery videos, and the cases in which they appear, model the situated practices of experienced teachers, but seem less suited to reflective dialogue with others about those practices. On the other hand, this limitation is balanced by an increase in stability and control over the content of the site and the perspectives and arguments that emerge there.

Genres like the threaded discussion and the case both frame user interaction and have an effect on what teachers and English teacher educators can say on these sites. These genres also implicitly shape the way English teacher educators might use these sites to contribute to the progressive, project-based vision of English teaching proposed by these sites' developers. The threaded dialogue, for example, seems more suited to collaborative dialogue about teaching across contexts, while the case seems more suited to individual reflections on situated practice. We now turn to discussion of our findings in relation to previous research, as well as implications for English teaching and teacher preparation.

Discussion and Implications

Framing Curricular Reform

In our above analysis, we stated that Edutopia frames the interactions that take place on its site in terms of a twofold purpose: It proposes a vision of interdisciplinary, technological, project-based curriculum that extends beyond the walls of the classroom, and it provides the tools for teachers to elaborate that vision, in the form of blogs and videos that illustrate application of and reactions to its core strategies in particular school contexts.

Much current research in English teacher education extolls the virtues of curricula that merge progressive, project-based principles of interdisciplinary, communal involvement with technologies such as video and Web 2.0 (e.g., Doering, Beach, & O'Brien, 2007; Greenhow, Robelia, & Hughes, 2009; S. Miller, 2007). For many years, this research has been primarily hortatory, though recently there have been some excellent examples of how English teachers might practically enact such curricula in secondary school classrooms. For example, Troy Hicks's *The Digital Writing Workshop* (2009) describes how English teachers might apply what we see as the progressive

principles of process, choice, and authentic practices (“what writers do”) associated with the writing workshop to technological tools such as digital video editing, blog portfolios, podcast essays, and research using RSS feeds. Moreover, Hicks’s book is accompanied by its own social network that allows teachers to share and discuss ideas for how to implement this vision, much like Edutopia.

However, such examples remain rare: print-based English teacher education research advocating such approaches and addressing situated examples of practice reaches a limited audience compared to the influence of programs like Reading First. Indeed, of the two parallel initiatives in the late twentieth century to develop standards, based either on quantitative educational research or on the situated practices of expert teachers (Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986; Holmes Group, 1986), the former has been more successful up until now. Education research of the

Sites like Edutopia not only propose a vision of curriculum of which English teacher educators have long been proponents, but they also reach an audience of thousands via the Internet.

kind reviewed and promoted by the What Works Clearinghouse has well-established means for dissemination, while the teacher portfolios used for certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) have always been a difficult vehicle for sharing with others (Olson, 1988). In this regard, technology may be a game-changer. Indeed, in the Edutopia video

introduction to the project-based learning core strategy, noted progressivist and technological learning pioneer Seymour Papert comments,

The standard I would like to see is students thinking differently, is the individual having the right to pursue individual interests. . . . The idea of learning experientially through projects has been around forever. John Dewey was saying that, Piaget, anyone you can name. Why did they not have a more powerful influence? Because of the limitations of the knowledge technology that we had in the past.

However, sites like Edutopia and Apple’s CBL may provide an alternative (in fact, the prior incarnation of Apple’s CBL site was the Apple Learning Interchange, directly associated with the NBPTS, the organization that arose from the Carnegie initiative to have master teachers develop standards and curriculum and take the leading role in school governance). Sites like Edutopia not only propose a vision of curriculum of which English teacher educators have long been proponents, but they also reach an audience of thousands via the Internet. Moreover, unlike other top-down attempts at curricular reform, which prior research has suggested simply become another layer of lamination on an already constrained curriculum (e.g., Cohen, 1988),

such sites frame English teachers and teacher educators as collaborators in elaborating this curricular vision.

