

# Documenting & Assessing Dynamic Learning

Issues and Questions

# The Standard Model

- Learning defined as progress toward fixed, uniform goals
- Assessed by pre-/post- performance on short-term tasks
- Comparative ranking of learners, methods, institutions, teachers?

# Limitations for Informal Learning

- Significant learning outcomes often unpredictable, emergent
- Learning outcomes not uniform
- Activity goals dynamically changing
- Valued outcomes identified post-hoc
- Significant learned practices not assessable by short-term tasks

# Dynamic Learning

- Informal learning, free-choice learning
- Goals and means continuously revised
- Feelings and desires in the loop
- Learning is one aspect of the dynamics of a trans-individual system

# The Role of Media

- There are always media – what affordances and how deployed?
- Kids converging avatars in a virtual world from multiple computers, with large screen projection and video recording, to have a birthday party

# Media 2

- A student, a remote tutor, an onsite mentor, and a friend use a simulation program to jointly solve an electric circuit problem
- Kids plan a garden project while claiming spaces for their own faces in a localized greenspace photo-montage projected on a large screen

# Media 3

- Kids share knowledge of how to build in a virtual world while playing out complex social relationships and having fun
- Kids create a powerpoint and a video showing their accomplishments in a virtual world
- Kids create and enact a play, making real-world props and costumes against the projected virtual-world backdrops they have constructed

# Richly Mediated Learning

- Genres as control vs. genres as resources
- Improvisational use of rich media enhances possibilities and unpredictability
- Rich-media learning mixes process and outcomes, vitiating traditional assessment



# Documenting What?

- Individual short-term performance
- Individual over-time trajectory
- Dynamic learning ecology over time

# Documenting How?

- Written records of short-term performance
- Video records of system dynamics and development on multiple timescales
- Observant participant and participant observer ethnographic fieldnotes
- Self-documenting activities

# Assessing How?

- External, pre-set, fixed & uniform criteria
- Integral assessment: criterion-dependent progress and success (cf. Gee on games)
- Retrospective assessment: outcomes of value identified and assessed post-hoc by variable, purpose-specific criteria

# Policy Issues

- Should assessment require comparative ranking of individuals and institutions?
- Should all citizens learn the same body of knowledge?

# Power and History

- How has the standard model of learning and assessment been shaped historically by:
  - The desire of elites for cohesive nation-states?
  - The Fordist model of inter-changeable workers?
  - The ideology of meritocracy?
  - The need to document inequity?