

Democracy from Global Web Education

How local collaborative Web education is uniting a divided world

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Abstract

The mentality of Colonial/Industrial Education is when a superior/expert group imparts their knowledge down into the working classes/cultures. Democracy in Education has the masses fully empowered to explore, create and share knowledge on equal footing between students, the same way billions of people typically use the Web today. The disconnectedness between these two trickle down - collaborative strategies of learning are vast, wide and sometimes antagonistic.

These differences dramatically impact how we deploy social change policies, educational program structures, content development, methods and Internet learning technologies. Yet, authoritarian styles of social change continues to proliferate in NGO/academic strategies, methods, programs and grants with significant problems. While colonialism continues, the common people are leveraging the Web to discover, adopt and share massive knowledge bases in a way that is more efficient, sustainable and successful. The world now has a more efficient global education system that bypasses our traditional training programs. Now how did this happen? Why is the collaborative Web a better system for social change?

1. Introduction

Colonial or industrial training is when people in authority such as governments, educational departments or companies utilize a learning process as a “one way street” to replicate the principles or *process* they want the learner to *perform*. It is trickle-down, authoritarian and industrial in its nature.

In Colonial training, there is not much personal responsibility for learning as is evident in a “do as you are told” process of developing good worker bees or soldiers. The eLearning buzz word for this strategy is “workforce productivity.” This is a pass or fail – fit in or get fired method. It is the 1929 movie Metropolis style of learning that we live in. Figure 1. illustrates this one-way flow of informational obedience.

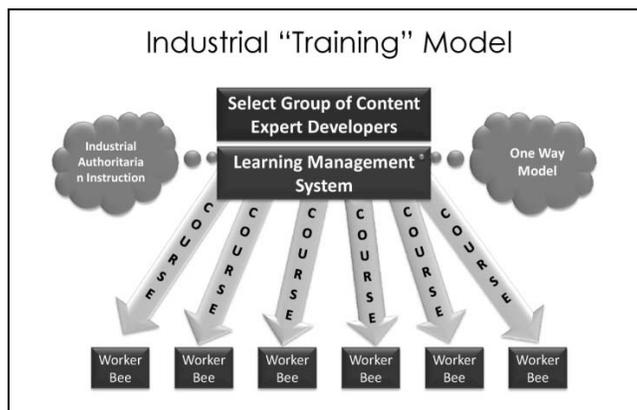


Figure 1. Colonial Industrial Training Model

In contrast, democratic learning on the Web is when the everyday person has the need or curiosity to learn something or wants to solve a problem. In democratic learning, it is also equally important that the learner also be the publisher, not just the receiver, but a creator as well. As a result, the entire learning process is a fluid, collaborative exchange of ideas that is forever changing. Democratic learning transcends the one-way learning between teacher and student, and it evolves into collaboration within a global audience.

Democratic Web learning is a set of processes that requires community trust, openness and validation of content relevance. It requires a collaborative platform with shared responsibility between the content developer, students, faculty and community on the published results. Rather than “pass or fail,” it yields a series of micro solutions to situations that deliver experiences of real world success or failure to a community of people. Democratic learning does not test for competence, but it delivers real world outcomes.

Democratic learning is grass roots “Search Learning” based on the demand for a solution at that moment. It is always relevant to the current situation. How does my tribe grow crops without rain? In each case, a brief lesson has an actual impact on the individual’s world that is desperately crying out for help.

The democracy of Web education offers freedom of choice about what to learn and adopt. By doing that, it brings personal responsibility for success to the level of the people, which of course is absolutely wonderful.

Understanding these principles is a key measurement of any developing nation’s education program. If collaborative Web development within the local communities is not taking place, then national K-12 and adult education sustainability is being restrained by colonial education methods.

2. The Colonial Training and Global Education Conflict

The battle for people to have control over their own lives, destiny and information has been in an ongoing collision course with authoritarian instruction, such as the China/Google battle. However, as large academic institutions slowly went online (mostly due to the massive success of University of Phoenix), they replicated the identical techniques of the authoritarian classroom, i.e. with the same cost per course credit and teacher at the head of the classroom in the online environment.

