



Overview: Opening Classroom Doors

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This exhibition highlights seven websites that use multimedia to document teaching and learning in classrooms in California, Philadelphia and New York City, from elementary and high school, and in math, language arts/ English and social studies. These sites are designed to contribute to the development of new forms and genres of multimedia representation that can help to make teaching public.

Multimedia and new technologies offer unprecedented opportunities for practitioners, researchers and the general public to explore and examine teaching and learning in settings inside and outside the classroom. Many teachers already have their teaching materials and student work in electronic form and the technology exists to put papers, photographs and other materials online; many also are becoming accustomed to videotaping their own or other's teaching; and new generations of faculty are growing up in an era in which creating web pages and surfing the World Wide Web are as commonplace as playing video games and changing channels on TV. But it takes much more than technology to document teaching and represent it in ways that will make it easily accessible to a wide audience (Hatch, Bass, Iiyoshi, & Pointer Mace, 2004).



In order to explore some of the key issues of documentation and representation that need to be addressed to take advantage of the promise of new technologies, we have organized an online exhibition that highlights key aspects of websites that focus on the work of seven teachers. These websites strive to bring together videos, interviews, written reflections, curriculum materials, student work and other resources that enable viewers to examine many aspects of teaching and learning in classrooms in pre-k-12 and higher education.

The work on these websites has been motivated by a number of concerns including the concern that for too long assumptions and decisions about teaching and learning have been made with relatively few opportunities for most people to see and consider what goes on in many different classrooms around the country. Consistent with these concerns, this exhibition seeks to contribute to the development of new forms and genres of multimedia representation that can help to make teaching public. In one vision of the future, these representations could be produced by many different people in relatively short periods of time (such as a few months or less) and shared freely over the internet. In the process, it may be possible to enable teachers, teacher education students, administrators and even parents and the general public to explore and develop their understanding of teaching and learning with many different kinds of students, in many different contexts including contexts close to their own. One can imagine for example collections of websites that strive to explore the kinds of teaching that goes on in particular schools or districts, in different disciplines, around specific issues or topics, or with different groups of students.

In this vision, what distinguishes these kinds of multimedia representations from others are the ideas that they could provide many people – those in research and in teaching;

The websites presented in this exhibition are part of a wide range of recent efforts to use multimedia and new technologies to examine teaching and facilitate learning in teacher education and professional development settings. For a sampling of related works see:

Multimedia cases like those produced by Teachscape <http://teachscape.com/html/ts/public/html/index.htm> and CTELL <http://ctell.uconn.edu/cases.htm>;

Digital portfolios and exhibits being developed by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards http://ali.apple.com/ali_sites/deli/nav1.shtml

Instructional modules being developed by the George Lucas Educational Foundation <http://www.edutopia.org/foundation/courseware.php>

Digital libraries produced by LessonLab <http://lessonlab.com/>

Multimedia “snapshots” in development at the Carnegie Foundation’s Knowledge Media Lab <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/kml/KEEP/index.htm>

Videopapers being developed by TERC and collaborators <http://vpb.concord.org/>

Online posters developed by participants in the Visible Knowledge Project http://lumen.georgetown.edu/vkp/profiles/dsp_posters.cfm

those inside schools and outside -- with some of the means to make teaching public, to examine it, and to learn from it; they may serve as freely-available vehicles that help to advance research, support learning among educators, and foster the development of a public demand for teaching and learning opportunities that meet the needs of all students. But whether or not this vision or some other vision of the development and uses of multimedia representations in education is worth pursuing remains to be debated. We hope that this exhibition lays out some of the possibilities and raises some of the key questions and issues that can help to advance this conversation.

The websites

This exhibition highlights seven websites that have been produced since 2000. The sites reflect a variety of origins, purposes, and authors. The earliest sites (Hutchinson's and Capitelli's sites) are drawn from the Gallery of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning on the Carnegie Foundation's website (<http://gallery.carnegiefoundation.org/>) and were produced as part of the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (CASTL). CASTL was a program of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching that provided accomplished teachers with a one-to-two year fellowship to document some aspect of their teaching and share it with a public audience. (For discussions of the evolution and work of CASTL and of the challenges and opportunities for making teaching public see Hatch et. al. 2005). The websites developed as part of CASTL were usually meant to complement teacher's own inquiries, and, for the most part, they were created simply to explore whether and how multimedia and the web could be used to represent teaching in ways not already available in more conventional forms. In some cases, researchers at the Carnegie Knowledge Media Lab took the lead role in documentation, design, and development of the sites (as in Hutchinson's website) and sometimes teachers themselves carried out the work largely on their own with some support from the Carnegie staff (as in Capitelli's work).

Two sites (Pedraza and Andrews) were produced at the National Center for Restructuring, Education, Schools and Teaching (NCREST) at Teachers College as part of a project to create "images of practice" that document teaching and learning with diverse learners in the New York metropolitan area (<http://www.tc.columbia.edu/ncrest/images.htm>). These sites reflect collaborations between the teachers, researchers at NCREST, and, in some cases, mentors or teacher educators who worked with the teachers. For these sites, plans for documentation emerged from conversations among the collaborators and researchers carried out the documentation and designed the sites with regular feedback from the other participants.

