Journal of Comparative Pedagogy

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# Prompt

Compare pedagogical ideas across modules as it's relevant to the idea and your application of teaching and learning.

# Goal

To imagine education as if it could be otherwise. How do you bring together these pedagogical ideas with the realities of helping someone learn? You should focus on your own perception. How could the pedagogies work for you?

# M6 Journal Entry: Crossover Learning Vs Incidental Learning

### 9 March 2022

Crossover Learning bridges formal learning with informal learning. In a generalized way, one can conceive of this pedagogy as integrating learning that occurs outside of the classroom into the course curriculum. One recurring example activity is for students to go to a museum exhibit to explore questions prepared by or in collaboration with the teacher. But one can conceive of many activities that leverage knowledge from the student’s communities (work, home, different groups of friends and families, cultural events or spaces) to amplify learning in the classroom. For example, one student in my class took the liberty to conduct an experiment for his essay on perception. He simply walked through the downtown area of his city saying “hello” to people and counted how many people responded with a “hello” back. He did this once dressed in “preppy-style” clothes and then in “hip-hop-style” clothes. I don’t recall the exact results, but he received a dramatically less number of responses when dressed in hip-hop style clothes. He included this in his paper, which responded to a book we read in which culture and perception were central themes. In another example, as part of a unit on logical fallacies, I assigned students an activity that tasked them to observe their everyday interactions and collect examples of logical fallacies that occur in these conversational exchanges they either take part in and/or witness; they then reported back to class and shared their examples with groups. When teaching about the writing process, one crossover assignment could be having students create or do something that they know how to do and accesses their interests and talents (creating a song, a food dish, or preparing for a sports game) and then have them record the process they used, step-by-step; the follow up task would have them relate this to writing an essay, breaking their process down step by step for writing in a like manner. These are just some examples of crossover learning from my classes, and while they speak to small formative assessments, one can imagine crossover learning taking more of a central role in the curriculum, which would require significantly rethinking the design of the course and its summative assessments.

If we integrate crossover learning to enable students to pursue themes relative to their most immediate lives, there are also the requirements of the course to think of; for example, students in my English composition courses need to read at least two books and write at least 6000 words in formal graded assessments in order for that class to be transferable to the University of California system and other universities. Should students choose these books based on the theme they are exploring? How could the instructor design that or even assess that (obviously not having the time to the possible dozens of books selected)? Or does the instructor need to have read those books in particular and can reading assessment be conceived in a different way? Some instructors meet this approach halfway, selecting a handful of books that students can choose from and then creating reading groups. In this way, each student has discussion opportunities with their book selection. This also brings up another issue—should students be working with similar content (i.e. reading material and such) so that discussion with others is available or can we conceive of other ways or activities of processing reading material that allows for a diversity of content yet still meaningful collaboration.

While crossover learning bridges the gap between in-class and out-of-class learning, another pedagogical approach also seeks to be more inclusive with the ways in which we learn, incidental learning. This speaks to the reality that sometimes we do not learn on purpose, and that learning can be an organic result of interacting with our environment. Do we have space for evolving learning outcomes in our classrooms? This is an intriguing idea, and it speaks to not only an improvisational style to teaching but the improvisational nature of human learning. Incidental learning, from my understanding, is integral to the “Montessori” approach to teaching children—which values unstructured exploration in an environment that supports various learning goals. In this case, the environment (the classroom) is the key design element. It makes learning more organic, and it allows children to have agency over their learning. As we grow older, the way in which we learn becomes ever more structured and pointed, with “incidental learning” not even a conversation outside of small circles of educators.

