

Flat Classroom Project 2007

Explaining the Concept and Topics

This year's project has three primary methods facilitating communication:

1. [The Flat Classroom Wiki](#) - This will be our product.
2. [The Flat Classroom Ning](#) (with private groups for teachers, leaders, student groups, and educators).-- This will be our connection piece that will allow us to make and cement the connections and manage the workgroups.
3. [The Flat Classroom Airset](#) to create cross-time zone calendaring.

This year's project has three components:

- A. **Editing and updating** previously created information (Mass Collaboration, Symphony)
- B. **Creating Digital Stories** using the 6 senses of the conceptual age from Daniel Pink's book, 'A Whole New Mind' and based on the flattener topic from Friedman's 'The World is Flat'
- C. **Post Project Reflection** - Students will post their reflection on the process to the project Ning.

Students will be editing the wikis based upon the [topic wikis](#) created by the [Flat Classroom Project](#) 2006.

A: Editing and Updating Specifics:

- Students will update links and remove dead links on the wiki page
- Students will provide current information relevant to news in their country on the flattener
- Students will make the wiki more concise while retaining the meaning of the original author
- Footnotes will be added in the wikipedia model of authoring.

Reasons:

- **Mass Collaboration** - It is essential that students understand mass collaboration and participate in cooperative knowledge building and learning with students around the world as they learn the nuances of overcoming language, geography, time zones, and culture to effectively communicate a common message.
- **Symphony** - *Dan Pink's third sense of the conceptual age* - "What's in the greatest demand today isn't analysis but synthesis - seeing the big picture, crossing boundaries, and being able to combine disparate pieces in an arresting new whole." Dan Pink, p 66.
- **Meaning** - *Dan Pink's sixth sense of the conceptual age*. We must move past projects that are discarded onto the trash can. Building new meaning on previous student work gives students a sense of contributing to an ongoing body of knowledge and gives meaning.

B: Creating Digital Stories Specifics:

Students will work in pairs to create one video in each of three categories for each topic. These categories are designed to build upon the four of the six senses of the conceptual age from Dan Pink's Book, *A Whole New Mind*: 1) **Design** and Innovation, 2) **Story** and **Empathy**, and 3) The Fun Factor (**Play**).

- Students will work with a partner to create a digital story about their topic.
- Students will be assigned (or select) one each of the following themes: design and innovation, story and empathy, and the fun factor.
 - **Design and Innovation** - Students will work to create and envision an innovation related to their topic. See [Atif's work](#) last year on the [horizon project](#).

For this theme you are to envision a different world, a world of the future. Consider these guiding questions:

- What is the future direction of your topic, or something related to your topic?
- How will this thing or practice change the way we do everyday things in our lives (eg the way the telephone changed the way we communicate, and now the mobile phone changes the way we socialise and interact)
- What are the features of this new innovative design?
- How will it be used by people around the world? For pleasure, meaning, beauty?
- In what areas? eg health, education, business, government?
- Can it be used to promote cultural understanding?

"Design is a high-concept aptitude that is difficult to outsource or automate..." Pink pg 86

- **Story and Empathy** - A compelling narrative combining persuasion, communication, and self-understanding. This video will tell a story and cause the viewer to empathize with the characters.

For this theme you are to create a compelling story that uses narrative. Telling a story can heighten our understanding of something.

"Based on facts but delivered with empathy and skill, a story can impart a 'complex idea in a more memorable and meaningful way'" (Pink pg 103).

"Stories are easy to remember - because in many ways, stories are *how* we remember" Pink pg 101

"What begins to matter more is the ability to place these facts in *context* and to deliver them with *emotional impact*" Pink pg 103

"...stories can provide - context enriched by emotion, a deeper understanding of how we fit in and why that matters" Pink pg 115

"Empathy is the ability to imagine yourself in someone else's position and to intuit what that person is feeling" Pink pg 159

A digital story based on the concept of story and empathy could focus on 'A Day in the life' of a person or organisation as part of your topic. It could also be based on a personal story or stories on a theme.

Consider these guiding questions:

- Can you find a good story related to your topic? Can you create a good story related to your topic?
- What is the important message or feeling being told in the story?
- Can you imagine yourself in the story? How does it feel? What would you be doing and saying?
- How can you create this story using multimedia to help the audience to understand the concepts better?
- How important is the multimedia? How important is the narration?

- [The Fun Factor](#) - Enjoyment, laughter, games, and humor are an essential part of the Conceptual Age because of their importance for our general well being. This video will highlight the fun aspects of technology that this trend enables or makes possible.

"Play will be to the 21st century what work was to the last 300 years of industrial society - our dominant way of knowing, doing and creating"

Quote from Pat Kane, in Pink pg 193

For this theme you can use your imagination to invent ways that play and fun can be used in your topic.

