POSTINGS 2-8 Assgn #2
Thanks Matthew and everyone for this interesting discussion. I saw the Thompson and Purdy article as demonstrating how a system analysis reveals changing realities in the design and implementation domains of curriculum. As a high school teacher in a school going through difficult restructuring, I found this analysis enlightening, especially in its validation of the significance of individual influence on the success or failure of innovation. The article gave a great example of a phenomenon frequently observed in public education—when the faculty member who promoted the linked classes through interpersonal connection and communication departed, the successful innovation went with her, because no organizational structures were developed to perpetuate the innovation—this should be an important consideration in structuring reforms. The article also showed how the allocation of resources can be changed or perceived differently over time. Sandra's posting implied that professors who questioned their time commitment or the school's priorities did not support student-centered curriculum, but teachers need to advocate for fair and reasonable working conditions just as do members of any profession. The analysis revealed that organizational 'founding fathers' often have emotional or philosophical investments in the new structure, and mutual understandings about the time and energy commitment they are making, which later arrivals often will not share, and successful systems be prepared for this change.

George, J. (2009). Classical curriculum design. *Arts and Humanities in High Education,* 8(2), p. 160-179.

Since I was forced to postpone participation till the last day, I have the benefit but also the confusion of reading everyone's thoughts—thanks! Like many others, I first read the Thompson and Purdy article, but as I finally began to write I grew confused. Was I looking at how the business school under study designed curriculum, or at the method of analysis used by the authors of the article? The original creators of the business curriculum used an academic approach heavily tempered with a humanist element. The school required a practicum course which called for synthesis and application across the curriculum, and later linked this course to a strategic management requirement. In designing their curriculum they emphasized relationships among subjects, and for a period moved toward a more integrated curriculum. The researchers who wrote the article, however, used a different curricular approach. In developing "A process model of implementation", and considering the "implementation of new ideas by people who over time engage in transactions with others within an institutional context", they applied a managerial approach, and observed the impact of individual actions on the group decisions, especially when there is no longer a shared agreement about the 'deep structure'—the basic mission or working agreements of the school. An 'aha' for me as a teacher was that, given the lecture's observation that 90% of curriculum innovations fail in implementation, usually due to faculty politics, the failure of many institutions to be proactive in meeting this predictable difficulty seems to embody the often-quoted definition of insanity.

In contrast, the George article does not look in depth at the difficulties of implementation, but illustrates the challenge of modern curriculum design and assessment. This is the uneasy amalgamation of approaches familiar to modern educators: the behaviorist's 'learning outcomes' are to be demonstrated in often state-determined general' competences'; this learning takes place through a traditional academic curriculum model, but that curriculum is to be delivered in a humanistic, even re-conceptualist, student-centered approach. Here is the place where Dr. Wallace's slide about "aligning theory with practice" became very important. Will M. Piaget and Dr. Skinner demonstrate the necessary collaborative skills, or is this a mixture of approaches with fundamental differences in their underlying assumptions about how students learn?

George, J. (2009). Classical curriculum design. *Arts and Humanities in High Education,* 8(2), p. 160-179.

Thompson, T.A., & Purdy, J.M. (2009). When a good idea isn't enough: Curriculum innovation as a political process. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 8 (2), 188-207.

Hi Jen:
I agree with your observation. The starting place of this modern traditional curriculum structure seems to be behaviorist--that's where I usually see 'desired learning outcomes/goals', or references to lessons where the structure is carefully controlled by the instructor. On the other hand, George's references to "student centered" learning, varied learning styles, and a sharing of responsibility and more equal footing between teacher and learner seem clearly to come from different approaches. As a teacher I struggle with this combination all the time. What if the desired learning outcome determined by authority is not the same as the goal of the student? What if the result of student-centered, problem-solving curriculum is learning of a different nature than that stated in the goal? How will success be defined?

Week 6 posting
Since circumstances usually give me most of my available response time Friday-Monday, I'm finding that often my main ideas from the readings or lectures are well-covered by other students--Amber, I thought, overviewed it all so succinctly! Most writers have focused on the skills of the information professional as a crucial resource for those involved in an e-learning experience; we could also take a closer look at the role of information professionals in creating the e-learning content. I am interning at a CSU campus, and my project is to provide the library staff with a report on best practices in online instruction and some sample curriculum modules based on face-to-face delivered lessons I observe. This is because the institution, which is very conservative in its approaches, is considering putting a portion of theoir very carefully proscribed curriculum on-line, and also because they are considering establishing on-line licensing or graduate programs. These courses have to be part of a careful and complete plan. Time will be required to create and implement the on-line structures; many experienced teachers are uncomfortable with online technology . The administrators and faculty of this campus turn to the library staff for support in moving forward on this project.

Contemporary information professionals are uniquely prepared to fill this void--they are the only group on campus with all the requisite knowledge: of the content area, the student needs, the relevant technology, and the available resources. In these days of state budget cuts, development of this on-line curriculum is going to save jobs for some lucky librarians.