In the learning community that I teach for at my college, we have a practice called “Live Learning,” which seems to honor this idea of “incidental learning,” in at least one respect. “Live Learning” is a practice that acknowledges the organic nature of learning and the fact that sometimes learning opportunities are presented to us in the classroom that are worthy of taking advantage of. For example, a student might bring up a topic or an exchange may take place that may have more value than if curbing that conversation back to the originally planned goal of the course time. “Live Learning” acknowledges that learning can sometimes be spontaneous. One example that occurred to me—and this might even be “crossover learning” in a sense---is when a student approached me in my office hours not too long before class began. She mentioned a Grammy performance by Kendrick Lamar that Dave Chapelle appeared in. She pointed to these lines in particular: “The only thing scarier than watching a Black man being honest in America is being a Black man being honest in America.” We watched the performance and discussed these lines, but then had to go to class, so on the way we decided to bring the conversation to the classroom. I was going to introduce theater to the class that day to get them ready to read a play, and so this activity fit anyways, just under the larger umbrella of performance. At any rate, the student and I led the discussion and I ended up adding the performance to the curriculum—for the final assessment a couple weeks later, students could write an essay on the play we read or this performance. I guess this had a bit of both elements—students bringing in and learning from what they are exposed to through media as well as having the flexibility to accommodate or take advantage of this opportunity.

If one incorporates incidental learning more fully into the classroom and at a more intimate level with each student, I think that teaching metacognitive reflection would be valuable since learning would be so specific to each student. A running metacognitive journal could help capture some of the learning, with a major assessment at the end that has the student summarize take-aways or create some sort of “metacognitive highlights” project would be one idea. I would imagine that incidental learning would take place in and out of the classroom, so the metacognitive journal would function as a tool for crossover learning as learning in the out-of-the-classroom environment is also captured. One key aspect of incidental learning is the environment, the “unstructured exploration” of a learning environment. If we bring this into the virtual environment, then I could imagine Units being set up as a sort of video game style lesson, where students could take different tracts or pathways to meet the learning outcomes (#studentchoice). Obviously, this is a bit out of the expertise of the teacher—having the ability to create a sort of virtual environment for learners to essentially play around with—but it’s a cool idea, and as a student of learning technology as well as a college teacher, it’d be interesting to conceive of and play around with what is possible as I gain more working knowledge of instructional technologies.

# M7 Journal Entry: Numeracy & Reasoning Informed Pedagogies: Learning by Argumentation, Engaging in Data Ethics, Computational Thinking

### 30 March 2022

In the college-level English classroom, argumentation is perhaps an overvalued genre of writing. This can be traced back to the rift in English composition studies that began perhaps in the 1970s but became more pronounced since—this rift essentially created two camps of English professors, those that used literature as a conduit for critical thinking and writing and those that valued the principles of rhetoric and non-fiction texts. It appears that the rhetoric has won out as course outlines largely specify requirements on teaching argumentation and using non-fiction texts, while teaching fiction is simply options. I am speaking in the context of required GE courses, of course, and not in the context of literature and creative writing electives. Suffice it to say, I have had significant training in and experience teaching argumentation. And I often use this mode of writing to teach critical thinking as it requires students to evaluate evidence, weigh pros and cons, and consider varying perspectives in the process. All argumentative writing can be placed under two broad essay categories, the first being a position argument, in which a student simply takes a stance on an issue, and the second a proposal argument, in which a student illustrates a problem and proposes a solution. The proposal argument, from my perspective, requires, to a greater extent that the position argument, students to engage in critical thinking in a way that takes them out of their comfort zone.

In this respect, Computational thinking completements the process and features of a proposal argument, also more simply called a problem-solution paper. In a problem-solution paper, students identify a problem, illustrate how the problem came about, analyze the parts of the problem with the intention of identifying a pointed solution, propose the solution and explain how it will work, discuss different points of view, concerns, and/or solutions as well as possible limitations to the solution. This process is very much in line with those mentioned in computational thinking--“breaking large problems down into smaller ones (decomposition), recognizing how these relate to problems that have been solved in the past (pattern recognition), setting aside unimportant details (abstraction), identifying and developing the steps that will be necessary to reach a solution (algorithms) and refining these steps (debugging).” I can see how these concepts can be adapted to the process of argumentation---by “breaking down problems into smaller ones,” a student can identify the scope of their task (decomposition); by “recognizing” how they “relate to problems (. . .) solved in the past,” a student can research the background on the problem and discover possible relative solutions; this does not necessarily have to be only “in the past” if research is placed in a global context as students can look to how other countries and cultures have solved or are currently dealing with similar problems (pattern recognition); by “setting aside important details” students can analyze the contexts of the solutions in determining what more readily applies to the situation under investigation (abstraction); by “identifying and developing the steps” of the solution, students are forced to look at the practical viability of their proposed solution and mark out a step by step approach to implementing it (algorithms); and by “refining these steps,” students are forces to consider the concerns of the audience and those impacted by the issue as well as possible limitations to the solution.

