Primer for (Learning in) Cyberspace
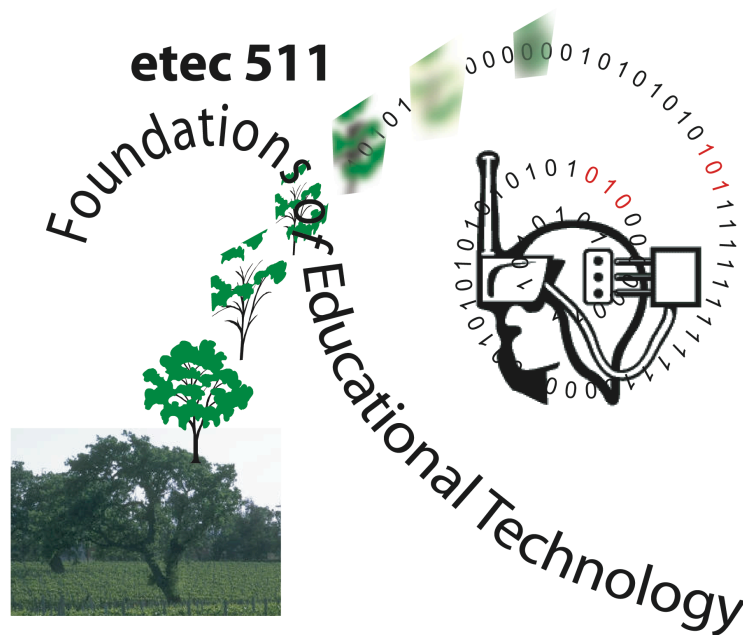
etec 511

Foundations of Educational Technology

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Introduction to ETEC 511

From the early days of the internet of the 1970s and the popularity of The Well during the early 1980s to the dawn of the web in the early 1990s, "online communication" was the primary justification for the new media technologies. When published in 1995, Howard Rheingold's *The Virtual Community* marked the height of this discourse and captured the spirit of internet and web enthusiasts. However, the last decade of critical cybercultural studies cast a pall over the virtual community thesis. Now, it is not clear whether "virtual community" is possible or even desirable. Little about communication, community and technology are unproblematic or can be taken for granted. Nevertheless, trends in web access and online courses continue unabated.

The aim of ETEC is to provide both a disciplinary tour and poststructuralist deconstruction of the foundations of e-learning, educational technology, learning technologies, and new media. It addresses the anthropological, economic, historical, phenomenological, philosophical, political, psychological, sociological, and spiritual foundations of educational technology along with a critique of these foundations. These foundations are cast within a larger framework of ecological-natural, ethical-personal, existential-spiritual, socio-political and technical-empirical dimensions of technology with implications for curriculum and instructional design. How, why and to what degree have media and technology been incorporated into, or changed by, education and what foundational structures underlie these processes? How do the processes of foundation building shape educational media, technology or learning technologies? What happens to e-learning, educational technology, learning technologies, and new media if and when we can no longer rely on their foundations or when foundations shift? This course is designed from a basis that educational media and learning technologies are *not* merely tools; educational premises are *neither* fully durable nor pliable; and actors or agents of education are *not* merely humans. It begins with an exploration of the cultural and social foundations of education, and proceeds through disciplinary and interdisciplinary foundations of e-learning, educational technology, learning technologies, and new media and concludes with a critique of these foundations and the cultural studies of educational technology, learning technologies, and new media.

ETEC 511 (version 1.0) was initially designed by Roger Boshier and Mark Bullen and put online in 2003. Initially the course was an introduction to mapping the discourses of educational technology. ETEC 511 is a core course of the joint University of British Columbia – Tec de

Monterey Master of Educational Technology (MET) program. The new iteration (version 2.0) was designed by Stephen Petrina in the summer of 2008.

Support

Theoretically, ETEC 511 was "front-loaded" with design features to allow the course, once launched, to unfold like a fine clock with minimal instructor involvement. Realistically, the course is redesigned "just-in-time" as a response to student requests and problems. Many of the general issues of content are resolved within the weekly forums. WebCT specialists at the University of British Columbia are mobilized more or less around the clock to respond to bugs and technical challenges. The "Technology Workshop" was designed to scaffold the students with a range of resources and tutorials for learning new media technologies. The "Technology Workshop" helps meet the difficult challenge of teaching technical skills online and is continually being updated. The group approach to the course was assembled with ranges of expertise in mind and the students are responsible to each other for a fair amount of "cognitive bootstrapping."

