Designing Experience: Modeling On-Line Collaborative Learning in Art & Design

Moderator
Thecla Schiphorst
Technical University of
British Columbia
Suite 301, 10334 - 152A St
Surrey, British Columbia
V3R 7P8 Canada
+1.604.586.5279
schiphorst@techbc.ca

Panelists
Steve DiPaolo

Susan Kozel
University of Suvrey

Alice Mansell
Ron Wakkary
Technical University
of British Columbia

How do we involve the learner in the individualization and co-construction of the digital learning environment? There is an explicit relationship between building experience and interaction in participatory learning. In this panel, presenters with diverse backgrounds in the art and design field explore new trends in designing experience-based models for learning online. The focus of the panel is the design of learning environments for the new virtual classroom.

Innovations in online learning involve moving beyond a simple desire to make the education process more effective by incorporating networked systems into instruction; they are based on a deeper understanding of the collaborative learning process in a connected environment. Experience- and studio-based methodologies engage visual, aural, and physical activities and practice, and are drawn into online learning environments.

The Designing Experience panelists are actively engaged in online learning and the use of educational technology. They routinely explore how to design experience in online collaborative environments utilizing both synchronous and asynchronous models. Their expertise ranges from user-interface design to curatorial practice, performance, dance and theater, virtual worlds and gaming, narrative and storytelling, painting and visual arts, and instructional design for online collaborative learning environments. The range of experience-based models explored in this panel discussion include responsive spaces, event-based interaction, online virtual communities, problem-based collaborative models, and questions of narrative and staging practice in the virtual classroom. Presenters represent educational design and pedagogy as it is being researched at Stanford University, the Technical University of British Columbia, and The University of Surrey.

Thecla Schiphorst
Thecla Schiphorst is a computer media artist whose work includes interactive installation, performance, and software design. She is currently assistant professor in interactive arts at the Technical University of British Columbia. She is the recipient of the prestigious 1998 Canada Council PetroCanada Award in New Media granted biennially to a Canadian artist for contributions to new technologies research. Her research includes gestural interface design, computer interactive installation, and kinesthetic systems for collaboration and performance. She has an interdisciplinary MA in computer compositional systems from Simon Fraser University, undergraduate studies in dance and computer science, and a diploma of technology from BCIT in computer programming and systems analysis. She is a member of the original design team that developed Life Forms, the computer compositional tool for animation and choreography. Her computer installation work has toured extensively, and it has been exhibited in numerous international conferences and festivals including SIGGRAPH, SIGCHI, Ars Electronica, ISEA, Interaction '97 in Gifu Japan, Interactive Screen, CyberArts, and others. Schiphorst designed, directed and produced the award-winning multi-media interactive project entitled "immerce," which won three first place festival awards at the International Digital Media Awards Festival

and a Graphex award in design. It was also presented at the ARC awards in Los Angeles. She is the co-director of Then/Else, the Interactivity Research Centre at TechBC and is involved in exploration of collaborative immersion, in which gesture and movement analysis principles are utilized to augment user experience and communication.

Steve DiPaola
Steve DiPaola has been involved with the cutting edge of the interactive fields of 3D animation and Web-based design since 1984, when he was a senior member of the Computer Animation Research Group at the New York Institute of Technology. At NYIT he conducted research and development in 3D character and facial animation, and produced animation for film, television, and fine art projects. He worked for advertising giant Saatchi and Saatchi, where he founded and co-ran its independent innovation arm, Darwin Digital, in San Francisco. As creative director, he explored state-of-the-art media and interactive projects for major accounts such as Hewlett-Packard and Macromedia.

