

Skill Builder 5

Overview

Work with group members to choose a shared space to develop a grid that will depict the evolution of distance education, and fill in the information with what you know about the first era of DE (correspondence).

Working Collaboratively

Developing and sustaining online group collaboration is an essential skill for any workplace that uses digital communication, but particularly for distance educators. Some tasks are naturally better suited for a group, for example, ones where multiple perspectives enrich the outcome. In the MDE program, you will learn and work collaboratively, both in the classroom and in small groups, sharing ideas and perspectives, questioning and challenging, and co-constructing knowledge. In the skill builder which begins this week and runs throughout the remainder of the course, you will work collaboratively with a small group to document what you are learning about the evolution of distance education. Together, you will design a grid that will be a place to share your knowledge and construct ideas about each wave of development.

The group area where you will find your group located can be accessed by visiting: [Navbar>My Tools>Groups](#). As soon as you have read the instructions for this activity, go to the group area and check in with your group so that you can get a quick start. Tips for how to effectively collaborate in an online group can be found in the [Course Policies](#) area under the topic [Working on Online Collaborative Group Projects](#). Here you will find detailed advice about how to effectively work as a group. For example, it will be very helpful if you begin by defining a critical path (schedule), and clarify and agree on the task, that is, make sure that everyone understands what you are to do, before you divide the work and identify individual roles.

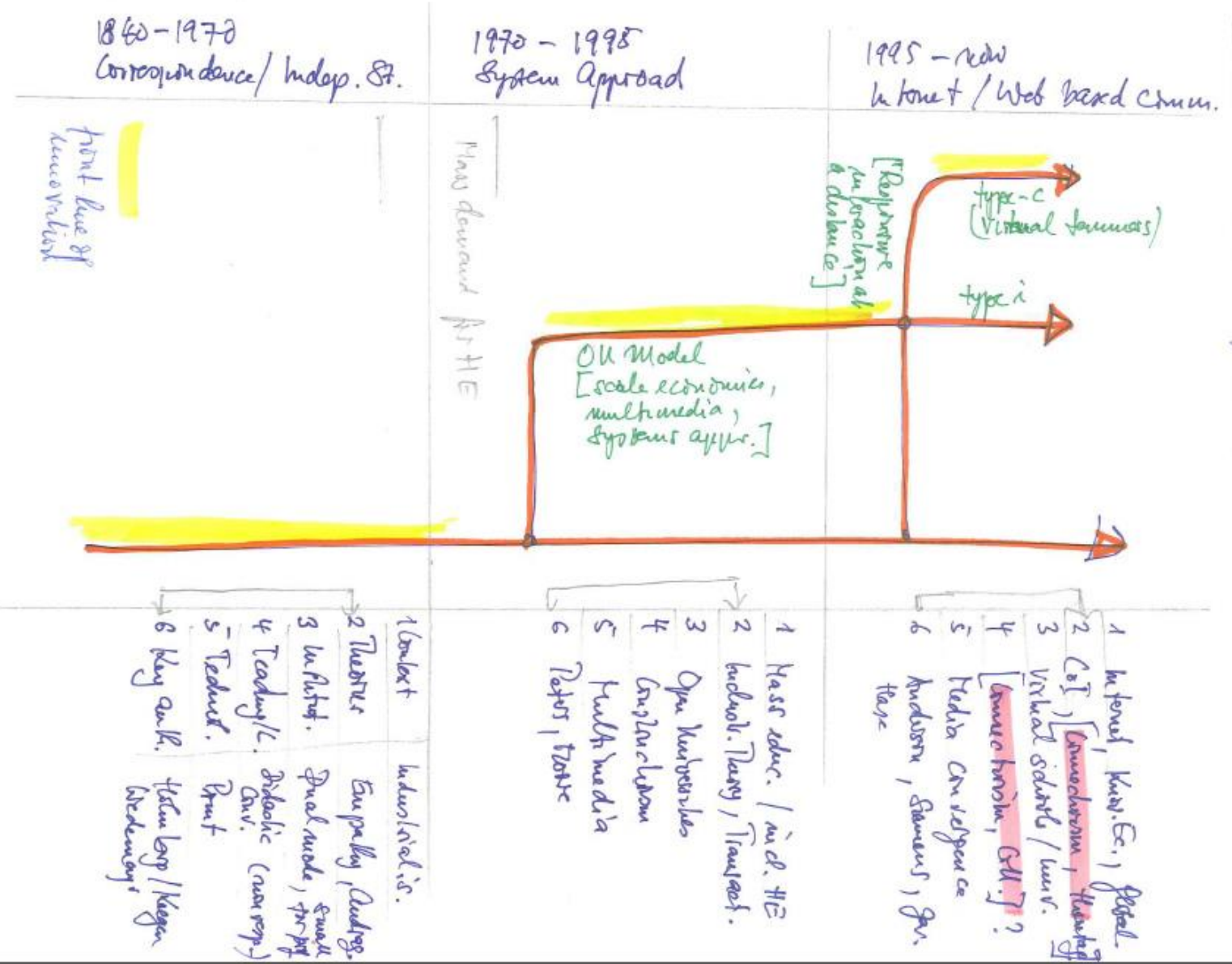
This is an ongoing activity throughout the course, and you and your group members will be updating the grid as you move through each wave of DE.