Educational NGOs and development organizations took the same approach with online Learning Management Systems designed for one-way knowledge distribution from experts in some remote place like Washington D.C. or Brussels.

Authority is appropriate when certification/standards style training is required. Traditional eLearning is ideal in this case. There is a role for the industrial format of education in rigid content. Bodies of sequential information must be learned in order to certify that someone is competent in a block of information, such as in Microsoft Certification or food handling. In this case, the industrial format works well.

3. Community, Not Facts Defines Competence

Colonial online learning fits the academic and business models well because of the requirement to control the following: brand, knowledge base, copyright, rights and student ownership. Yet, even when we were developing the Microsoft and other certifications, we understood the limits of certification training that were eventually tested in the courts. We could certify that the person knew the body of Microsoft knowledge, but not certify if they were a competent systems engineer or that the NT servers would run because of variances in hardware environments. Tests only tell us that a person is competent in a bubble of knowledge. Certification does not necessarily mean that “competence” has been developed. The development of competence requires human collaboration with the real world.

Training only accepts test level competence, apprenticeship or Project Based Learning has a level of human interaction that moves from competence into personal responsibility, reputation and character building.

4. Democracy is Learning in the Context of the Community

The Web is not only knowledge, but it is knowledge connected together with other knowledge in “context” of the communities in which it resides. By its very nature, context about a piece of information is often more important than the piece of information itself. An image of the president of the United States in a U.S. social community has a totally different meaning than in a radical Islamic community.



Figure 2. Knowledge Context Model

In colonial training, it does not matter if the student feels the test question is right or wrong. Multiple choice answers are hard wired. You must repeat the fact that is presented to you whether it is right or wrong. How often have we heard from a professor, “Now class, your free opinion is requested on these papers,” when you know in order to get a high grade, you must parrot back to the professor their own values? A dictator who only asks for advice that reinforces their thought is a symptom of colonial based education.

In democratic learning we turn to the open community to challenge if what we have learned is true and useful. We even have the choice to go directly against the community regarding what they think is right, when we know that the community is wrong, like I am doing in this paper. **In democratic education, sometimes it is right to be wrong.** In democratic education, to be different is not necessarily right or wrong.

This flexibility of democracy is what makes it so highly complex for traditional eLearning systems. The global Web seems to manage this fuzzy grading system of publishing effortlessly on a massive scale. I will explain this later.

Some contemporary models of eLearning try adding searching into Knowledge Management architectures, wikis or forcing a high level of Fidelity into the course material and market this as collaborative education. The idea that knowledge is rigid in a fluid global system happens because developers have yet to grasp the role human “context” plays between knowledge objects. SCORM LMS technology also does not handle true global collaboration within true human context. Human context is more complex than a common metatag.

Collaboration is the flow and placement of knowledge within the context of community. The context of an eLearning developer will always be disconnected from the context of the learner and will have an even larger disconnect from the learner’s community. Even if the student thinks, “that’s not how we do it here,” the developer simply forces the issue with a test at the end. I many cases the student is left with feeling.” They don’t care what it think.” And they are right.s

In forcing the compliance learning to take place with a test, the developer or training department may convince themselves that they have accomplished sexual harassment training when no behavior modification has taken place. Hospitals across the country force everyone to take sexual harassment eLearning courses, yet it is still a massive issue. Drug education prevention courses can also fail, even if people receive a 100% score on the tests. Programs like DARE work because they use group dynamics with students in collaboration. In many ways, our nation’s drug education programs from the 70s did exactly that, they educated the nation on how to do drugs. The entire authoritarian program backfired, because it ignores the community aspect of drug behavior. According to [Justice Department’s Bureau of Justice Statistics \(BJS\)](#), we have exceeded two million prisoners and drug arrests in the 1980s skyrocketed.

