

# Northwest Journal of Teacher Education

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Volume 11

Issue 2 *Possibilities of Teacher Education Programs*

Article 12

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October 2013

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### Recommended Citation

Biswas, Shampa (2013) "Schoolology-Supported Classroom Management: A Curriculum Review," *Northwest Journal of Teacher Education*: Vol. 11 : Iss. 2 , Article 12.

DOI: 10.15760/nwjte.2013.11.2.12

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## **Schoology-Supported Classroom Management: A Curriculum Review**

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### **Abstract**

Schoology is an online learning, classroom management, and social networking platform that attempts to improve learning through better communication, collaboration, and increased access to curriculum and supplemental content. In this article, the author evaluates different prospects of Schoology-supported classroom management using selected principles of students learning and literacy development from Cummin et al (2007). Innovative approaches and tools in the Schoology website facilitate both teachers, students, parents to build a collaborative community of learners to fulfill the educational goals in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It can be expected that Schoology's supported instruction has the strongest potentiality of connecting and collaborating school stakeholders at the same platform. These communal relationships may help to fulfill the demand of multi-literacies. Furthermore, different values of Schoology for individuals have the credibility to raise academic achievement and educational innovation of students.

## **Rationale of the study**

Educational transformation is imperative to bridge the gap between students' learning interest and teaching content in the classroom in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The main crucial commitment for schools must be to foster students' participation and active engagement in discussing, analyzing, and critically comprehending information within a small group or whole classroom (Cummins, et al. 2007). Technology-enhanced literacy teaching can advance students' learning and allow them to practice learned knowledge intuitively. According to Egbert (2009), teachers can lead students to the effective use of technology in the interest of creating something innovative in the classroom. Consequently, students will be motivated to express their own ideas and thoughts and learn from others. Thus, these literacies will drive students toward a different kind of meaningful thinking and decision making that is strongly connected to their daily activities. This review of Schoology website evaluates how the Schoology website is appropriately aligned with the students' learning and literacy activities in the classroom today. The Schoology website is reviewed considering the following three design criteria from technology supported instruction by Cummins et al. (2007):

- Provide cognitive challenge and opportunities for deep processing of meaning
- Promote self regulated activity for collaborative inquiry
- Focus on multiliteracies in the twenty-first century need

## **Schoology-supported classroom management**

Schoology is a promising educational tool for meeting both current and future challenges of teaching and learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. [Schoology.com](http://www.schoology.com) is a free teaching tool that helps teachers to manage classroom information. It is a collaborative platform for teachers, students, and parents. The purpose of developing and integrating Schoology in schools is to connect school community in the technology-supported classroom for improving students' learning. This technology-supported instruction creates dynamic educational support that can be fitted to new ideas from teachers and students.

Schoology supports an intimate partnership between educational institutions and technology developers and serves as a catalyst to empower teaching and educational effectiveness at different levels of any environment (i.e., K-12 education, higher education, corporate). To assess its value to teachers and students, it is important to evaluate if the Schoology website is appropriately aligned with students' learning and literacy development in today's classrooms. If the Schoology website and system does what it claims, teachers can use it to help assure the promotion of students' motivation to share their ideas and solve multiple problems for the benefit of individual or community.

This Schoology website provides an integrated platform for Student Information Management System (SIS) beyond the typical learning management system (LMS). It also offers an advanced API (Application Programming Interface) to help teachers concentrate more on an effective teaching instead of administrative responsibilities. Schoology has three account options for teachers, students, and parents that are integrated with classroom management applications. These classroom features are developed for schools and can create dynamic educational support for teachers and students, empower teachers by creating a collaborative learning environment for students, integrate experiences among educational stakeholders, and advance academic achievement and success in schools.