- Can you invent a game or a series of skits that communicate the meaning and/or evolution of your topic?
- Can you invent a more powerful form of learning about your topic rather than just reading a wiki page?

"Ample evidence points to the enormous health and professional benefits of laughter, light-heartedness, games and humour. There is time to be serious of course. But too much sobriety can be bad for your career and worse for your general well-being. In the Conceptual Age, in work and in life, we all need to play" Pink pg 66

The Topics:

Group 1 and 2: *The New Age of Connectivity, Flattener #2, p 60-77*

The second flattener is identified as our ability to not only author our own content, but to send it worldwide with the 1995 launch of the Internet. Netscape and the Web broadened the audience for the Internet from its roots as a communications medium used primarily by 'early adopters and geeks' to something that made the Internet accessible to everyone from five-year-olds to eighty-five-year olds. (8/9/1995)

Overview of topic

- Development of the Internet: low-cost global connectivity
- The emergence of the World Wide Web: Individuals able to post content for world viewing
- Spread of the commercial Web browser: Netscape and others, able to display WWW content on any computer, development of protocols enabling devices to talk to one another

Ideas related to this topic

- Global Perspective on Internet connectivity
- Digital divide issues
- Standards and policies for use of the Internet and the WWW: comparing differences between countries
- Development of eCommerce, dot-com boom and bust
- Development of social interaction and communication between individuals via the Internet

Group 1 Topic: '[Connecting the World Online](#)'

- Provide a perspective from your country on Internet connectivity: development, access methods and statistics
- Conduct a digital divide comparison and discussion based on country and regional news and issues (Are there digital divides between countries, within the countries themselves? What is the impact of limited Internet availability on education and industry?)

Group 2 Topic: '[How the World Wide Web has Changed the World](#)'

- Discuss the development of the WWW (Netscape etc) and associated protocols
- Provide a perspective from your country on WWW standards and issues
- Conduct a discussion about the use of the WWW in education and business (local and global perspectives)

Group 3: *Work Flow Software, Flattener #3, p 77-93*

Free workflow software was developed, allowing people from around the world to collaborate and work together on projects using a shared medium. The ability of machines to talk to other machines with no humans involved.

Overview of topic

- Being able to create and manipulate digital content (words, data, pictures) from the desktop
- Through online connectivity being able to share and distribute this content: machines talking to machines
- For work to flow seamlessly: connections between different platforms, transmission protocols and languages e.g SMTP, HTTP, HTML, TCP/IP
- Interoperability between departments necessitating software and hardware development
- Standardization of business and other practices: PayPal, JPEG
- New coding called AJAX: allows for online productivity (what you would normally do on a PC eg WP, can be done over the Internet)

Group 3 Topic: '[How Work Flow Software can Enhance Productivity and Communication](#)'

- It has become more important to standardize software and devise platform compatibility in order to be able to work more efficiently between programs and between users: Discuss a perspective on this in relation to business and education
- Provide current scenarios and examples of work flow software to support your comparative discussion eg how does a Mac OS PC 'talk' to a PC running WinXP? What are the most common applications that promote interoperability: packages and Web 2.0
- How does the concept and practice of work flow software enhance/improve productivity and communication: give specific examples

- How must education change to instruct students in collaboration? How must industry change how they train their workforce? How cultural and geographic (time zone) issues impact collaboration?

Group 4 and 5: Uploading, *Flattener #4*, p 93-126

Communities [uploading](#) and collaborating on online projects. Examples include open source software, blogs, and [Wikipedia](#).

Overview of topic

- More people authoring more content and collaborating on that content; more people uploading files and globalizing that content
- Power to individuals and self-forming communities to send up and out their own products and ideas-often for free
- "Uploading is...becoming one of the most revolutionary forms of collaboration in the flat world" *pg 95*
- Ordinary people can now be producers as well as consumers
- Three forms of uploading:
 - community developed software
 - Wikipedia
 - blogging/podcasting

Ideas related to this topic

- Students as producers as well as consumers of content
- Enhanced communication now possible between individuals and groups
- The impact of using uploading tools on everyday activities in education and business
- Authenticity, privacy, security, globalization and cultural awareness issues

Group 4 Topic: '[The Changing Shape of Information](#)'

- Provide an historical account of the availability of information. Refer to developments in participating countries and make global comparisons
- Discuss the impact of the Internet and how uploading has changed the way we find, use and transfer information
- Provide specific current examples related to business and education of consumers also being producers of content that is "uploaded."

Group 5 Topic: '[Why we should be promoting Web 2.0 Tools for Sharing Information](#)'

- Provide an outline of essential Web 2.0 tools (Blogs, podcasts, wikis) and discuss developments and trends in the participating countries
- Discuss essential social and ethical issues to do with using Web 2.0 tools in both education and business.
- Provide current scenarios and examples of using Web 2.0 as an effective collaboration and communication tool

Group 6: Outsourcing, *Flattener #5*, p 126-136

Outsourcing has allowed companies to split service and manufacturing activities into components, with each component performed in most efficient, cost-effective way.