5. “Context” the Cement of Knowledge Objects

In collaborative learning, the human element (context) becomes equally (if not more) important than the knowledge object. Let’s say I hold up a U.S. dollar bill in a U.S. sales meeting. I get excitement and cheers. There are places in the world where if I held a U.S. dollar up, the hatred for it could get me shot. The paper bill is innocent, however the human context around that paper is highly significant. Human collaboration around an object or idea is what gives it “context.” Context is the cement between the bricks of knowledge. How we as humans decide to put the bricks together defines whether the bricks become a school, a fort or something to throw at an invading army. Whether we heal cancer or blow up the world is defined in the context of how we perceive the use of nuclear energy. Context through human collaboration is what makes the brick relevant to the community. Systems must manage context with knowledge.

The global exchange of knowledge by humans is what makes the good the bad and the ugly of knowledge relevant to the collective “us.” **The entire world is now empowered to speak out in one global democratic cry of creativity and knowledge sharing. We now live crashing against one another’s context, local communities and cultures.**

6. Micro Learning Paths... the Process of Global Education

Can we find a method in this madness of global exchange of information? Is it possible to facilitate collaboration in the classroom, business and global community? Can we teach in such chaos? Absolutely, yes.

To understand how Web collaborative education works in contrast to assess-teach-test is to move from flat index learning into a 3-D weave of human context and knowledge sharing. I used to believe that on-demand “search learning” would accomplish this, but now I see that collaboration and publishing are all inseparable processes in the education of global social communities.

To grasp how Web education works, let’s start fresh by dropping the idea of an eLearning course and exploring the basic building blocks of learning about something, “a lesson.” People learn by on-demand lessons or stumbling across something new. Some examples of this are: using a phone to upload movies, disciplining an ADHD child or using the latest diaper design on an airplane.

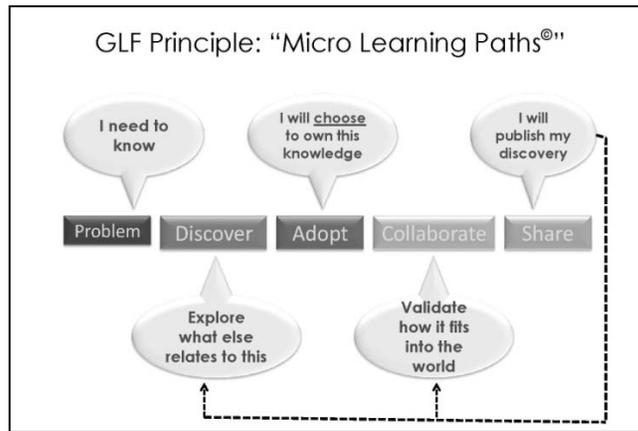


Figure 4 Micro Learning Paths™

The Global Learning Framework is a weave of humanity concurrently performing five simple educational processes:

- 6.1 **Problem:** We start with a need or problem. We turn to the global Web with “How do I find out...?”
- 6.2 **Discovery:** Next, enter a discovery process. Often we discover that we are asking the wrong question or looking in the wrong place. As the Web keeps offering search results, we find ourselves reformulating our questions until we finally come to a place where we think we’ve found what solves the problem. On the Web, we are forced to discover the truth and not blindly accept what we are told by an authority.
- 6.3 **Adopt:** Once we discover what we are looking for, we choose to adopt it either as the fact we need or the action we would like to take. Either way, at this point, we take ownership of that knowledge. With ownership comes a level of “trust” that is enough to embrace it into our life.
- 6.4 **Collaborate:** Knowledge alone is useless unless tested or applied with other people in the real world. After learning new cake recipes or drip irrigation, I can try it with the physical world or present it to other people. Collaboration is a field of testing the new knowledge with the reality around us. If it is not accepted, we may have to go back to discovery again. Collaboration also reassures us to move ahead or go back to the problem.
- 6.5 **Publish:** Once we go through these steps and trust our conclusion, we publish it in a variety of ways. Publishing can be writing your conclusion on a homework blog, planting burn resistant seeds, or baking the ultimate brownies you just researched (only to discover that your date is allergic to chocolate). Publishing is a statement that what we have learned is “worth” giving back to the world or local community.