### **Evaluation of Schoology.com**

The review of Schoology evaluates how Schoology website is appropriately aligned with the students' learning and literacy activities in the classroom today. Through the Schoology website, teachers can assure students' motivation to share their ideas and solve multiple problems for the benefit of individual student or school community. The following three design criteria from technology supported instruction are considered to review Schoology website from technology supported instruction by Cummins et al. (2007):

#### **Design Criteria 1: Cognitive challenges and opportunities for deep processing of meaning**

Schoology embedded course design offers an opportunity to share questions, problems, and opinions within the classroom community. Teachers can motivate students to add, create,

record, and share supportive materials (i.e., audio, video, pages, pictures) (see Figure 1, 2) for class lessons by using this website. In addition, teachers can make class lessons more involving and applicable in daily life after facilitating students to use their prior knowledge and experiences.

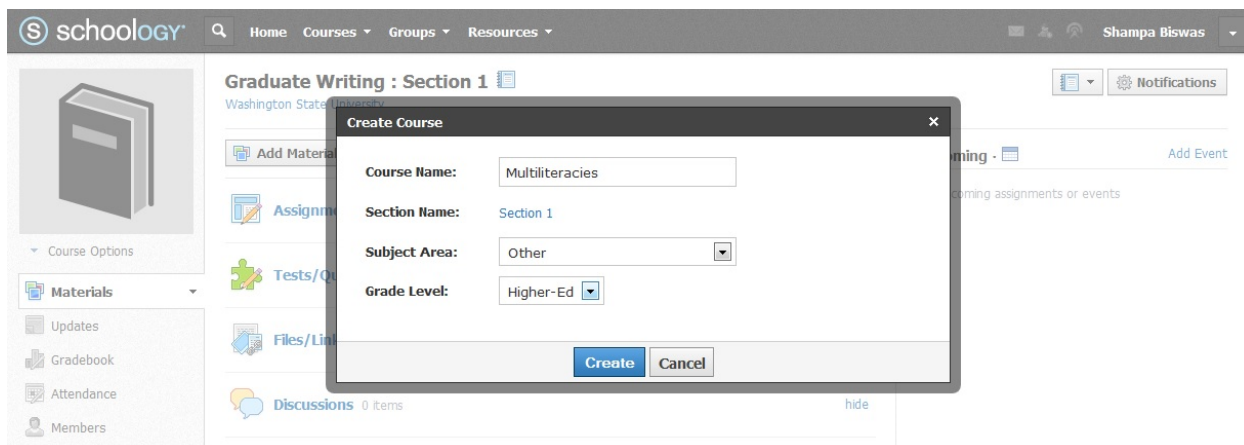


Figure 1: Course Creating option for the classroom management in Schoology website