When I apply computational thinking to argumentation and the English composition classroom, I am largely speaking in context of assignments that examine social issues. However, the report “Computational Thinking” concludes by acknowledging that the approach “may not be appropriate to solve human and social problems that cannot easily be decomposed into sub-problems.” From my perspective, this approach can be useful to help students limit and focus their solutions. Social issues encompass many problems that are interconnected, and it would be valuable for students to identify those problems as a means to focus their solution on something practical, and not write under the presumption that they need to solve such a large, complex problem, but identify a practical and effective “next step” to bettering the situation.

To speak a bit about “Engaging in Data Ethics,” I see this as a possible intriguing unit in the English classroom. For me, there would be a bit of a learning curve to this as I am not really that informed on these issues. I would likely assign it as a research assignment (or series of them) and then set up groups for students to share information. This would also allow me to learn as well. Group presentation assignments could work well. The report mentions that starting with a case study would be a good idea since these issues usually lead to a discussion on the need of legislation. This would be a good first step to delve right into the issue. This could also potentially work well with cross-over learning, especially if the focus is on data collection with social media since so many students, and really all of us to a certain extent, are engaged in social media on a daily basis. The report mentions the case with Facebook; this could be a good starting point, but younger students are normally on Snapchat or TikTok, so looking at these social media platforms may be more relevant to their lives. I can see how cross-over learning can really work out with this, but to my understanding “data ethics” is more of a lesson or unit plan than a pedagogy.

# M8 Journal Entry: Playful Learning, Learning with Robots, & Esports

### 6 April 2020

“Playful Learning” intersects well with “Crossover Learning” and “Incidental Learning” especially given its central focus on the learner as opposed to the teacher. Learning through games and exploration highlights student interests, the value of making mistakes, and agency in making decisions. In the classroom, I have incorporated playful activities, many of which come from “improvisation pedagogy,” which basically takes a variety of routines normally used in theater improvisation classes and adapts them to other contexts; for me, it’s community college English. These routines created a playful and supportive environment and boosted collaboration and social engagement in the class. I usually started off with games to just get everyone comfortable, games which did not have anything to do with the content we were working on, and then I would adapt the same game to the content of the course, adjusting the topic of exploration to, for instance, a recently assigned text. For instance, the game “7 things” in which student groups put members on the spot to name seven things about whatever they want (movies, foods, ways to hello, it’s really wide open) would be adjusted to “7 things about the text” in which student would put others on the spot to name, for instance, seven things about the author or seven annotations, for example. The questions became more difficult to follow up on when applied to the course content, but the environment the ‘low-stakes’ routine we started off with created a social environment in which everyone felt comfortable to chime in and support each other by helping them through their responses (and crack some jokes in the meantime). Since the covid pandemic, courses have been primarily online with only a limited number now back on campus (only about 20% of English classes). But I have yet to find a way to transfer these types of activities to the online environment.

When we place this in an online environment, I can see how mobile apps can provide opportunities for informal learning and how digital games can increase engagement with the course content and among peers, but I am having difficulty visualizing just what types of games would work in an online environment and for an English class; I also have to admit that my experience and knowledge are limited in this area, both in terms of being informed on different programs or games available and also on how to instruct students to “make their own games” as suggested by the report on “Playful Learning.” I like the idea of escape rooms, and creating some sort of virtual space where students essentially take an interactive quiz to escape the room, so to speak. There could be other types of English-type games that could be adapted to online (if I can muster up the technical abilities to do so); for instance, students could put an essay together, dragging parts of an essay and/or paragraphs to put them in order (this would be part of a lesson on organization); I’ve done this activity in class, basically just cutting up an essay with a pair of scissors and tasking small groups to work together to arrange the parts in order. Other games, which could take the form of escape rooms or even some other form, could focus on lessons about selecting quotes, revising for vague language, thesis statements, topic sentences, and many more. I initially envision these types of games allow students to click optional answers, but it could also other forms; for instance, the content could be driven by the narrative that is generated much like a video game. Again, this is all hypothetical right now as I would need to have more technical knowledge to pull this type of stuff off or simply need to know more of what’s available at the point.

