

# **Network Mediated Discursive Education (NMDE)**

**Ronald E. Day, School of Library and  
Information Science, Indiana  
University**

# Purpose

- To conceptualize, preserve, and scale up the tradition of critique within a networked environment

# Networked Knowledge

- Networked knowledge. Networked knowledge refers to knowledge based on ‘information’ (documents and data) linked by information infrastructures ranging from digital libraries to convergent multimedia technologies to digitally mediated interlinked faculty and institutions.

# Critical Knowledge

- Critical knowledge refers to knowledge that is the product of thinking through texts and other cases in order to arrive at an understanding of the history, concepts, and logic of cultural forms and social norms, as well as technological objects and their uses.
- Critical knowledge is grounded in discussion or 'discourse'—a particular form of conversation revolving around particular problematics (sometimes found in texts) and other cases and their explanation and expansion by conceptual tools and dialogue.

# As to networked knowledge:

- there is the tendency in the university today (and in KM, traditionally) --perhaps because of the dominance of the science model--to think of networked knowledge as a type of additive (aggregated and distributed as such)—and even more, a ‘progressive’ —type of knowledge. Here, knowledge is thought of according to common epistemic assumptions about ‘information,’ understanding information as a quantitative entity. Knowledge, here, is seen as a product of a totality of information that is a ‘processed’ by some sort of reasoning.

# As to critical knowledge

- critical knowledge—‘thought’—traditionally has been highly text and reader specific. The paradigm for such has been canonical philosophy, of course, with a highly limited canon and a method largely dominated by a one-to-one relationship between text and reader. Critical judgment in this model is shaped by education with the emphasis upon the personal development of analytic skills and expression (i.e., ‘intellect’ and ‘thinking’).

# The following recommendations are socio-technical

- The greatest challenge here is not technological challenges, but rather, social-institutional challenges, primarily in terms of how universities and faculties are assembled and their individual staff are trained, rewarded, and their work duties assigned.

# Recommendation 1

- *The integration of multimedia and the rearrangement of individual faculty teaching duties into faculty assemblages*
  - The greater use of multimedia resources
  - The longer term reorganization of faculty across campuses and universities into faculty assemblages in order to ‘team-teach’ courses and run programs.

# Recommendation 1 cont.

- *Administrative tasks should be shifted from the assignment of teaching hours for faculty to the support and distribution of faculty expertise throughout the unit, throughout the university, and beyond.*
- *Correspondingly, there is a need for a large-scale integration of pluralities of institutions, starting perhaps at state (e.g., Indiana), national (e.g., United States), and regional (e.g., European Union) institutions.*

# Recommendation 2

- End professional and other ‘money cow’ programs:
  - *Apprenticeship programs should be established or further expanded, professional schools reoriented toward research and education rather than training, and some advanced degree professional schools and fields should be closed down altogether.*

# Recommendation 3

- *University supported scalable networks should play a role in providing the educational, technological, and socio-technical affordances for democratic processes and agency. Universities should be **mandated to proactively** provide and support the education, infrastructure, and tools for democratic empowerment.*