Participating on sites whose progressive, project-based curricular vision seems to align with the vision of English teacher educators suggests the possibility of not only reaching preservice and inservice teachers but also intervening in policy conversations. A recent CEE policy brief by Kent Williamson (2010), Executive Director of NCTE, notes that standards-based reforms of the kind associated with Common Core State Standards and Race to the Top, as well as government investments in state and local education, are

environmental factors over which we have no control and little influence. What we can and will do is to support teachers in carrying out their responsibility to exercise informed, professional judgment about how best to advance literacy learning. That means resisting mandated or formulaic approaches to teaching and ensuring that practicing literacy educators have a direct voice in decisions about curriculum, assessment, and teacher evaluation. (p. 3)

One answer to how English teacher educators might support English teachers' situated decisions about literacy learning and provide alternatives to top-down, formulaic approaches may be in sites like those we examined, with their potential not only to reach thousands of English teachers but also to engage them in collaboratively elaborating a progressive, project-based vision of English teaching valued by organizations such as NCTE and CEE. In short, English teacher educators might benefit by thinking deeply about how to capitalize on the sympathetic vision and powerful influence of the sites we examined to reframe standards-based curricular reforms.

It is worth noting that not all of the sites we reviewed or analyzed share the progressive, project-based curricular vision of English teaching to which we have referred. Even some of the ones that do seem to share this vision have their own agendas related to the interests of corporations or individual businesspeople. For example, we noted that Apple's CBL, though it includes many examples of progressive, project-based English teaching, and was at one time directly connected to the NBPTS, foregrounds the use of Apple technologies. English teacher educators may wish to consider whether and how their participation on sites sponsored by Apple, Discover, Verizon, and others may overlap with these non-academic agendas.

A Spectrum of Emergence

In the preceding sections, we suggested that sites like Annenberg, Edutopia, and TeacherTube, when looked at together, can be seen as a continuum

of possibilities for framing whether and how user contributions shape the content of a site. At one end, Annenberg allows little opportunity for users to contribute, and thereby maintains control of the content and sequence of the workshops it presents; at the other, TeacherTube's collectively defined categories and associations of content reflect users' current interests, but do not filter the amateur from the professional. In between, Edutopia provides a content-shaping vision in the form of its core strategies, but also allows contributions from users who interpret, contextualize, and extend that vision.

This continuum suggests different ways that English teacher educators interested in employing websites like the ones we examined can shape curricular conversations about situated examples across contexts. Some English teacher education researchers have already sought to engage preservice and practicing English teachers in creation and discussion of digital records of practice like those on the Carnegie Gallery of Teaching and Learning (e.g., Grossman & Richert, 2006; Hatch & Grossman, 2009). However, like Annenberg's Learner.org, the Carnegie Gallery itself provides little opportunity for users to respond directly through Web 2.0 capabilities. To truly create a "living archive" or a "community of learning" (<http://gallery.carnegiefoundation.org/insideteaching/>), we argue, may require this opportunity. However, the presence of Web 2.0 capabilities alone is not enough. The low barriers (Jenkins, 2006) to participation on sites like TeacherTube may mean more participants, but may also mean lower-quality content. Decades of research on brainstorming (e.g., Sawyer, 2007) have suggested that collaboration within guidelines or facilitated by an expert tends to produce more and better ideas than the complete absence of constraints. By not filtering their content at all, such sites may become less useful to English teacher educators.

In contrast, sites like Edutopia, whose blogs and groups provide an organizing vision and allow users to elaborate it, may provide opportunities for preservice and practicing English teachers to participate in emergent conversation about pedagogy that are also aligned with the progressive principles held by many English teacher educators. Further research is necessary into how English teacher educators might create or employ online records of progressive, problem-based English teaching practice that preservice teachers could discuss and respond to with their own multimedia contributions.