Last semester I took a class on high school library media centers. One strong point the professor constantly reiterated was the necessity for the presence, whether physically or digitally, of the teacher librarian wherever learning was occurring. He saw this of course as crucial for promoting the librarian's status and indispensability in the school, but also as an absolute requirement for the students inundated by information. All my on-line classes have been taught by librarians, so suggestions about searches, guides to pathfinders, warnings about problematic material are generously part of the fabric of the class. What if I were taking, for example, an online history class with a big research paper? Especially for undergraduates, it would be better if the information specialist had a cognitive and social presence within the online class. In real undergraduate education I have observed the librarians many times visit classrooms at the professor's request to give a specific presentation on, for example, a relevant database for the students' research, and the librarian has always said students could contact her for follow-up help. When they seek her out, she already knows about their assignment and the teacher's expectations. Garrison and Anderson write, "The goal is to give students the ability and strategies required to manage this overwhelming breadth and depth of information"--an underlying goal for all instruction, but the specific instructional content for us.If each class is a critical community of learners, in an ideal program an information specialist should be part of that community--not just an anonymous available resource.

Margaret, your post made me think of 2 disparate things. First, I liked the way it started with a polite disagreement. I appreciated Rourke the grad students'scomment on p. 53 of Garrison/Anderson, concerning the tendency of online student forums to be supportive to a fault--I like to compare people's points of view! Also, I am really noticing as an intern that it is very difficult for the library professionals to master new technology or even to learn of new options when none of their ongoing duties are decreased. I know in my own teaching that lack of time for preparation tends to force me back to what I already know will work, even when I suspecta new approach could be more effective.

On the one hand: I have found the SLIS online classes perfect for my needs. The technology makes reality of the asychronous and yet collaborative 'community of learners' so embraced by the text, and I know that programs such as this proliferate and produce successful graduates, which bears out G+A's predictions for the future.

On two other hands (creepy mutant argument structure), recently I was chatting with the Human Resources Director of our school district, and he made it very clear to me that he would not look on my library degree as the equivalent of a traditional program, a possibility which never crossed my mind when I entered the program. A few weeks ago I

also saw on Saturday Night LIve a sketch where the people were getting online degrees to become brain surgeons in 3 weeks, etc., and I felt embarrassed--I wondered how many people think what I am doing is some kind of short-cut--the reputation of online learning doesn't seem to keep pace with its achievements; possibly because of some unscrupulous for-profit use?

To be contentious, it is a truism of education at all levels today that the nature and behaviors of the average student have changed, and curriculum must be adjusted accordingly.Page 117 of G+A says: "The future is for those who are ready to assume control and responsibility for their learning." The text assumes that students will evolve to be more independent and more active in asserting their own educational preferences--is that in fact what has happened? If we ask college professors whether this describes a larger or a smaller number of college freshmen than it did ten years ago, what do you predict they would say?

Week 10 posting
Before reading the material under 'Evaluating Information Products to Support Learning' or reviewing the Instructional Design material from Week 4, I decided to brainstorm my own criteria list for a Research Guide. The elements I came up with were content quality, user ease, and accessibility. After reading the 'Evaluating' material, I found that a summary of the Massachusetts Department of Education detailed rubric for evaluating instructional technology materials[http://www.doe.mass.edu/edtech/standards/tech_mat.PDF] provides a list very similar to mine, with an additional evaluation of technology support required. However, when I reviewed the Instructional Design material, I was reminded of the importance of measurable outcomes for use in revision. I decided this must be one of my criteria. So now my criteria are:

* Is this Research Guide filtered and focused so the student is
    presented with the best and most useful resources?

 * Is the product accessible to diverse users?

 * Is there a built-in element of user-evaluation?

I looked for research guides on the library website of Cal Maritime [http://library.csum.edu/majors/index.htm], because I'm doing an internship there. Although I found that the guides came up short under my criteria, I have to defend the program there—it is so small and so personalized that very few students will use these guides unsupported by face-to-face contact and advice.

* Is this Research Guide filtered and focused so the student is

presented with the best and most useful resources?

Under my first criteria, especially since the Cal Maritime 'Campus Services' page [http://www.csum.edu/Services/] says "the Cal Maritime library is one of the few maritime research libraries in the world", the research guides offered are too broad. There are no topics, only a guide for each of the 6 school majors. Even within the majors, the offerings are too general. Databases listed include both the MARNA maritime database, and JSTOR. The guides are actually just online accessible collections of general library resources.

* Is the product accessible to diverse users?

The resources are provided in a simple list of links; descriptions of each product are succinct and clear; all the links work. There are no alternative language resources, though there are multiple languages spoken by students. It also appears that the code descriptions for the use of computer 'readers' is insufficient, but ADA mandates at CMA are limited because admission has physical requirements.

 * Is there a built-in element of user-evaluation?
On the Harvard Classics and Medieval Studies research guide I saw a little survey link for measuring user satisfaction. The Maritime Academy may be collecting this data face-to-face, but a digital access and record would help them in both improving their site and documenting their effectiveness.