DiPaola was director of development and design at the OnLive Group of Communities.com, where he led a team of artists, architects, user-interface designers, and musicians in designing and developing 3D voice-based avatars and virtual worlds for such clients as NEC, MTV, ABC, and Universal Studios. Previously, he was at the Advanced Technology Group of Electronic Arts. He directed a group that spearheaded development of advanced techniques in CD-ROM-based interactivity. Considered a pioneer in alternative user interface design, he has spoken at major conferences such as Internet World, SIGGRAPH, SIGCHI, and The Institute for the Future. At these conferences, he has delivered presentations and published papers on interactive characters, advanced Internet design, collaborative virtual environments, and the future of identity. He is currently Vice President of Creative Development at Muse Communications, which is creating a next-generation, broadband platform that integrates multiple technologies such as HTML, rich media, 3D graphics, and multi-user community into a unified, synergistic environment.

Susan Kozel
Susan Kozel is a performer, choreographer, and researcher specializing in live performance in responsive spaces and development of digitally connected learning environments. She is currently working as a senior research advisor with the Institute for New Media Performance Research at the University

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of Surrey on creation of an online module called "The Extended Body: Gender and New Media Performance," which places particular emphasis on online, real-time visual/audio/text exchange, plus studio experimentation in physical as well as virtual environments. She is now a member of the faculty of Interactive Arts at the Technical University of British Columbia. She is also undertaking a research project into motion capture in theatrical installations with the Institute of Dramaturgy of the Aarhus Universitet.

Kozel has a PhD in phenomenology from the philosophy department of the University of Essex and has experience with a wide range of movement practices. She is a founder, member, and director of Mesh Performance Partnerships, a professional cross-disciplinary artists' organisation specialising in media technologies. Recent Mesh projects include Contours (1999) supported by the Arts Council of England and Figments (1999) supported by the UK National Lottery. Her most recent project is Trajets (2000), co-directed with Gretchen Schiller and co-produced with the Banff Centre for the Arts. She has performed in many countries and is widely published. Her writings can be found in books and journals of performance, architecture, and film from the UK, Australia, the USA, Holland, Sweden, Belgium, Italy, France, and Morocco.

Alice Mansell

Alice Mansell is vice president, academic at Canada's newest university, the Technical University of British Columbia. TechBC's mandate is to provide advanced education and research in applied and technological fields and to make a significant contribution to the economic development of the province. Its initial program areas include Information Technology, Management and Technology, and Interactive Arts.

At TechBC, Mansell has led development of new programs, integration in defining innovations in pedagogy in the online learning environment, and definition of new research and program directions in Interactive Arts and beyond. She has long advocated exploration of a fusion of arts, science, technology, design, and management, and the opportunities that success in those integrations can bring to the business and cultural arenas. Her current research interests include interactive learning and its relationship to personal narrative in art-based electronic commerce models. She served as president of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, where she led collaborations among government, education, and industry partners in development of new-media education and research initiatives. She was professor and chair of the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Western Ontario and a faculty member in the Department of Art at the University of Calgary, where she led development of interdisciplinary studies in gender and the arts in Canada.

Mansell continues to pursue an active studio practice in the visual arts. She enjoys an international reputation as an artist and lecturer in contemporary art theory and art education. She is currently a member of the Board of Directors of CANARIE and serves on its Learning Advisory and Content Committees. She is an active member of the Surrey Public Art Advisory Committee and in 1996 was selected as Women of the Year (Education & Research) in Halifax. She was born in Alberta and holds degrees from the University of Calgary and the University of British Columbia.

Ron Wakkary

Ron Wakkary is associate professor and dean of academic planning at the Technical University of British Columbia. His research interests include interaction design, network interactivity, and art and technology. Beginning in 1995, as director and cofounder of Stadium in New York, he collaborated on many leading and pioneering projects in art and the Internet with internationally recognized and emerging media artists. Many of these projects have been displayed at ZKM in Karlsruhe, the Whitney Museum of American Art, ARCO in Madrid, and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. He has led Internet projects for the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim Museum, the Dia Center for the Arts, and Electronic Arts Intermix in New York. He is an editorial review panelist for the Leonardo Digital Reviews, an advisory board member of WebLab in New York, and director of Then/Else: Interactivity Centre at TechBC. He was formerly on the digital design faculty at Parsons School of Design of the New School University in New York. He is currently researching a social network game in collaboration with Nokia, in Tampere, Finland.