Collective experience and learning in cyberspace challenges us to theorize the process. It *is* perhaps as challenging to take a class in virtual space, as it is to facilitate one. Of significance to the question of technological determinism, this space of mutual interaction has a way of leveling, humbling us all when responses to our posts on bulletin boards are delayed. It is similar for us all in cyberspace: when we wonder how our innovations, concerns and hopes might come across; when we wonder if what we have been trying to convey has been understood, when we suspect we might miscomprehend a virtual situation, when we wonder if we have altogether missed the point!

How might we make sense of the way in which, online or virtual learning in cyberspace with its potential to humble, offers new ways of understanding pedagogy and the social in learning, when students and teachers cannot look into the other's eyes, detect nuances, changes in motion, inflection, tone, and exchange nods of approvals. Ironically, with problems of virtuality that we examine in a graduate course on culture and technology, we are faced with the prospect of being reduced to pure text— students and instructors have been called upon to reach deep within to respond in responsible and caring ways.

We learn in social environments. A theoretical framework that fits with our experience is found in [Lave and Wenger](#) 's proposition of situated cognition, explained in their classic *Situated Learning*. Through this framework, Lave and Wenger rethink our formulation of learning as pre-configured. They emphasize participation, which "is always based on situated negotiation and renegotiation of meaning in the world" (p. 51). Viewing learning as a process of participation in "communities of practice," they stress Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP). This stems from their view of learners as legitimate participants who, while beginning on the periphery, move to the centre as learning progresses. Educators have interpreted this as an apprentice type model of learning— we are always learning with each other. In addition to this thesis that learning is inherently social, we can take three important concepts from Lave and Wenger: Learning is always situated, necessarily involves peripheral participation, and involves the artifacts of everyday experience.

Begin here…
Vista, like the older WebCT, Blackboard ,or Moodle, is technically a course management system (CMS). Theoretically, everything you need for online courses should be found within the CMS shell. You will nonetheless discover that everything you need is not in WebCT. ETEC 511 is fairly comprehensive but you will still find the instructors uploading and distributing files throughout the term. If you have not familiarized yourself with WebCT, please take time to do this. For the most part, the navigation bar on the left of your screen provides you wit links to the main components of ETEC 511. Download the syllabus if you have not done this and review it. All of the assignments are described along with assessment. Complete the first participation task by following the steps on the "Begin Here" page, linked from the navigation bar.

Although we use a variety of CMC options in ETEC 511 (e.g., BB, chat, listserv, e-portfolio, wiki), the discussion BB and chats are fairly structured. There are certain rules that we have found helpful for BB posts, our live forums or chats, and the ETEC 511 listserv. We call these our cyberdiscursive ethics.

Cyberdiscursive Ethics: Discussion (BB) Guidelines

The discussion BBs in ETEC 511 are not facilitated by the instructor(s) in a formal sense, but they are structured. The discussions are structured in two ways:
1. Around **content threads** (typically the module and readings for the week)
2. Around **course management issues** (typically issues that arise during the course).

Generally, students interact with each other on the discussion BBs. ETEC 511 instructors intervene and comment when necessary but do not typically respond to all threads.

The challenge is to find a comfortable zone somewhere between academic writing and casual exchange. The goal is to write in a conversational style but to draw on the issues and theories for course. We'll call this **academic conversation**. Students often get anxious over academic writing and the charge that they are "talking from nowhere." The other extreme is "talking from everywhere," a form of what Donna Haraway called a "God trick." "Talking from somewhere" is the goal— this somewhere may be your experience (with examples) or it may be from what you've read or from the theory we are addressing. We want you to theorize and this is different than merely providing your opinion, which is what so many professors dislike. There is a difference between your narrative or experience and opinion. Remember these tips for your media productions. Although discussion threads function well when weaving otherwise haphazard consciousness and ideas into organized streams, the very fragmentary nature of their organization does not easily allow for addressing concerns *across* threads. How can we deal with this? It will be up to some of you (as well as the instructors) to synthesize across threads.