The elaboration by teacher users of a progressive, project-based, interdisciplinary, technological vision on these sites may give rise to what some researchers have described as a "participatory archive" (Huvila, 2008; iText Working Group et al., 2001). Rather than a traditional archive created by imposing categories on existing materials, these sites invite participation

by teachers and other users in elaborating and even creating categories to describe the situated complexity of English teaching. Archives of materials associated with particular aspects of English teaching, as enacted in different school contexts, may be of use to English teacher educators, whose methods courses are often limited by the local school and university contexts with which they overlap. Moreover, the possibility of participation in emergent conversations within such archives might provide an authentic rhetorical situation for preservice and practicing teachers to create and reflect on their own contributions to sites like the ones we examined.

Attention to the spectrum of emergence we have described may also be important for developers and users of the networks associated with initiatives like the Gates Foundation’s “Literacy Design Collaborative” and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Like the sites we examined, these networks attempt to enlist teachers in elaborating a vision of curricular reform by uploading assessment tasks and examples of student work to a participatory archive. However, the Common Core State Standards portals do not provide opportunities for teachers to annotate their contributions with advice to other teachers about how to implement the tasks in particular local contexts. Given that the CCSS sometimes propose teaching more difficult texts to younger students (e.g., *The Autobiography of Frederick Douglass* proposed as an option for eighth graders), this kind of situated annotation by teachers may be especially important. The impact on English teachers and English teacher educators of the transition from individual state standards to the CCSS may depend on how that archive balances editorial authority and users’ collaborative contributions.

The genre(s) a site makes available to users can implicitly shape how and what teacher users contribute to the site.

Enabling Genres

Above, we suggested that sites like Edutopia, Annenberg, and TeacherTube, which differed in other ways, could be similar in the genres, or types of communication (like the threaded discussion), they made available to users. These more or less flexible genres, like the case templates furnished by Carnegie’s Gallery of Teaching and Learning, shaped the kinds of content elaborated by users, creating consistency while still allowing for variation. However, these genres also carry with them the traces of prior genres that may be more or less suited to the purposes of promoting certain kinds of English teaching.

As we have tried to show, the genre(s) a site makes available to users can implicitly shape how and what teacher users contribute to the site. This

finding is in keeping with a conception of genre that connects regularities of form and content to social relationships and participation in the shared practices of a community (Bazerman, 1997; Bazerman, Bonini, & Figueiredo, 2009; Hicks, 1995; Prior, 1998). The nature of the genres on sites such as the ones we examined can thus engage teachers in certain kinds of interactions, such as elaboration of a strategy with multiple examples (as on Edutopia), or reflection on how an artifact fits into a sequence of planning, teaching, and assessment (as on Carnegie's Gallery of Teaching and Learning). They may also encourage teachers to make certain kinds of contributions, such as examples of project-based teaching and learning. And they may do this even without articulating an explicit vision, like Edutopia's six core strategies, merely by providing certain kinds of templates, as in the Carnegie Gallery. As the variations on the Carnegie Gallery's KEEP toolkit template show, certain online genres on such sites can provide flexible guidelines that shape teachers' contributions while still allowing for the particularities of situated classroom examples.

In this article, we have addressed the possibility of participation by English educators on several popular websites with English education content as a means of promoting their agendas to broader audiences. Among the websites we examined, Edutopia has features that may provide the most significant generative examples of what is shared by many others. Our analysis examined how sites such as Edutopia invite participation by users, whether and how that participation reshapes the content of the site, and what kinds of interactional patterns are established as a result. Analysis of these potentials suggests to us that to varying degrees these sites do provide a vision of curricular reform shared by English educators. The question that remains, though, is how English educators will be able to use the models of interaction and tools the sites provide to elaborate that vision and reshape, to whatever extent possible, not only the content of current and future sites but also the content of the ongoing arguments over the direction American schooling should take in the twenty-first century. Regardless of how this final question is resolved, what should be good news to English teacher educators is that a broad and varied field is opening up with the potential to provide them, as well as their current and former students, with opportunities to communicate and collaborate with each other and, in the process, to be heard by a large and diverse audience.

Note

1. For a list of these and other useful Web analytic tools, see http://sixrevisions.com/tools/tools_monitoring_website_popularity/.

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