Tools A:
Basic Technologies

VLEs

"LMS"

"walled gardens"

▶▶

the future of VLEs …

yesterday's question?

[…] VLE development has peaked in any case and […] VLEs are likely to be replaced by Web 2.0, which is more suited to the individualistic temperament, skills, and requirements of teachers and learners.

Stephen Brown (2008)

By the time all schools have established virtual learning environments, the technology may well have moved on, making them an expensive irrelevance.

Ofsted (2009)

I expect the context of the market to be very different by **2014**. Between movements toward **more personal/informal learning environments**, the big changes that are happening in the textbook industry as **content providers and delivery platform providers collide**, and the breathtaking pace of innovation that continues in the consumer web market, I strongly suspect that we'll see **a wave of new software that will begin to displace the classic LMS**.

Michael Feldstein (2010)

The VLE is perhaps not the most effective way of creating a PLE for learners. The rise of social software […] means that learners are able to personalize their learning outside of the structures of their schools and colleges.

[…]

[W]hile the VLE has an important role in the student experience, making it a safe and sensible option from the perspective of the institution, **it is a solution to an old problem**, which may have lost its relevance in a world of continuous change that requires a continual re-skilling of the population.

Philip Banyard et al (2011)
with ref. to McLoughline & Lee (2007) & Phipps et al (2008)

VLEs

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- self-contained environments for:
  - **information**
  - **communication**
- continual additions & upgrades

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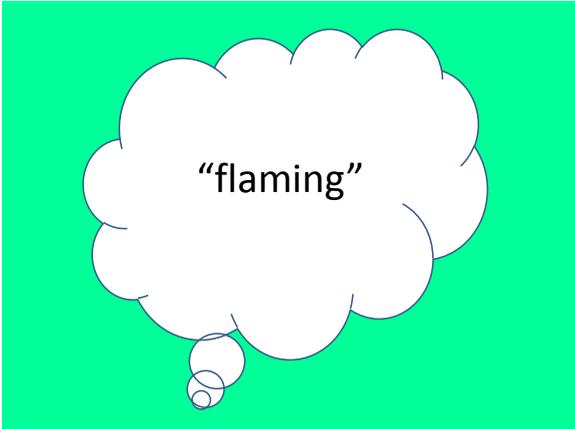- limited customisation
- long-term viability?

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discussion boards

The historical divide between speech and writing has been overcome with the **interactional** and **reflective** aspects of language merged in a single medium.
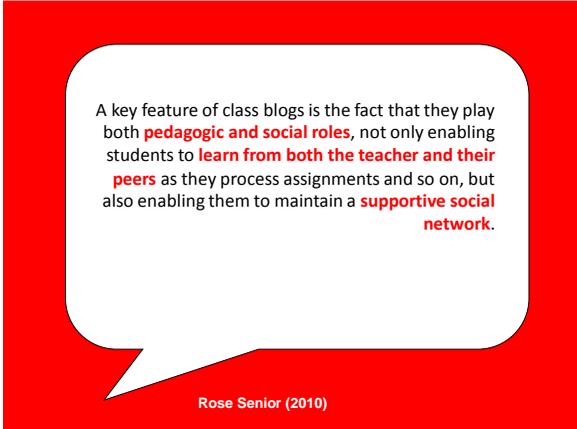
Mark Warschauer (1999)

Slide 1

"weaving"

Andrew Feenberg

Slide 2

[…] today's parents are putting a much higher premium on having an **interactive, collaborative relationship with their child's teacher** which affords them the opportunity to potentially **personalize the learning process** for their child.