The following "Rules of Engagement" are crucial to successful discussion BBs:

1. **Post at least on discussion message per week.** Part of your course participation mark is based on your posts to the discussion BB. Although Vista tracks the quantity of your entries, which is important, we will also be monitoring the quality of your BB entries.
2. **Be succinct!** Limit your messages to 250 words (about 1 screen), and try to say what you want to say in one message!
3. **Use clear subject lines!** Courteously and wisely use the subject lines of the messages you post. Provide a sense of the message's content in the subject line. This facilitates skimming over groups of new and older messages.
4. **Be specific!** If you are responding to messages, make sure "re: <subject> is in the subject line. If your message is part of a "thread," copy or quote exact references from the message you are responding to. But be sure to edit out that which is not relevant. This helps readers understand the context of your response.
5. **Offer readable text!** Use short paragraphs and point form notations. Headers over paragraphs are helpful.
6. **Be tolerant and use discretion!** What is of interest to some on the list may not be of direct interest to you! And, what is of interest to you, may not be interesting to others.
7. **Maintain professional interaction!** The discussion BB is for sharing insights, stimulating new ideas, expanding the discussion into new territory and increasing the cohesion and vitality of the group.

Cyberdiscursive Ethics: Live Forum (Chat) Guidelines

The live forums in ETEC 511 are "structured chats" or facilitated by the instructor(s). The live forums are structured in two ways:
1. Around **content** (typically the module and readings for the week)
2. Around **participation** (we take turns in the order of names logged or entered into the chatroom— right side of your screen).

With large groups in a virtual classroom setting, this type of structure is necessary to avoid mass confusion, topic drift, domination of discourse, and frustration in participation. These are the values we aim to realize in each live forum:

1. **We value participation over elaboration.** This means that we want everyone to have a chance to participate in the live forum and to provide opportunity for this may have to compromise on the elaboration of certain views and expressions.
2. **We value direction over disturbance.** This means that we want to work as a group to provide direction for the live forum as opposed to tolerating a series of disturbances that come from many directions and flow towards many directions.
3. **We value complexity over complication or confusion.** The weekly readings and module ought to inspire complexity at a graduate (advanced) level. The forums ought to allow us to work through confusion.
4. **We value patience over speed and space.** Some are quicker typists than others and can fill space in a chat quite readily. Others need more time to prepare answers and type them. Some have higher speed connections than others. Please be patient while waiting for your colleagues to take their turns.

The following "Rules of Engagement" are crucial to a successful live forum:
1. To realize our live forum values and make the meetings productive and fulfilling, the instructor(s) has to facilitate. We have learned this by experimenting.
2. In this virtual classroom, the instructor(s) will queue up respondents to questions or issues. This typically unfolds as follows: "ok—let's address the issue of digital aesthetics— is there a digital aesthetic and if so what is it?--- your turn Kirstie, and then George, Yan, Carlos and Chung…"
3. The order of students follows the order logged into the chatroom. If someone wants to pass, a simple "pass" typed in and entered will work.
4. Those who are queued up can prepare their comments while waiting.
5. Use chat acronyms (see below) to help simplify typing and communication.
6. If we all follow the rules we will reduce the chance that someone feels disregarded or left out.
7. Be patient with each other.

Cyberdiscursive Ethics: Listserv Guidelines

The ETEC-511 listerv allows us to communicate without having to log into WebCT. It can make life a little easier in many ways. ETEC-511 is unmoderated, meaning that what gets sent is automatically sent to everyone on the list (all of the classmates and instructors).

What is a listserv?
A listserv is an automated mail distribution tool. In this case, a UNIX-based computer in the Computing Center at UBC maintains a list of subscribers. As email messages are received by the computer, the UNIX listserver automatically reproduces and forwards that message to everyone on the list. The result is both a "one to many" and "many to many" correspondence. In addition, you still have the ability to send personal messages to anyone on the list by simply addressing an email message to them directly. Combined, these two methods allow for both public discussion and private exchange. Email for private exchanges has been used for quite a while; now we have a vehicle for more public exchanges. There are thousands of lists on any imaginable topic!

Besides posting, you need the Listserv to:
1. Subscribe to and unsubscribe from etec-511.
   a. To receive a list of the email addresses of subscribers (your classmates in this case), send the following message to majordomo@interchange.ubc.ca:
      subscribe etec-511
2. Get a copy of the email addresses of subscribers
   a. To receive a list of the email addresses of subscribers (your classmates in this case), send the following message to majordomo@interchange.ubc.ca:
      who etec-511

Posting messages to etec-511:
You will receive etec-511 messages in your regular emailbox. Messages can be copied, discarded, forwarded, printed or replied to. When you want to post a message to etec-511, whether as a reply to something that someone else posted or to introduce an issue for discussion, send your message as email to:
      etec-511@interchange.ubc.ca

PLEASE NOTE that etec-511 is configured in such a way that if you use "REPLY" on your mailer, your message will only go to the sender. IF you intend your reply to go to everyone on the list, THEN (re)address your message to etec-511@interchange.ubc.ca! The idea is not to limit input, but rather to maintain some discretion and self-control to prevent an overloading of subscribers' mailboxes. BE CAREFUL and CARING.