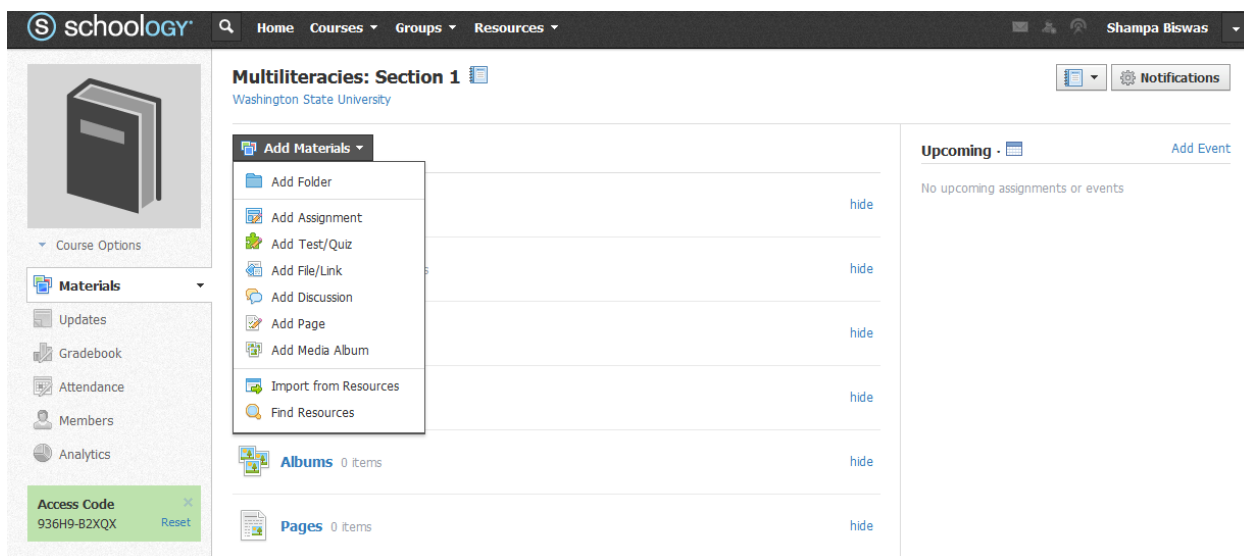
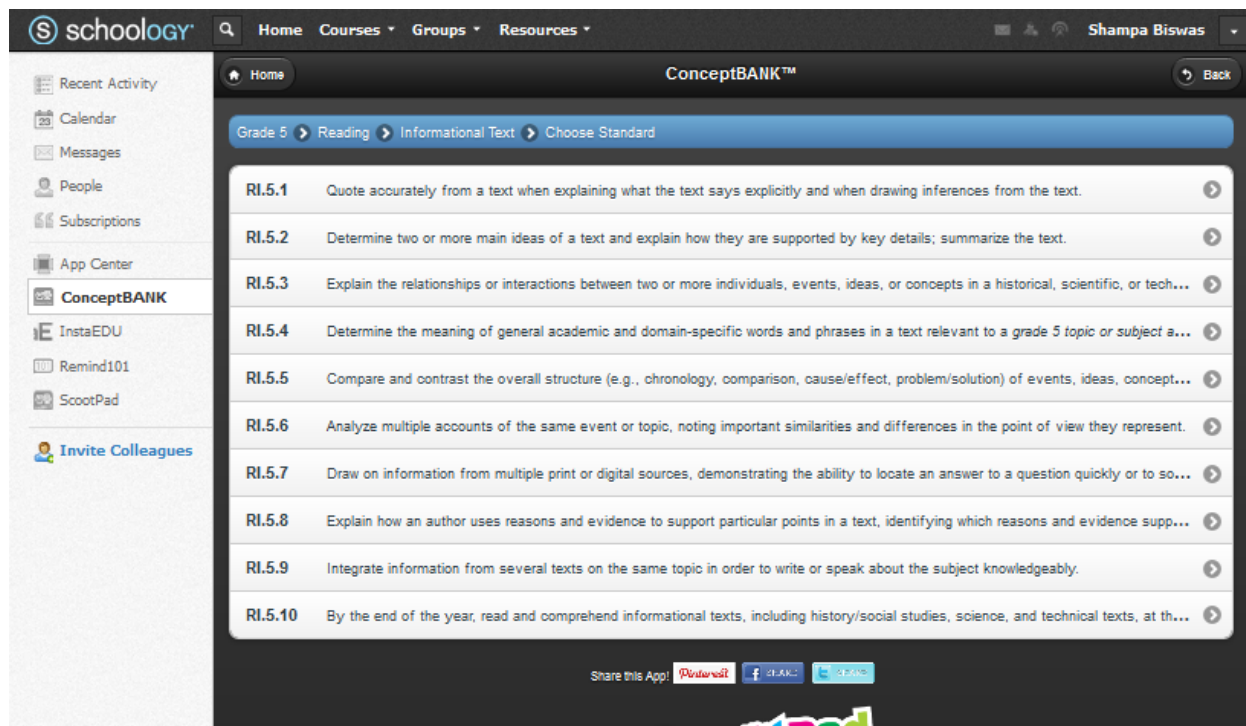


Figure 2: Different options of “add material” in Schoology website.

## Design Criteria 2: Self regulated activity for collaborative inquiry

The Schoology website offers to help students create personal profiles. This website provides Email and SMS text features in mobile that can easily bring course updates to

students.. Student-to-student and teacher-to-student interaction features can encourage students to contribute and share interesting and relevant ideas with classmates and teachers. Students' interaction on class content with classmates and teachers promotes deeper understanding and advances their ability to apply for diverse context.