Project Tomorrow (2011)

Slide 3

"flaming"

Slide 4
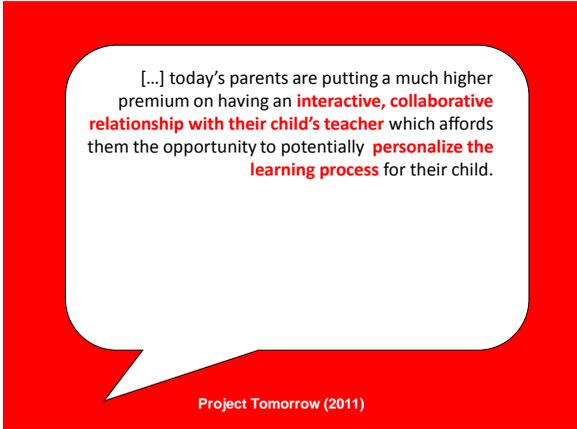
discussion boards

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- combination of **interaction + reflection** (Warschauer 1999)
- collaborative, constructivist learning
- community
  - learning community beyond classroom

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- flaming
- time-consuming for students & staff
- literacy requirements for participants

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Slide 5

blogs

Slide 6

A key feature of class blogs is the fact that they play both **pedagogic and social roles**, not only enabling students to **learn from both the teacher and their peers** as they process assignments and so on, but also enabling them to maintain a **supportive social network**.

Rose Senior (2010)

Truth […] is being 'flattened,' as we create an on-demand, personalized version that reflects our own individual myopia. **One person's truth becomes as 'true' as anyone else's**.

Andrew Keen (2007)

"information literacy"

blogs

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- **reflective tool**
  - diary or journal
- **interactive tool**
  - communication with a wider audience
  - feedback
- collaborative, constructivist learning

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- information literacy
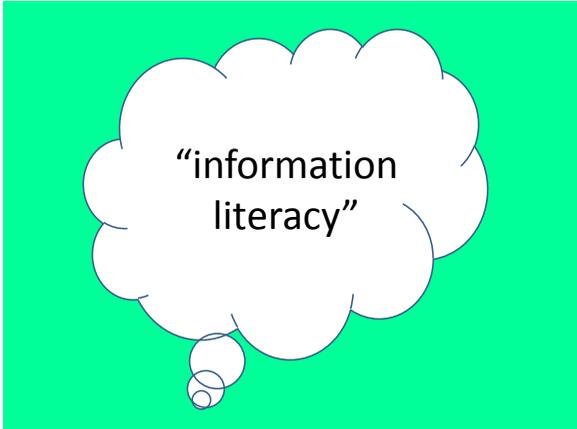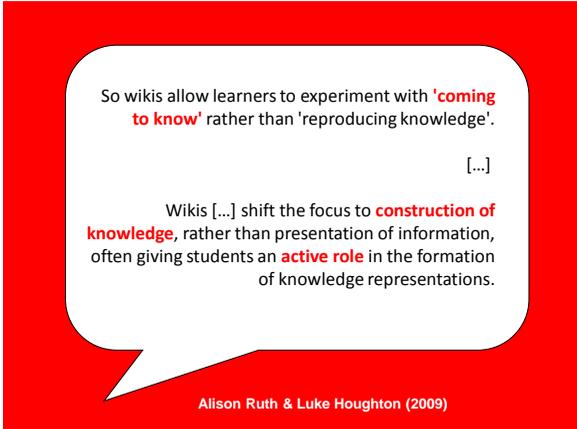- inappropriate feedback vs lack of feedback

wikis

Should you believe Wikipedia?

The answer is: what page on Wikipedia? How many people have edited it? How many people are 'watching' it? I will argue that **a popular, high profile Wikipedia page is the most accurate reference that has ever been created in the history of the written word**. (Really!) A low-profile page that few people have edited is unreliable. It all depends on how many people have checked the article and its references.

Amy Bruckman (2011)

"collective intelligence"

4

"cognitive surplus"

Clay Shirky

So wikis allow learners to experiment with **'coming to know'** rather than 'reproducing knowledge'.

[...]

Wikis [...] shift the focus to **construction of knowledge**, rather than presentation of information, often giving students an **active role** in the formation of knowledge representations.

Alison Ruth & Luke Houghton (2009)

Wikis present themselves as an interesting tool for **enhancing social constructivist learning environments**. As non-linear, evolving, complex and networked texts with multiple authors, they can provide a great opportunity for student collaboration, co-production of texts, argument, and interaction.

Axel Bruns & Sal Humphreys (2005)

"information literacy"

wikis

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- collaborative, **constructivist** learning
- **collective intelligence**
  - pooling of distributed knowledge

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- information literacy
- lack of participation & feedback