# SANSWE 07: Current Trends and Practices in Teacher Education
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## Workshop

### Classnetwork.net Resource Sharing In Schools

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**Abstract**

Over the last two decades there has been a steady rollout of new information technologies such as multimedia-capable computers, the ever-increasing power of which is accompanied by a reduced cost and more recently, the rapid growth of the Internet has resulted in enthusiastic claims for technology's ability to provide high-quality education for all (Alexander and Boud, 2001, p.1). Given the access to a vast range of digitized information, learners are facilitated to engage in activities which would have been otherwise not possible in a traditional learning environment. Learners need to actively engage with what is to be learnt and have ways of expressing their understanding if they are to be confident of what they have learnt and feel that what they have learnt is worthwhile. Teachers, as facilitators of learning are now looking to more and more digitized resources given the technology made available to them to facilitate the teaching and learning process in schools in Brunei Darussalam. The Classnetwork.net is one such open source tool currently shared by three academic staff members for their courses at the Department of Educational Foundations, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah Institute of Education, Unviersiti Brunei Darussalam. Through the Classnetwork.net, all relevant lecture information and materials are posted for the students to access at any time and at their own convenience for reference as well as to refresh. Online assignments are also given this way and students are encouraged to discuss by using web blog to find solutions to problems given.

The proposed Workshop aims to share with participants our experiences and benefits of using the Classnetwork.net in our work and to discuss the setting up of the Classnetwork.net in their schools as a resource sharing tool for teaching and learning. Participants will be able to view the Classnetwork.net currently in use and engage in hands-on activity in groups and attempt the setting up of one for their school.

**What is the Classnetwork.net?**

Classnetwork.net is a learning page intended to explore various ways of delivering content to its target audience virtually. Content that is parked in it as a whole is structured using Sharable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM) sequencing techniques. Each of the digital content, called Sharable Content Object (SCO) is tied up with its own assets; for example, the main content (SCO) displayed in each of the pages is supported by its asset such as links to other HTML files, images (JPG etc), videos (AVI) and animation (SWF). Each page in classnetwork.net can be considered as a complete learning system which has its own learning objectives and various modes of assessment and evaluation.

The content in Classnetwork.net follows the SCORM content hierarchy comprising; Content aggregation - a group of learning resources that can stand by itself, Sharable Content Object (SCO) - the level at which the learner interacts directly with the learning content, and the Asset - a small, single purpose learning resource that can be used in multiple contexts as described by Fallon & Brown (2003, p.9).

As a whole, each page in Classnetwork.net is intended to be related to other pages either in related areas or outside related areas, for example, the lecture notes for Sociology of Learning might be useful in designing user interface in an Interactive Design Course.

The nature of online learning needs to be dynamic in terms of learners' engagement with the content. The question posed by McCracken and Wolfe (2004, p.38): "Are your users "read then do people" or "do then read" people?" needs to be mentioned here. That is, do users want careful instructions before starting or do they immediately start working with a new interface, can be considered a useful indicator in setting up active communication between students and lecturers. In order to be dynamic, we have created various channels of communications which includes the blog for teaching and learning.

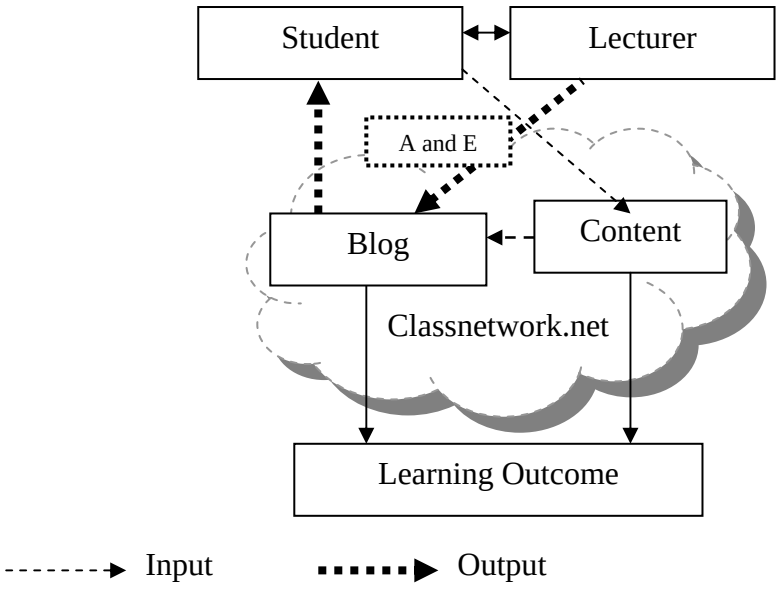

**Figure 1:** Learning Input and Output for Student Engagement with the lecturer and content in Classnetwork.net

Figure 1 shows learning input and output for student engagement with the lecturer and content in Classnetwork.net. The lecturer as the content provider uploads the content to classnetwork.net on students' demands according to the course objectives. The students will then download the content (lecture notes) for their reference during lectures and reading purposes. Based on the course objectives, the lecturer creates a blog scenario for students to expand ideas on the issue highlighted by the lecturer in the problem-based blog scenario. Information provided by students through the blog exercise is filtered by the web administrator to maintain quality. The students are instructed to strictly follow the blog etiquette as only the information that follows the rules will be published. The students work in groups and in certain instances, are given a time frame for them to complete the discussion in the blog exercise. Finally, all comments in the blog are compiled according to the groups and the students are required to summarize the comments (learning outcomes) and submit to the lecturer for assessment and evaluation as originally stipulated in the exercise.

**Classnetwork.net at the Department of Educational Foundations, SHBIE**

Currently the Classnetwork.net is used by three academic staff members at the Department of Educational Foundations, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah Institute of Education, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, one of whom is the Administrator of this resource. All three staff members enlist the Classnetwork.net for making available the following to students on the various courses that they teach:

a) Lecture notes either in PowerPoint format or more detailed versions where necessary
b) Course assignments
c) Articles and resource materials for tutorials
d) Reminders and submission deadlines
e) Tips for completing assignments
f) Blog exercises where problems are posted for group discussion tasks
g) References and reference materials for further reading

This way, students have 'all time' access to the course materials and where required can download and print hardcopies for easy reference. However, in the case of the blog assignments there is a specified time period given and the respective groups are required to complete the task by the deadline stated after which they will not be able to access the blog task.

From experience, the Classnetwork.net is:

1. Convenient
2. 'All time' self and easy access of reference
3. Easy to update and maintain relevant course materials

## Classnetwork.net as a tool for sharing in schools

Given its usefulness as a tool for sharing, schools would equally benefit from its use. Administration as well as teachers will be able to utilize this tool for disseminating and sharing. Teachers could use their staff professional development time for building syllabus materials to be shared and this allows for mentoring, peer-collaboration, and induction sessions for younger staff. Primarily, syllabus modules for all classes can be easily created and shared making self-access and self-directed learning part of the curriculum. With the national vision and mission of a knowledge society and the technology in place to support this effort, teaching and learning paradigms in turn have to concomitantly shift to accommodate the future needs of a developing nation. As always, schools have a major role to play in this effort and it stems from how best the available resource tools can be utilized to achieve excellence.

## References

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McCracken, D. D. & Wolfe, R. J. (2004). *User-centered website development – A human-computer interaction approach*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Education.