Email and mailing lists can be potential hassles. As the volume of mail on listservs increases, you may very well become annoyed with the accumulation of messages in your mailbox. This is especially a problem if you subscribe to a number of lists. You ultimately have to sort through this mail to get the information that is relevant to you today. Or less desirable, you may delete your messages without reading them. Stay organized and use an email application to help.

8.

Common Chat Acronyms

2L8	Too late		**CU**	**See you**
2U2	**To you too**		CUL	Catch you later
4GM	Forgive me		CUS	See you soon
4RL?	For real?		CUL8R	See you later
AAMOF	As a matter of fact		CWOT	Complete waste of time
AFAICT	As far as I can tell		**CYA**	**See ya**
AFAIK	**As far as I know**		CYE	Check your e-mail
AFK	**Away from keyboard**		CYL	Catch ya lata
AIUI	As I understand it		DBEYR	Don't believe everything you read
AKA	Also known as			
ASAP	**As soon as possible**		DHYB	Don't hold your breath
ATM	**At the moment**		DIIK	Darned if I know
ATSL	Along the same line		**DIY**	**Do it yourself**
ATYS	Anything you say		**DL**	**Download**
AWA	As well as		DQYDJ	Don't quit your day job
AWOL	Absent while online		DT	Dang Typos
B4	**Before**		DW	Don't Worry
B4N	Bye for now		DYFI	Did you find it?
BAC	Back at computer		EAK	Eating at keyboard
BAK	Back at keyboard		EG	Evil grin
BBIAB	**Be back in a bit**		**EOD**	**End of discussion**
BBL	**Be back later**		EOL	End of lecture
BBS	Be back soon		EOR	End of rant
BCNU	Be seein' you		F2F	Face to face
BD	Big deal		**FAQ**	**Frequently Asked Questions**
BFN	**Bye for now**		FCOL	For crying out loud
BC	Be cool		FITB	Fill in the blanks
B/C	**Because**		FOCL	Falling off the chair laughing
BCNU	**Be seein' you**		**FOFL**	**Falling on the floor laughing**
BION	Believe it or not		FTMP	For the most part
BME	Based on my experience		FTR	For the record
BOL	Be on later		FUBAR	Fouled up beyond all recognition
BOT	**Back on topic**		FUT	Follow up to...
BRH	Be right here		FWIW	For what it's worth
BRB	**Be right back**		FYA	For your amusement
BRB	Bathroom break		**FYI**	**For your information**
BSTS	Better safe than sorry		G	Grin
BTA	But then again		G2TU	Got to tell you.
BTDT	**Been there, done that**		G4U	Good for you
BTW	**By the way**		G2G	Gotta go
BW	Be well		GA	Go ahead
BWG	Big wide grin			
BYTM	Better you than me			

CMIIW Correct me if I'm wrong	
GA Good afternoon	
GAL Get a life	
GAS Greetings and salutations	
GD&R Grinning, ducking, and running	
GE Good evening	IDNK I do not know
GFN Gone for now	IDNDT I did not do that
GG Good game	**IIRC If I remember correctly**
GI Good idea	IK I know
GICBTS Gosh, I can't believe that stuff!	IKWUM I know what you mean
	IMAO In my arrogant opinion
GICNBY Gosh, I cannot believe you!	IME In my experience
GIWISI Gee, I wish I said it	**IMHO In my humble opinion**
GJ Good job	IMHARO In my humble and respectful opinion
GL Good luck	
GM Good morning	IMHBMAO In my humble but most accurate opinion
GM Good move/match	
GMTA Great minds think alike	IMNSHO In my not so humble opinion
GN Good night	**IMO In my opinion**
GOK God only knows	INRS It's not rocket science
GOWI Get on with it	**IOW In other words**
GR8 Great	IRL In real life
GTG Got to go	**IRT In reply to**
HAGD Have a good day	IS I'm sorry
HAND Have a nice day	ISO In search of
HCIT How cool is that	ISTM It seems to me
HF Have fun	ISWYM I see what you mean
HH Ha-ha	ITMT In the mean time
HH1/2KO Ha-ha, half kidding only	ITYM I think you mean
HHSF Ha-ha, so funny	JLMK Just let me know
HHVF Ha-ha, very funny	JMHO Just my humble opinion
HO Hold on	**J/K Just kidding**
H/O Hold on	JOOC Just out of curiosity
HOAS Hold on a second	J/P Just playing
HTH Hope this helps	JTLYK Just to let you know
IAC In any case	K OK
IAE In any event	KHYF Know how you feel
IAG It's all good	KIR Keepin' it real
IAGW In a good way	KISS Keep it simple, stupid
IB2D I beg to differ	**KIT Keep in touch**
IC I see	KWIM Know what I mean?
IC In character	L8 Late
ICOCBW I could, of course, be wrong	**L8R Later**
IDGI I don't get it	LMK Let me know
IDK I don't know	LYK Let you know
	LMBO Laughing my butt off