“Esports” is an intriguing idea and obviously links into “Playful Learning” since, after all, it is about online games supporting the learning process. I was happy to learn about “Twitch” as I have seen these types of gaming videos pop up on social media, and they are popular with both kids, teens, and young adults. My first impression was just how much of a vehicle it could be to support collaboration and social interaction in an online environment. I teach in a learning community called Umoja, and we have a learning community room where students can hand out, and video games are a regular activity in this room (I’m speaking from on-campus, pre-Covid times). “Twitch” could be a great tool for students in the program to interact even when not taking the same classes together; in fact, “Umoja” is a state-wide program, and a possible “Umoja Twitch” could offer interaction between members of the learning community across the fifty or so colleges that houses this program. Some worries I have are that it could isolate students who are not really into gaming or even have the time to get into it (a lot of my students also work full time and/or are parents). The ideas in the report about using the platform for group conversations, student presentations, and other types of assignments is intriguing. As something relevant to English class, I can imagine student using the platform to perform a process demonstration, which is transferable to the skills we develop in English classes. I would need to get some hands on experience with “Twitch” to help me generate ideas and create assignments, but it does sound like a step in the right direction. Overall, the gamification aspect of online learning is something that I am really interested in; I would like to know more about it and how I can not only implement it into my online classes but apply it to creating a more vibrant and robust online social environment for the learning community I teach in.

# M9 Journal Entry: Enriched Realities, Artificial Intelligence, & Chatbots

### 13 April 2020

Integrating enriched reality components into lesson plans appears to be a powerful strategy that could increase engagement as well as open access to a more diverse range of content and activities. Most of the examples the report illustrated were focused on the sciences, but I can imagine this being useful for English and Humanities classes as well. For example, novels usually pack so much history and culture throughout the pages that they often offer endless opportunities for research and study. When reading Dostoyevsky novels, how cool would it be to ‘virtually’ wander the streets of Saint Petersburg at the end of the nineteenth century? I could also imagine all the bits of information or blurbs that could pop up when students virtually encounter places where scenes take place in the novel. I could also imagine this not only in the context of students exploring the historical and geographical context of a novel, but it could also be helpful in learning and applying literary theory—perhaps relating information on psychology, for example. I’m not sure how this would all work, but it does sound like students would pick up on a lot more nuances of a novel if they had a more accessible way placing historical and cultural references. This also connects to ‘playful learning’ which we explored in a previous module, since it encourages exploration.

I also like the idea of virtual museum visits. This type of activity can really be valuable for students and can set the context for all types of writing assignments—where they are simply reflection assignments or analytical (analyzing a work of art, for example). This actually connects well with a current discussion in another class, Elements of Design, on having a “creatively flexible, technology fluent” (CFTF) mindset. One example activity illustrated in the reading material was an online blog to capture ongoing reflections. Students could do virtual visits to museums and integrate images, videos, or whatever they want into their reflection blog. There could also be other types of ‘virtual visit’ assignments; I can imagine this also a type of research activity, for example. Visting virtual museums and other types of exhibitions is also a form of crossover learning since it encourages students to interact with their community, and I imagine that it would enrich the diversity of content since I imagine students having a lot more choice in terms of what museums they could visit; with just a [quick search](https://www.travelandleisure.com/attractions/museums-galleries/museums-with-virtual-tours), I’ve found virtual museums ranging from Brazil to Amsterdam to Seoul, Korea.

When we jump to using AI and chatbots, one of the main things that jumped out at me was just how valuable this could be in the English classroom; there are so many comments that I make that are redundant. I feel like I make a certain set of similar comments for essays, like three or four, and I could really just copy and paste them and they would cover all my feedback for students. Chatbots or AI that evaluate essay drafts and offer feedback on organization, phrasing, development, formatting and such would be immensely helpful, and would save a lot of time too. I think this would be a more approachable mode of getting feedback too since so many students are hesitant to see a tutor or the teacher in office hours; some will not even participate in peer review with other classmates. This would take the feeling of being judged out, as I believe was mentioned in the report. I do think that AI should not be used for summative assessments, at least not for essays and assignments dependent on critical thinking, as I’m not confident that critical thinking can be accurately assessed by AI, as mentioned in the report. I also believe that AI should not be used to score standardized tests or placement exams, at least not any written portion; these types of tests have already proven to produce fairly inaccurate assessments of student skill and the flaws of AI scoring could amplify this.

