

# Communication and Collaboration 2.0



## ISSUE ORIENTED

Communication and collaboration have been important skills from the beginning of the human race. How have these skills changed or expanded with the advent of digital media, Web 2.0, and globalization?

Communication is still the ability to articulate your thoughts and ideas or to write and speak well. Collaboration is still a process of two or more people working together toward a common goal by sharing knowledge and skills and building consensus. And both still take a lot of work and practice to understand and achieve.

One obvious change is that communication with digital images and video is increasingly important. The tools are readily available, many for free, and the read/write Web has created a vehicle for sharing. But Web 2.0 is much more than a vehicle for sharing. According to Henry Jenkins, Director of the Comparative Media Studies Program at MIT, it has given birth to a whole new culture—the participatory culture. He defines this as a culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one's creations, and some type of informal mentorship. As such it has also become a metaphor for how work is done and knowledge is generated in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Media education has become the responsibility of all educators. We all need to consider how digital media affects our content areas, the learning of content, and how important media literacy is as a 21<sup>st</sup> century skill or literacy. Students must be able to develop and create digital media, use it to communicate, and understand its effect on themselves and society.

Web 2.0 tools have also allowed participants to engage in real-time collaboration and to co-construct solutions to problems. The need for collaboration has also increased as learning has come to be viewed as a social activity. According to a new report from the Joan Ganz Cooney Center at Sesame Workshops, today's children are growing up at a time when knowledge development is a team sport, as children need to be able to know *with* in addition to *how* and *what*. Jenkins sees the new media literacies as social skills, ways of interacting within a larger community.

In Jenkins' list of skills needed for the new media culture, the two that seem most connected to communication and collaboration are *collective intelligence*—the ability to pool knowledge and compare notes with others toward a common goal, and *negotiation*—the ability to travel across diverse communities, discerning and respecting multiple perspectives, and grasping and following alternative norms.

Both the Jenkins paper and the Sesame Workshop report are concerned about educators' own lack of digital media know-how. Fortunately, we can take advantage of the participatory culture to communicate and collaborate with each other around bringing media education to all students and ourselves.

### Resources

- Jenkins, Henry. (2006). *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. MacArthur Foundation: [http://www.henryjenkins.org/2006/10/confronting\\_the\\_challenges\\_of.html](http://www.henryjenkins.org/2006/10/confronting_the_challenges_of.html)
- Shore, Rima. (2008). *The Power of Pow! Wham!* The Joan Ganz Cooney Center at Sesame Workshop: <http://www.joanganzcooneycenter.org>

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