7. Web Education Flows Within a Non Linear Global Community

This sequence of Problem > Discover > Adopt > Collaborate > Publish seems like another linear method, however it is anything but linear. It is a path 100% integrated with innumerable other Micro Learning Paths all concurrently running at the same time and at different stages of the educational experience. We call these Micro Learning Paths. Although it seems like five nice boxes, the contents of those boxes are dynamically changing.

When we share our thoughts (Publish), it integrates with other Micro Learning Paths around the globe. In fact, all learning is impacting other learning on a massive scale. Just repeating a path’s moments later may yield completely different discoveries and outcomes.

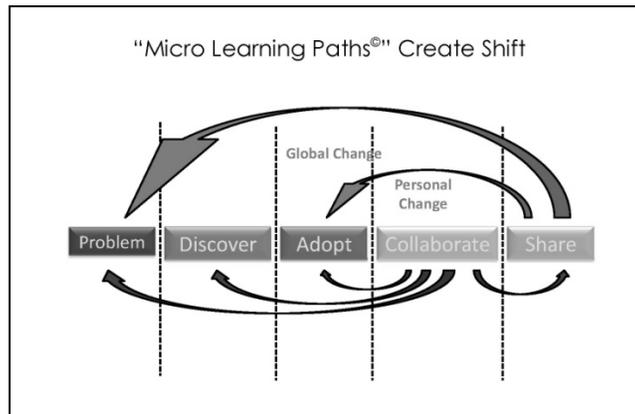


Figure 5. Micro Learning Paths feeding other MPLs

Just like a heated town hall meeting, democracy bursts out with everyone talking at once. Yet in the end, collaborative conclusions of greater accuracy are the final outcome. What we should be able to conclude at this point is that the power of human collaboration is in its ability to rapidly evolve and change the world's knowledge base as a whole.

For example, let's say a small group of African farmers are talking about that they are not convinced the irrigation system presented to them by an NGO would work on their hilly ecosystem. They explore well irrigation instead of river dams. During that process, a youth missionary points out that they've heard of children using merry-go-rounds as pumps which the group explores at a cyber café. The group orders one, puts it together and it works like a charm. They then publish a YouTube video on the whole project. Another group in Thailand, in the middle of their exploration has the same problem, and stumbles across that African's video on YouTube.

Another case I saw recently was a homeless shelter having issues with bed bugs. The state's official pamphlet presents the standard pesticide way to deal with them. However, in a LinkedIn discussion, someone shares a YouTube video demonstrating that heat over 115 degrees kills them, and exterminators now blast homes with up to 150 degrees of heat to wipe them out. Micro Learning Paths turn the entire planet into an educational community that transcends all physical classrooms and eLearning portals combined. As I write this we are empowering women in a homeless shelter to build their own curriculum from lessons already on the Web with a Web Education System called Global Chalkboard.

With the Micro Learning Path, we can see how frequently solutions to life's problems are often outside of the course, certification, community and even the country's educational bubble. This a staggering leap in educational theory and practice. Any child who has an iPhone is already there.

Micro Learning Paths all feed into one another at various stages. When a group publishes something, it impacts another's group's discovery process. One group's collaboration process intersects another problem or publishing stage. In a fantastic way, all of the problems and solutions in the world become not only integrated in a theoretical sense but in a very literal way. The world ends up teaching itself simultaneously. Knowledge Objects are crashing together in a sea of social context.

The content experts and visionaries at the top are still needed, but the methods of distribution of the knowledge are entirely different. If their idea is needed by the world, it will be swept up in a current with billions of people all moving it along a virtual mosaic of Micro Learning Paths. Perhaps in this world, the expert must find their significance in the masses rather than lead the masses. Perhaps experts will need to move from authoritarian modes to servant modes of behavior.

8. Colonial Knowledge Silos

The isolated knowledge silo of Learning Management Systems are dwarfed by a global learning collective of the Web search based system that taps into millions of servers and billions of cell phones around the world.