*Figure 3: Concept Bank alignment with Common Core Standard of reading and listening*

For instance, ConceptBank application is one of the applications of Schoology website that supports an embedded feature with common core standard for Language and Arts, Mathematics, Special education, and Technology. Student can read the standard and then practice and relate their reading or listening content by practicing quizzes or questions. They can immediately check their performance. These activities promote awareness about the lesson tasks (see Figure 3). As a result, Schoology-website supports learners to take control of their own learning by checking their performance in their account as well.

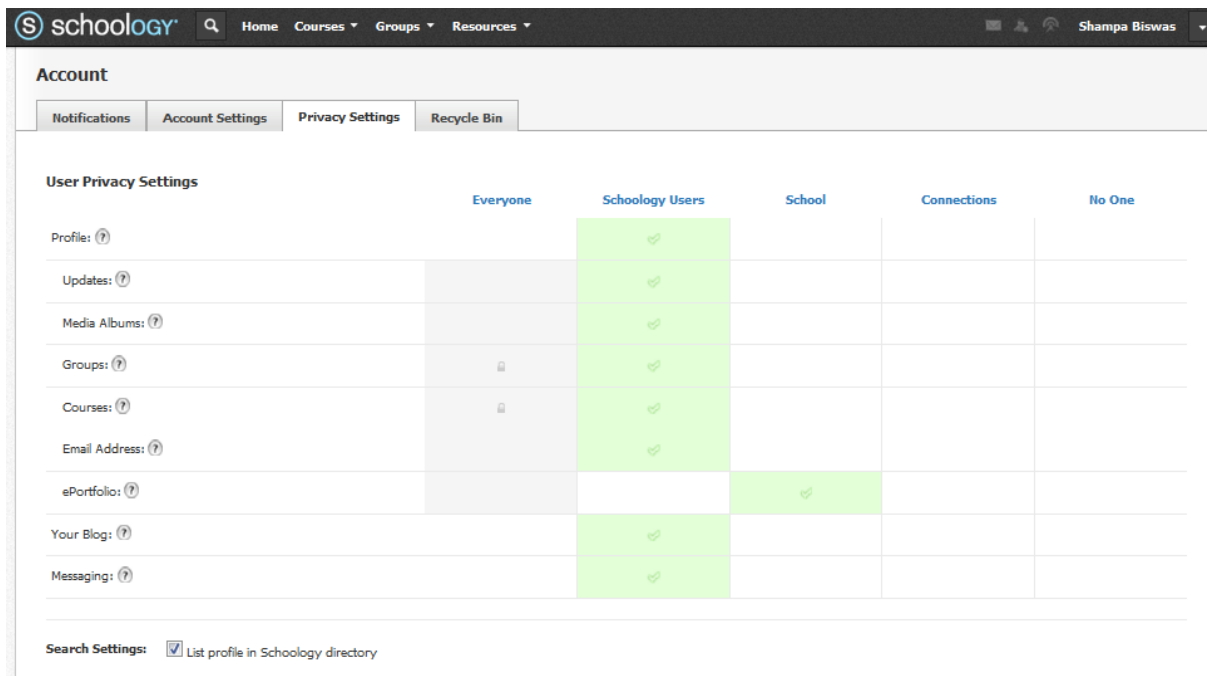
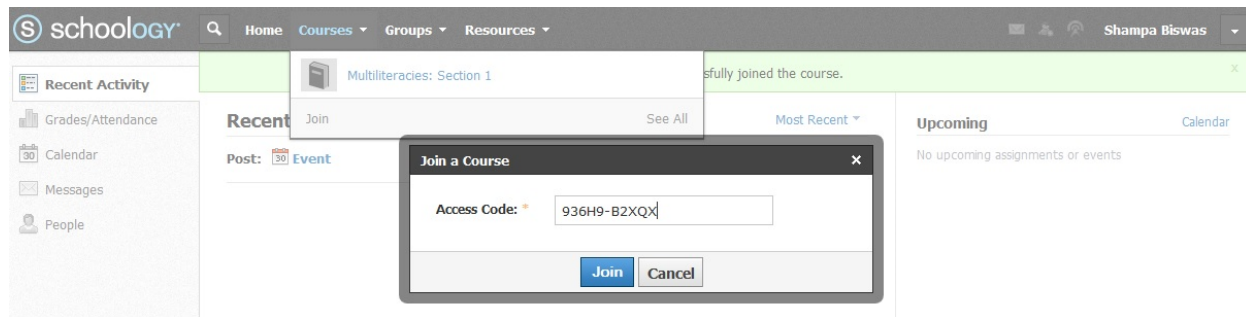