One area that is intriguing, however, is to use chatbots to assist the teacher in assessing students and facilitating the course. While using chatbots to develop quizzes would help me out immensely (quizzes take me so much time to create, at least for me! I only use them for the reading material, and students seem to need them in order to be compelled to complete the reading assignment), I think using them to assess learning disabilities would totally change things across the board. Looking back on my career, I can say that I have embarrassingly judged some students as slackers because their papers were riddled with proofreading errors; maybe some actually were but others put in a very timely effort. It wasn’t until many years later that I learned pervasive proofreading errors are indicative of a learning disability, and that proofreading would always be a struggle they would never master. I started to notice this more and more as my teaching career went on but I never even hear it talked about among other teachers. In fact, while we all have a DSPS at our colleges that students can go to and receive learning accommodations, DSPS centers are really disconnected with the actual classrooms (this is my experience at the several community colleges I’ve taught for). The only interaction you get with DSPS is through a slip that the student brings you that basically says they can take their tests in the DSPS office and have extra time. There are never really any interactions with DSPS on facilitating learning strategies effective for students who are neurodivergent. Teachers using chatbots to assess disabilities and inform the teacher of learning strategies and other vital information would change things across the board.

# M10 Journal Entry: Place-based Learning, Student Co-created Teaching & Learning, Offline Networks, Online Laboratories

### 20 April 2022

Place-based Learning draws on Crossover Learning given the opportunities it provides to engage with the community. In a face-to-face setting, this may require organizing field trips but there may also be on-campus opportunities. For example, our college has a small but ongoing art display that can provide opportunities for group analysis and possible follow-up assignments. Students can also investigate data collected by the institution to inform research projects—for instance, they could gather success rates of the college, either in general or focusing on a certain class. They could also look at how the data breaks down according to race and ethnicity as well as gender; identify groups needing support; conduct interviews with students to identify barriers to success and generate ideas to help improve success rates. This would lead to producing a research project and delivering it paper and/or presentation, either individually or as a group. For field trips, there are plenty of opportunities in nearby Oakland, a city rich in African American history; the first thing that comes to mind is the Black Panther movement and the many historical places that students could go to and learn about if doing a project related to the Civil Rights era; but there are other opportunities to explore Black culture and history too. I’ve done a field trip with the learning community I teach for, Umoja, to the Museum of the African Diaspora in nearby San Francisco, where there are many museums to explores, as well as cultural and historical neighborhoods. Returning to these types of field trips seems a bit far off given that we are still in the process of transitioning into post-covid education, which will likely require more online options than previously. (Though, I do imagine study abroad opportunities will march forward in full swing). Even still, place-based learning could allow students to explore digital spaces; this could come in the form of visiting online museum exhibitions, as discussed above in the AI and Chatbot reflection; or it can also feed into projects that explore other digital spaces.