The old idea of oodles of silo Moodles all running the same courses with incomplete curriculum libraries becomes ridiculously redundant. It would be much cheaper to give the entire U.S. K-12 curriculum away to the world for free online. Yet academics, egos and grants will block that from happening.

9. What is Collaborative Education?

First collaborative Web education is not traditional eLearning courses in an asses-teach-test model. ADDIE and ISD eLearning standards track mostly to this kind of model. I know I will catch flack for this, but I will continue anyway. The flaw of these models is that they either assume or attempt to get everything the person must know to be "competent" into the "course," and that only works in industrial training cases. Course knowledge may exist in a bubble like that; however our educational experiences in life do not. You may be certified in what a clean operating room is, but then find yourself in a refugee camp with flies and no supplies, what will you do? The flaw of industrial training is that no piece of knowledge or process can be 100% self-contained. **Life is relational and 100% integrated.** Even more importantly, eLearning typically

assumes that the information is absolute and not debatable. That is another disconnect from the real world. **You do not debate with an eLearning course, yet the classes we both love and learn in at most high schools and colleges were filled with debates.**

All knowledge is connected to the world and therefore must collaborate with the world. This is like the purpose and process of the Internet. The Internet is so great at collaboration that learning is addictive. The Web is like the two kids in the back of the class that are always talking or (texting) to one another until the teacher yells at them to stop collaborating or is that stop learning?

10. The Challenge of Filtering, Blocking Trash

What about all the porn, and violence? What about disinformation and junk science/politics that needs to be filtered out?

There are two types of filtering that some claim will one day blur together. I would challenge that, but not in this paper. System filters, such as child protection filtering, keep things out like porn, violence and social sites that might be more of a distraction than educational.

The second type of filtering is human, personal and community driven. This filtering is the natural way humans focus on points of interests and filter out knowledge based on their values. By nature, we both filter in searching and publish through the same set of personal human filters. Animal lovers look at animals verses cars and publish photos of a cute kitten verses dragsters. We technically facilitate this by how Google adjusts to our behavior and how we tag when we publish. Tagging and Personal Learning Networks is how we control our personal context and the beginning of Web 3.0.

11. Future Community Learning Centers

Perhaps what we will see is a merger between public libraries, telecenters, community meeting places and collaborative technologies in the center for rural towns and urban cities. This is what we call Global Learning Community Centers. These will all have shared social network communities of interest knowledge bases and communication technologies. Farmers can turn to farms in the same eco system on the other side of the planet for help. Microeconomic small groups can be trained all at once. Even more revolutionary, experts can listen in real time and give advice. Even all NGOs, government and faith-based groups can train and work together in such centers. The idea of a collaborative knowledge mall can be birthed. Several countries are all ready looking at this concept now.

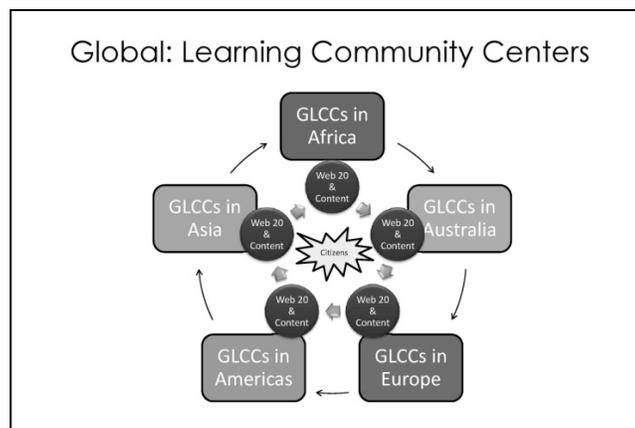


Figure 6. Global Learning Community Centers

12. Evolving out of Colonial Learning

In order to evolve out of the industrial paradigm, eLearning experts will need to move from seemingly arrogant stand of believing that only a few talented people can create good eLearning content and they must accept the reality that the public is currently building great content. Web learning is usually small pieces of information or a brief lesson. Case in point: A tiny rural farm in Africa only wants to know how to install drip irrigation on a piece of equipment or how to transplant banana trees. They do not need (or want) a degree in agriculture to perform these tasks.