Overview of topic

- Definition of outsourcing: Taking a specific, but limited, function that was being done in-house (research, call centers, accounts receivable etc) and having another company perform the exact function then reintegrating their work back into the overall operation
- Drawing on 'brain power' from India, setting up companies outside of the USA/west
- Using fibre optic cable and Internet to communicate with home bases
- A global perspective on types of businesses outsourced to South Asia
- The Y2K story: India benefited from supplying workers for menial programming tasks
- Call center development

Group 6 Topic: '[Globalization and Outsourcing](#)'

The terms "outsourcing", "offshoring", or "nearshoring" are often used to refer to the movement of jobs from regions with high labor costs, such as the U.S., Western Europe, and Japan, to countries with relatively low labor costs, such as India, China, and the Philippines. Already commonplace in the manufacturing sector, outsourcing has recently spread to the service and high-tech industries, affecting workers who are traditionally among the most highly-paid and highly-skilled in their home countries. In fact, U.S. market research firm Forrester Research, predicts that by 2015, 3.3 million U.S. service jobs, totalling \$136 billion in wages, will move offshore, fuelled by advances in digitization, the Internet, and high-speed networks.

- Discuss ways technology has changed the way people do business with each other and give specific examples from around the world
- Provide evidence of how the development of outsourcing has changed job opportunities and created new areas of expertise and opportunity in both areas. Discuss this in relation to both sides of the world (eg offshore tutoring)
- Discuss what job skills are necessary for the 21st Century and how this impacts on plans and trends in education for your country and the rest of the world

Group 7 and 8: In-forming, *Flattener #9*, p 176-185

Google and other search engines are the prime example. "Never before in the history of the planet have so many people-on their own-had the ability to find so much information about so many things and about so many other people", writes Friedman.

Overview of topic

- Google: a great flattener
- Searching, information, knowledge
- How does searching fit into the concept of collaboration? (Friedman calls it In-forming)
- In-forming: The ability to build and deploy your own personal supply chain - a supply chain of information, knowledge and entertainment, without having to go to the library or the movie theatre or through network TV. It is searching for knowledge It is about seeking like-minded people and communities

Ideas related to this topic

- Personal and Professional Learning Environments (PLE, VLE)
- Search engines: comparative study
- Social networking and Web 2.0
- Information has become a business: eg Google

Group 7 Topic: '[Google Takes Over the World](#)'

- Explore and discuss the development and impact of Google and other search engines on the concept of In-forming
- Compare global perspectives on using a search engine such as Google: developments and trends

- Provide current scenarios and examples of the impact of Google on education
- Discuss the business aspect of Google as an example of the impact of Internet connectivity and the potential for business development and possible monopolization

Group 8 Topic: '[Personal Learning Environments and Social Networking](#)'

- Provide an historical account of the development of social networking and PLE's
- Discuss the approaches taken in Bangladesh and the USA and others to the use of social networking tools for education
- Provide current examples of how business and education use Web 2.0 tools to connect and deliver/find information

Group 9, 10, 11: The Steroids, (Digital, Mobile, Personal and Virtual)

Flattener #10, p 185-199

Personal digital devices like mobile phones, iPods, personal digital assistants, instant messaging, and voice over IP

- Emerging and new technologies
- Digitized content (connections, protocols and standards)
- Mobile: anywhere, any time, through a variety of devices (wireless connectivity)
- Personal: By the individual, for the individual, on their own device
- What does the flat world look like taking into account all of these new forms of collaboration?
- The first steroid: Computing power
- The second steroid: Breakthroughs in instant messaging, peer-to-peer networks
- The third steroid: Breakthroughs in making phone calls over the Internet (VOIP)
- The fourth steroid: Videoconferencing
- The fifth steroid: Advances in computer graphics
- The sixth steroid: Wireless technologies and devices

Group 9 Topic: '[Mobile and Ubiquitous](#)'

- Explore and discuss the development of mobile and ubiquitous computing from a global perspective, giving specific examples from personal use and from other areas of the world
- Provide evidence of how mobile and ubiquitous computing has impacted on education and business
- Provide current examples of the emerging new tools (devices and methods of connectivity) that we should all be taking notice of now

Group 10 Topic: '[Virtual Communication](#)'

- Explore and discuss the use of online and virtual communication tools such as VOIP, peer-to-peer networks and video-conferencing
- Find current evidence of how these being used in education and business in your respective countries
- Discuss social and ethical issues to do with the digital divide, security and privacy with the use of virtual communication in each country

Group 11 Topic: '[Wireless Connectivity](#)'

- Outline the development of wireless connectivity for your countries (Internet and mobile devices)
- Explore and discuss how mobile and ubiquitous computing has impacted on education and business
- Provide examples of current use and trends in this area