Title: Tools to foster online learning conversations
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Tools to foster Online Learning Conversations

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Outline

• Web as a learning platform
• Online interaction
  - how to monitor inappropriate uses
  - how to facilitate chat conversations
• Visual tools
  - how to provide a focus for conversation
Internet

- A new medium for learning
- A medium that respects multiple forms of intelligence
  - textual
  - visual
  - abstract
  - musical
  - social
  - kinesthetic

WWW

- "Leverages the small efforts of the many and the large efforts of the small"
  - John Seely Brown
What would a parent like to be alerted to?

- Sex
- I can pick you up
- so lonely
- curious about sex
- come alone
- expletives

What would a parent like to do?

- Configure the chat services
- Flag or filter the undesirable language use
- Child will not be able to see or send such messages
Hey mom, why is Chu Kang manipulating the discussion in HDB now? Let me enter the chat room to find out.

PARENT IS USING THE MAIN "CHEAT". LET ME ENTER THE CHAT ROOM TO ADVISE HER.
Conversation Facilitation (CF) agents

- Make chat easy to follow
  - pry out different conversational threads into private chat sessions
  - integrate chat with task window

Loel C.K. (1999)
Visual Tools
Mind Tools

- Originally developed for individuals, when thinking was considered an individual act
- Social constructivist view of learning => thinking as an social act
Visual Tools for Negotiating Meanings

• Students generate ideas individually and then share ideas with the group
• Deepen & express individual views of how information is connected
• Share ideas with each other, incorporate new information from other students' maps, develop own understanding

Looi C.K. (1999)
SCAFFOLDING THE EFFECTIVE USE OF MINDTOOLS

• tools may be provided to build mindtools,
• but students may need to be scaffolded to know how to meaningfully construct them.
• prompts and questions which provoke the students to know how to think and what to do next in the context of using the mindtool to solve a problem.


Some leading questions for compare-and-contrast

• How are they similar?
• How are they different?
• What similarities and differences seem significant?
• What categories or pattern do you see in the significant similarities and differences?
• What interpretation or conclusion is suggested by the significant similarities and differences?

Making use of past wisdom

• Accumulate lots and lots of mindtools for common projects
• Question: how to make use of such information to help future students doing the same projects?

Project: Water Shortage Problem in Singapore

Of the 235 projects done on this topic so far, 87% uses fishbones, mindmaps and the list, 7% uses cause-and-effect diagrams and lists, 4% uses trees, 2% uses form-and-functional analyses.

I am the SMT agent!

Lot's try the fishbone mindtool...

Please show us what mindtools have been used for this project in the past.

how the **** is form-&-functional analyses useful for such a problem?
Mindtools represent the structure of information, so that efficient searches can be done over the knowledge accumulated from completed mindtools.

I don't know why this project group suggests cause X as a cause of Y. Let me look at the text annotations. Oh-Oh! Nothing there. Chat agent, can you show me the log of the discussion which transpired during the creation of this mindtool?

Hey, I am also the chat agent!

So, what do all these buy you?

- Web as a learning platform
- Online interaction
  - monitor inappropriate uses
  - facilitate chat conversations
- Visual tools
  - provide a focus for conversation
  - archive the process and leverage on it