Figure 4: Privacy settings of Schoology teachers' account



Figure 5: Student access in a Schoology supported course



*Figure 6:* Student join in a Schoology supported course after entering access code

### **Design Criteria 3: Need of multiliteracies in the twenty-first century**

The Schoology website provides an integrated platform for practicing multiliteracies for students. It stores all personal, academic, and instructional information in one place with restricted access (see Figure 4). Teachers can both monitor students learning performance, but students can also check their performance. Student users can share rich-text file with others. Teachers can guide students to create a classroom networking by using this website. As this website can connect to both Facebook and Twitter features, the scope of students' learning may move from individual to classroom, classroom to society, and society to the world. Overall, students can practice multiple literacies through the Schoology website. For example, students can sign into the website with a class code (see Figure 5, 6) (i.e., computer literacy), complete their lessons for the class (i.e., academic literacy), create videos or compile a food/ travelling album for the class, and share their ideas inside the class (i.e., group) and outside the class (e. g., Web 2.0 services: Wikipedia, Facebook, Google Search). In brief, the Schoology website can adjust to the need for multiliteracies in the 21st century. Thus, different innovative applications and tools in the Schoology website can facilitate both teachers and students to build a collaborative community of learners and also fulfill the need of current educational goals.





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At Schoology, we're dedicated to providing our community with a simple, customizable experience that meets their unique needs. It's this dedication enabling us to continue fulfilling the promise of educational technology to improve learning and empower those who use it.

**K-12** **Higher Education** **Corporate**

Figure 7: Schoology for any educational environment (as multiliteracies)

### Educational Importance

Our schools are not ready to provide support for the broader range of literacies that are multiliteracies (Cummins, et al. 2007). To cope with the current educational challenges, teachers should be equipped with the concept of multiliteracies. Likewise, diverse research on technology-supported teaching strongly focuses on student's everyday use of Web 2.0 technologies and their participation on Web 2.0 both in and outside the classroom (Greenhow, et al. 2009). Technology-enhanced literacy teaching can advance students' learning capabilities and practice in different situations, contexts, and problems. These different multiliteracies pedagogical practices may facilitate students' abilities to think,

observe, participate, and apply learned information from the text to the real problem solving.

Teachers can use the Schoology website to manage everyday classroom practices of the school community with a goal of improving students' learning. Different embedded options in this website can enhance interactive learning for students, connect school stakeholders at the same platform, increase teachers' teaching efficiency, and shape students' learning and thinking for the diverse community needs.

### **A collaborative platform for school stakeholders**

Schoology's supported instruction holds a strong potentiality for connecting and collaborating school stakeholders at the same platform. These communal relationships may help fulfill the demand of the broader range of literacies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century need. This different pedagogical approach not only increases teachers' teaching efficiency, but also shapes students' learning and thinking for the diverse community needs (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003; Cummins, et al. 2007). Consequently, Schoology enables students to monitor their own learning process and makes students responsible for their own understanding and thinking.

It can be expected that school stakeholders can share challenges with others in this integrated learning environment. Furthermore, different values of Schoology have the credibility to raise academic achievement and educational innovation of students. Therefore, Schoology.com can be a supportive and advanced tools that helps school stakeholders fulfill the demand of strong literacy skills and development for students. Comparing Schoology with other available teaching tools might open a new lens for teacher educators to consider this Schoology website in their classrooms. Exploring the experiences of school stakeholders who already used this website could help Schoology developers to understand the benefits and shortcoming of this Schoology website. However, creating an information system for school stakeholders on students' learning success would provide good evidences for educators to integrate this website in classroom management and successful teaching.

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