LOL	**Laugh out loud**	RHIP	Rank hath its privileges
LOLOL	Lots of laughs out loud	RL	Real Life
LTNS	**Long time, no see**	ROF	Rolling on the floor
M8	Mate, a.k.a. friend	ROFLMAO	Rolling on floor, laughing my a•• off
ME2	Me too		
MOO	My own opinion	**ROTFL**	**Rolling on the floor laughing**
MYOB	**Mind your own business**	ROTFLMBO	Rolling on the floor, laughing my behind off
N	And		
NBD	No big deal	RP	Role Play
N2M	Not too much	RPG	Role Playing Game
N/C	Not cool	**RT**	**Real-time**
NE1	**Anyone**	RTFA	Read the flippin' article
NFW	No freakin' way	**RTFM**	**Read the flippin' manual**
NLT	No later than	**RW**	**Real world**
NM	Nevermind	S2R	Send to receive
NP	**No problem**	S/B	Should be
NRN	No reply necessary	SCNR	Sorry, could not resist
NM	**Not much**	SNAFU	Situation normal, all fouled up
NMH	Not much here		
NMJC	Nothing much, just chillin'	**SOS**	**Same old stuff**
NNITO	Not necessarily in that order	SOS	Sibling over shoulder
NO1	No one	SOSO	Same old, same old
NOMB?	None of my business?	sp?	Spelling?
NOMBR?	None of my business, right?	SSDD	Same stuff, different day
NOTTOMH	Not off the top of my head	SUSFU	Situation unchanged, all fouled up
NSISR	Not sure if spelled right		
N/T	Nice try	SWDYWTTA	So what do you want to talk about?
NVM	Nevermind		
NW	**No way**	SYSOP	System Operator (chat monitor)
OIC	Oh, I see	**SMH**	**Shaking my head**
OMG	Oh my gosh		
OMOHOD	One minute, one hour, one day		
		TC	That's cool
ONNA	Oh no, not again	TCO	Taken care of
OOC	Out of character	**TMI**	**Too much information**
OT	**Off topic**	TTBOMK	To the best of my knowledge
OT	Other topic	TTFN	Ta ta for now
OTOH	On the other hand	**TTYL**	**Talk to you later**
PLZ	**Please**	**TTYS**	**Talk to you soon**
PLZRD	Please read	TTYVS	Talk to you very soon TMA Take my advice
POS	Power of suggestion		
POV	Point of view	TWIMC	To whom it may concern
PPL	**People**	**TY**	**Thank you**
RESQ	Rescue	TYVM	Thank you very much
RFC	Request for comment	TGIF	Thank goodness it's Friday
		TOH	The other half
		TOH	Typing one-handed

TNX	Thanks
TIA	Thanks in advance
TIC	Tongue in cheek
TBC	**To be continued**
TBH	**To be honest**
TC	**Take care**
U2	**You too**
UR	**You are**
UR	Your
URSKTM	You are so kind to me
VBG	Very big grin
W/	**With**
W2F	Way too funny
WC	Who cares
WDMB	Will do my best
WE	Whatever
W/E	**Whatever**
WNDITWB	We never did it this way before
W/O	**Without**
WRT	With Regard To
W8	**Wait**
W8AM	Wait a minute
WADITWB	We always did it that way before
WAEFRD	When all else fails, read directions

THX	**Thanks**
WB	**Welcome back** (chat)
WB	**Write back** (e-mail)
WTG	**Way to go!**
WU	What's up?
Y	**Why?**
YMBJ	You must be joking
YMMV	Your mileage may vary
YRG	You are good!
YVW	You're very welcome
YW	You're welcome
!=	Not equal to
?	**Huh?**
?4U	**Question for you**