

Computers in the Classroom: Appropriate Curriculum and Instruction Related to Computer Technology is a graduate-level course offered by the [Faculty of Education](#) at the [University of Regina](#). The course, as it is taught by Alec Couros, “was designed to foster an immersive experience where participants could engage in and critically interpret digital content, tools and emerging pedagogies” (Couros 2008b). The course design and delivery moves the professor from the role of knowledge adjudicator to community facilitator and assesses its success by the ability of students to acquire knowledge from the socioprofessional community that Couros introduces them into. Knowledge is built through the processes of interacting with professionals from the educational technology community and creating collaborative resources.

In the Spring 2008 offering of the course, Couros used a combination of Web 2.0 resources, input, and participation by colleagues within his online professional community as well as his own experience within that community to bring his students into the shifting knowledge space of educational technology. Communications within the course relied on a [course blog](#), a [wiki](#), [Twitter](#), [Ustream.tv](#), and other social networking resources to help students develop their own community and to offer them access to an existing professional community in the field. During the course, students were able to draw on professional input as well as the impressions and contributions of classmates in building their own shared understanding of the educational capacities of Web 2.0 technologies.

The development of the course was influenced by a variety of educational theories including [social cognitive theory](#), connectivism, and [open thinking](#). The [assessment process](#) for the course was threefold: Students had to develop a personal blogfolio, a collection of work illustrating the student's engagement in personal reflection, analysis of readings, community interactions, and critical reflection on the student's personal education context; participate in the creation of a class wiki regarding technology in education; and develop a major digital project such as an online course unit, a digital video, or an educational resource Web site. Couros invited ten guest speakers over the course of the term and welcomed dozens of educators from around the globe to participate in his live online classes through Twitter announcements. According to Couros, the course structure facilitated student participation, leading to improved technical competency, a greater degree of independence, and more self-sufficiency in learning (Couros 2008a).

Couros was also positive about the flexible, community-based nature of the course, which allowed for complex and changing concepts to be understood in meaningful ways. He offered as an example the development of a class discussion from one student's inquiry. This student's work developed out of a student-led session during which the student in question mentioned wanting to learn more about the issue. Couros used Twitter to bring in Sue Walters, who he knew had some experience in the area. The conversation that ensued involved about fifteen students; another twenty students and professionals from outside the class listened

in on a spontaneous discussion of a topic that was global and timely—but not included in the original plan for the class. And while the session was scheduled for an hour, participants were so engaged in this open dialogue that they stayed for two (Couros 2008a).

The subject for study, parental consent for blogging, arose organically from one student's interest, but thanks to the capacity within communities to connect people for knowledge sharing, a large group of learners and professionals were able to join in the conversation and contribute. Students then reflected on the issue in their own blogs, connecting it further to their own experiences as administrators, teachers, and technical consultants. And, in a prime example of the kind of authentic learning that can arise when Web 2.0 technologies break down the walls of the classroom and extend the concept of community beyond the false construct of "the class," a participant who was not a class member actually wrote and posted a rich summary of the conversation (Walters 2008), which the class was then able to draw on as a resource that they had been instrumental in shaping. For Couros, this development is emblematic of the strengths of the course's structure: "We have big concepts to learn but she seeks out what she wants to learn and I help her connect, and she also has ways of connecting, creating, constructing and understanding based on what she hears, who she reads, and her own work/learning context" (Couros 2008b).

## References

Couros, A. 2008a. Interview by D. A. Cormier. Skype/Audacity recording. March 21.

Couros, A. 2008b. Open, connected, social: Implications for educational design. Paper presented at International Conference on Information Communication Technologies in Education Corfu, Greece, July.

Walters, S. 2008. Conversation on Al Upton situation with Alec Couros's EC&I 831 class. [Weblog entry, March 20.] *Mobile Technology in TAFE*. <http://aquaculturepda.edublogs.org/2008/03/20/conversation-on-al-upton-situation-with-alec-couross-eci-831-class/> (accessed May 29, 2008).