In the past, I have, to some extent, co-created curriculum with students. My approach was to create enough flexibility in my writing prompts to allow students to develop their own prompt if they so choose and given some basic underlining requirements and guidance on my part. Some cool assignments have come of this; for example, instead of writing a literary analysis of the core themes of a play we read, one student wrote a ‘sequel’ to the play that continued to develop the core themes of the play we read. One thing about education in general is that analytical work tends to overshadow creative work the higher the grade level; this can really squash a lot of joy out of learning. As talked about previously in this class, incorporating student creativity into the curriculum can increase engagement, and incorporating creative alternatives in collaboration with students requires instructor flexibility above all. One way to incorporate this idea more fully would be to engage in a conversation and/or activity where students create alternative writing prompts as a means to leading up to a writing assignment; in this way, student have prompts to choose from instead of having to initiate the conversation with the instructor. This type of activity would need structuring, and I would probably frame the conversation in terms of modes of writing; for example, one prompt could focus on textual analysis, another on creative writing, and a third on research. This could get a bit tricky, and I would need to consult the course outline of record to make sure that options are in line with the requirements and learning goals of the course, but this seems like a doable option more so than embarking on a major project that fully incorporates student collaboration in the course design, which, don’t get me wrong, is a commendable act, but as the report indicates this does not necessarily mean students are more likely to do or do well on the work and more likely than not it means a certain students would play more of a role than others. One idea would be to hire students to participate in task forces or some particular project for the school in which student input is vital; there should be a hiring process so that a diverse range of students is hired, and not just students, for example, who are highly motivated and eager to be a part of student government or clubs. Another idea is to hire a student tutor for a class and collaborate with the tutor to create curriculum and design the course. For any large-scale collaboration, I do think some pay is necessary and only ethical too. I must acknowledge that much of the conversation I am having is in the context of face-to-face interaction; the student-teacher as co-creator dynamic is more complicated with distance education courses, especially since students usually just want to know what to do and when to turn it in by. A clear course structure and clear instructions on assignments become more important, and while flexibility can still be integrated into the design, it would probably be more dependent on teacher-student interaction in office hours, or an outreach component in collaboration with a tutor could be more suitable; it would be difficult, for example, to have full class discussions that arrive at focused prompt alternatives, as could happen in a face-to-face class.

The two optional pedagogies, Offline Networks and Online Laboratories, bring some good ideas to mind, even if it was hard to identify with much written in the reports. For example, it was difficult for me to envision what using ‘offline networks’ looked like in the online classroom based off what was written (and my own lack of knowledge, perhaps), but one thing I did learn about that caught my eye is the “Slow Education Movement.” I think that, particularly in the community college, so-called slow learners or even those who prefer to take their time because of other responsibilities are largely overlooked and even deliberately excluded from conversations of student success. For California, AB705, which eliminates remedial education requirements, functions under data that is limited in scope—for English, it looks only at data that determines student success in college-level English within the first year of college, but it does not even take into consideration that many students are not interested in taking English their first year; this unanalyzed assumption (that all students are trying to get their requirements out of the way in a limited set of time) inflates that data and conclusions that student success in more likely if basic skills is removed. It also conveniently supports efforts for students to earn certificates and degrees at a faster pace, which (again, conveniently) is key to increased funding from the state. In a nutshell, AB705 supports many good things but it also supports the ‘for-profit model’ of getting students in and out of school at a quick pace. The Slow Education Movement would be a valuable addition to our community college conversation that acknowledges students that do not fit the colleges preferred 2-year mold. The Online Laboratories report mostly talks about online science labs, but our college has a lab component for our first-year writing courses. One major shift that I can anticipate in terms of what our post-covid course offerings will look like is that the majority of our sections will offer the lab component online. This does bring up a major shift and could lead to department designed modules as opposed to each instructor creating their own. I do think that our department does need to reassess the value of these labs as they have not always been equally valuable to all students and in fact hindered some students’ success given the extra time commitment they require.