Search Learning through Google and Social Networks on agriculture is evidence that the person can find a quick solution and share it with a community with common interests. People turn to the Web to learn almost everything and rarely their old college professor. Come to think of it, I have never called any of my teachers for an answer to any of life's problems.

Wikipedia vs. Britannica and Expedia is the quintessence of evidence of the difference between authoritarian and collaborative learning. Wikipedia is managed by the people of the world as a global bibliography (trusted guidepost) on where to find knowledge about any topic. Unlike drowning in millions of Google results, a trip to Wikipedia is like stepping up to the librarian and saying, "How can you help me?" However, unlike the single personal librarian, we are greeted by a

collective of librarians that are in fact a group of thousands of people around the world who guide our exploration simultaneously through a single voice, called Wikipedia. They even argue amongst themselves before publishing it. This presents a massive leap of trust. What if the world is wrong? We find comfort in this, because democracy is a large collective is more likely to be truthful than a single person who is in power. As Proverbs says, there is wisdom in numbers.

What is interesting is that these communities of interest are democratically created at the grassroots level in our societies. Even top down marketing firms seek out the markets that are interested in its product, and they avoid markets that are not. Idealistically, the market driven business would be controlled by the educated consumer. Unfortunately, consumers are not educated enough to filter the good from the garbage.

12.1 Trust and a Global Learning Framework

With democracy of knowledge comes responsibility for how we adopt and share things. It requires a level of trust on the validity and relevance of each piece of knowledge passed on to a fellow worker, classmate or child. If we grasp the global way we are dependent and reliant on one another to survive, perhaps this could transcend our tribal warring.

Learning is a framework that connects us all. When we see that it comes from all of us and impacts everyone, I have faith that we will change for the better. The Global Learning Framework was developed to illustrate the massive evolutionary leap we are currently taking as a species.

13. Global Learning is Global Social Change

Understanding this process is critical to understanding global social change. Altering any point in the learning process (Micro Learning Paths) creates social change and at no other time in our history does the human race have both greater control of its own destiny and is at greater risk of being manipulated by a select few with massive media power.

Perhaps in recognizing our collaborative connectedness, we will rejoice in the wonder of our uniqueness and unity. Perhaps with the interdependence of our unity in diversity, we can find security and a sense of peace in our violent world.

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You will find the roots of these ideas by exploring Wikipedia on [John Dewey](#), [Constructivism](#) and [Singularity](#).

CHRYSALIS CAMPAIGN, INC.

The Chrysalis Campaign, Inc. is a non-stock holding incorporation in CT USA Application for US 501 C3 is pending. A Board of Directors and advisors oversee it's activities.

MISSION

Provide safe community learning centers, safe social communities for collaboration and global Web resources in collaborative ways that transform the developing situation into self-sufficient communities of new possibilities.

ABOUT

Founder Richard Close In the corporate eLearning market, Richard has 20 years of experience consulting and developing marketing-event programs for companies such as IBM, Microsoft, Oracle and helped launch a number of eLearning companies. He has published white papers and several books on Africa and American Rescue Missions. He is an International conference speaker, industry strategist and developer of the Global Learning Framework at: <http://globallearningframework.ning.com> Richard designed and built, in the US, its first profitable commercial Technology Center in New York City called the Netlan Technology Center.

Chrysalis Campaign, Inc is currently being sponsored by UNESCO Power of Peace Network to launch a YouTube story telling contest call "I am Africa. This is my story..." Chrysalis is building Chrysalis Community Learning Centers in US cities. Chrysalis is exploring building community learning center in China, Nigeria, Lesotho and Sudan Africa. Provides educational content and a community on <http://globallearningframework.ning.com>.

In his missions to Africa, he has developed two photographic writings books for Kenya and Zambia. He continues his work to show the mercy and the beauty of the poor by building Web based social communities, photo galleries and press for partnering missions. <http://www.scribd.com/richardclose>



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