Three sites (Lampkin, Myers, and Pincus) were developed as part of the Quest Project, an outgrowth of the CASTL Program, for the explicit purpose of exploring the use of these kinds of web-based representations of practice in teacher education (<http://gallery.carnegiefoundation.org/insideteaching>). For the most part, these sites reflect collaborations between the teachers, researchers from the Carnegie Foundation, and teacher educators who were interested in using these sites in their own courses. In some cases, these sites emerged from conversations among researchers and teacher educators who identified key issues for documentation; in other cases they began with conversations with teachers. In the three sites highlighted here, the researchers took the lead role in documentation and design, with regular feedback from both the teachers and teacher educators.

Given the variety of these collaborations, the sites are produced in different styles and voices. Sometimes the sites are produced in the third person with quotes from the teachers; sometimes they are written in the first person in the teacher's voice; sometimes they reflect a mix of both. In either case, exactly how to explain authorship for these works – and how to address related issues like intellectual property and the means of citing and referring to these sites – are questions that warrant wider consideration.

Although all seven of the sites focus for the most part on the work of a single teacher, usually in a single class, the different origins, purposes and perspectives of the sites also raise fundamental questions about exactly what aspects of teaching to highlight and how. In particular, as viewers like Anna Richert, Pam Grossman, and Kathy Schultz began to use sites like Hutchinson's in their own teacher education classrooms, questions about whether or not all sites needed to have certain elements (such as particular information about the context, explanations of standards covered, examples of student work, documentation from the beginning of the year etc.), and about how "broad" and how "deep" they need to be came to the forefront. In addition, questions about how to navigate the occasional tensions between what teachers wanted to represent in their practice and what teacher educators wanted to see and explore emerged. In the process, both producers and viewers of these sites had to confront questions about the extent to which a particular site can serve the needs of teacher educators in multiple contexts, with diverse aims in multiple courses and how closely a website needs to "match" the context in which teachers and teacher educators work in order to be most useful.

It is worth noting that in addition to creating this exhibition, the organizers of this exhibit played some role in the development of all of these sites that have been produced through the Carnegie Foundation, NCREST and Quest work, and we know those sites that are highlighted here particularly well. These seven sites were selected to illustrate a range of subjects, ages, contexts, styles, and purposes. In particular, we wanted to in-

clude in the exhibition sites that focused on the central content areas of literacy / language arts and mathematics, that reflected work with diverse students, and that provided a substantial amount of material for viewers to explore. The sites selected reflect the fact that more sites that focus on language arts and the elementary years have been produced up to now.

To the extent possible, we tried to select sites that do not present technical problems, but we linked to these sites “as is”; we did not attempt to update older sites or check or fix all links. Therefore, different sites may present videos and other materials in different formats, and, particularly in the older sites like Hutchinson’s, videos may load more slowly than they do in others. This also will be the first time that these sites have been made widely available to large numbers of people at the same time, and we expect to make adjustments as we learn how well these sites do and do not respond to any increased demand. Our choice was to go public now, knowing that these sites might not work in all cases (over a modem, for older browsers etc.), but we are hopeful that they might be far enough along to show the potential of these kinds of representations and to help to contribute to conversations about their further development and wider use.

This exhibition

The exhibition is organized to give viewers several different entry points to the web-sites. On the home page of the exhibition, viewers can see some examples of the kinds of materials that they will find on the selected sites and explore the sites further on their own; they can launch a slide show that highlights key aspects of the sites and read a short discussion of some related issues of representation; or they can begin by viewing the comments of a number of reviewers who have been invited to respond to the exhibition.

The term “exhibition” has many different connotations, but it is used in this context to encourage the consideration of teaching and learning through forms of representation and presentation that are more likely to be used in artistic fields and other endeavors than in conventional forms of educational research. At the same time, it illustrates one of the chief assumptions (and problems with) efforts to develop web-based representations of teaching and learning: we do not yet know – and may not have imagined – how to use multimedia and the internet to represent and examine teaching and learning most effectively. In that sense, the proper analogy for this exhibition may be to shows of new works or collections of the work of emerging artists designed to provide a common place for producers, critics and consumers to think about where things are headed – not a juried show designed to bring recognition and reward in a “best of” collection.

In order to place the work in this exhibition in the larger context of the many other on-going efforts that use multimedia and online technologies to learn about and from teaching and learning, we have invited a number of people to respond to the exhibition and the links it includes. We invited commentaries from people who have had some familiarity with the projects that spawned these websites (including some who have developed or used websites like these in their own work), and we also sought to include the perspectives of some of the people who have been engaged in their own efforts to use multimedia to document, examine, and learn from teaching.

We asked the commentators to use one or more of the three key questions about the multimedia representation of teaching and learning that are addressed in the slide show as a point of departure for their discussions. We invited them to make a few comments about aspects of the sites that are of particular interest to them and to make some connections to their own work or other work they might know about that can help to inform and advance these efforts and others like them. We suggested that commentators might want to produce a short essay, a set of annotations on material presented in the exhibition or elsewhere, and/or a web-based display of their own design. While running the risk of producing a set of disparate responses that are difficult to organize, navigate or comprehend, we sought to provide as much flexibility as possible precisely because we believe we have not yet imagined some of the most useful or interesting ways to represent and respond to issues of teaching and learning in multimedia and on-line forms.

Consistent with that view, in addition to contributing to a conversation about the uses of new technologies and the power of new forms of representations for advancing knowledge of teaching and learning, we hope that this exhibition will also serve as a stimulus for new forms of online publication in education. Ideally, new publication opportunities will provide some of the incentives and support that practitioners and researchers need to experiment with multimedia representations and develop a new generation of educational scholarship that can inform both research and practice..

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