# M11 Journal Entry: Stealth Assessment, Big Data, Formative Analytics, & Making Thinking Visible

### 27 April 2022

It’s hard to imagine how stealth assessment would function in the college-level English course; after all, it would take a very creative mind to create an engaging video game that teaches critical reading and writing. I can imagine how certain critical thinking concepts, such as logical fallacies, could be integrated into a video game concept; after all, logical fallacies are meant to deceive and so knowing who the bad guy is based on identifying this deception does play into a video game narrative. On a larger scale, however, I would really need to stretch my mind to do this. The TAALES tool, mentioned in the report as an alternative type of stealth assessment, assesses vocabulary use in student essays; this is obviously very relevant to my field. I did a quick search and found that it is a free tool you can download, so it may be valuable for me to try out. Based on the description, it should simply be used as a tool to help students develop a broader vocabulary, which is one aspect of writing, so I couldn’t imagine using it as a means of grading essays all together; there could be, however, a vocabulary portion of the rubric (which currently exists in mine as “audience awareness”) that this tool could help assess, but it may not be worth the time to use for actual grading. I see it as something students could use for their rough drafts, which in turn could help them revise and their papers for final submission. TAALES also connects with the report on “Big Data,” which uses student writing as an example of how data would be collected and used. It mentions much of the same types of digital evaluation with regards to writing—focusing on vocabulary and language features to collect data. One concern I have with heavy focus on linguistic features is the overemphasis on Edited American English as the standard to which linguistic features will be analyzed, which could cause significant bias. The nuances of language and expression can vary widely geographically, within the US, as well as culturally, which enables a rich variety of linguistic expression that I would imagine be difficult to account for if analyzed for such things as word placement and variety and sentence structure. It could, in fact, create significant bias. It would actually be interesting to research if and how this issue is accounted for with digital assessment of writing. Other digital assessments that are more traditional or straight forward, such as quizzes for ebooks or chapters, may present less challenges, and I like the idea presented in the “Big Data” article about including student input on revising questions and responses. One other thing that caught my eye was the digital capturing of peer review responses; I could imagine capturing this data in a structured way that organizes it for students to show up for them, for example, on future assignments, it could help students assess how they are working on their challenges throughout the course (as opposed to only with the Unit or task in front of them).

While it is hard to visualize incorporating stealth assessment in any concrete way, the underlining principle of this approach—to essentially assess students without formal testing—is a very important principle; after all, test anxiety and the lack of diversity in testing have always made these normally “high stakes” assessments relatively limited measures of success in terms of their accuracy, and this reality has proven to disproportionately impact minority students in a negative way, and Black students in particular. So, “blurring the distinction between assessment and learning, while carrying out accurate diagnosis,” as the report mentions, is a valuable goal that should be advanced into mainstream use in education. I believe I mentioned this in a previous reflection (or perhaps a discussion post) but a handful of instructors at my college are using Contract Grading, which speaks to this purpose here, eliminating the anxiety of high stakes testing by essentially having students sign a contract to complete a set number of assignments that correspond to a certain grade for the class (A, B, C). To a certain extent, assessment is based on completion, but I imagine that instructors build in certain requirements so that students demonstrate certain knowledge or skills necessary to pass the class, as per the course outline of record.

Looping back to using the TAALES tool to develop vocabulary use, I had mentioned that this would most likely be valuable for students to use on rough drafts so that they have time to apply some of what they learned and try out new words. I would say that this is a form of formative analytics since I suggest its use on a formative assignment. In Canvas, there is a section called “new analytics,” which offers some insight into student participation in the course. Instructors can view the number of times students logged into the course, the number of assignments submitted, the total time spent logged into the course, and the last time submitted. There is also a feature in Canvas Studio that shows how many students viewed a video and for what amount of time. Honestly, I’m not too sure how valuable this all is; if students don’t submit anything for a couple weeks, then I will contact them to ask what’s going on and offer help. It could help to guide conferencing in the sense that it will help to gauge just how much exposure the student has had to the material, but I’m not exactly sure how else it would help outside of also reflecting on just how well I as a teacher am reaching students – for example, if some videos are not viewed as much as others perhaps I could shorten them or even take them out. There is also a discrimination measure in Canvas quizzes which could help me revise some quiz questions if they show up as often missed by students, which more often than not is simply an issue of phrasing, but it could also inform what I emphasize when reviewing the content being quizzed or how I organize it in Canvas pages.

The report that discusses “Making Thinking Visible” places value on student understanding of their own learning process and accessing digital tools to do so. This approach connects well with the “Reading Apprenticeship” (RA) approach, a popular teacher training that functions under the principle of “making thinking visible,” or as RA puts it “making the invisible visible,” to teach reading. They do this through activities that center on social metacognition as a means to make the reading and thinking process visible. The digital tools most valuable to implementing this approach are social annotation tools, where students can read and interact with the annotations/thoughts of other students, bringing the reading and thinking process into concrete reality, so to speak. In class, this could be more organic as students could read and verbally share their thoughts (a routine called “think aloud”), but personally have had more success with the digital tools as students are less self-conscious about sharing their thoughts if they are not on the spot and have taken some time to articulate them before they share with others. In a sense, discussion boards also function as “making thinking visible” as they are usually formal assessments designed to help students process the reading material, at least for my classes.