This skill builder has **two parts** this week: **(1)** developing a grid that you can use for the rest of the class to document the evolution of DE, and **(2)** documenting Wave 1.

Part 1: Develop a Grid

The first part of the task is to decide what kind of shared virtual space can best accommodate a grid (table) that your group can collaboratively develop. For example, you might use Google Docs (<http://docs.google.com>) as your preferred space. You will need to make your choice quickly and then ensure that each member has full access to it to write and edit, including your instructor(s) and TA. As you are learning, each wave of development in DE has a peak time of influence and then dissipates (but does not end) as another wave rises. Remember the visual from Week 1?

Stages of Development



- 1 Internet, Univ. Ec., Personal
- 2 CoI, [Construction, Learning]
- 3 Virtual students / Univ.
- 4 [source known, OLI?]
- 5 Media convergence
- 6 Anderson, Saunders, for. large

- 1 Mass educ. / ind. HE
- 2 Innovat. Theory, Transfer.
- 3 Open Universities
- 4 Anglo-American
- 5 Multi-media
- 6 Papers, Tutors

- 1 Context
 - 2 Theater
 - 3 Instruct.
 - 4 Teaching/L.
 - 5 Tutorial.
 - 6 Key anal.
- Individualis.
Empathy, Analog.
Print made, for print
Didactic (mass opp.)
Print
Historical / Keygen
Inventories

Unlike this image, which shows the waves as continuing, you will most likely use a simple table or a grid. Although a grid implies a specific end date for each wave, this is not intended. It is understood that a wave continues but is in the background as another wave becomes dominant. We specify using a grid because it is the easiest and most effective way of depicting all the dimensions of each wave. The grid that you develop should allow you to do the following:

Identify the following developmental waves and the years of greatest influence:

1. First Wave: Correspondence / Independent Study
2. Second Wave: Systems Approach to Education / Distance Teaching Institutions
3. Third Wave: Internet / Web-based
4. Current Trends: New theories, new roles, new applications of technology

Describe the various dimensions of development of DE for each of the waves identified in your grid. These should include but are not limited to the following:

1. Forces dominant in the larger context that drove development of DE (e.g., demand for educational access, government policies that determined the development and shape of DE such as funding and equity policies)
2. Theories/Ways of Understanding DE
3. Institutional and organizational development (systems; ways of operating)
4. Prevailing teaching/learning theories/methodologies/Prevailing view of of role of teacher and role of learner
5. Predominant technologies
6. Key authors

Here is an example of what your grid could look like (created with Google Docs):

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/11fab2cGZz39ndFCmSPf3SdM8sjrXk0ZMh27tQttIq0/edit>

Part 2: Document Wave 1

Once you have your grid prepared, you will be ready to start entering what you know about Wave 1 of the development of DE. Think about what you learned in the first two weeks about the early history of DE, forces that brought it into being such as social and economic development of the time, and how DE was practised and for whom. You might also think about Otto Peters' description of his discovery of DE as a unique form of education and how he described its broader dimensions in his analysis. Borje Holmberg also

provides some important insights in terms of early DE practice, focusing on the two constituent elements of DE and the type of interaction used. All of your readings, the videos, and your discussion of these will be valuable resources in describing Wave 1 using your (R)Evolutionary Grid. Many of you have also begun this task by identifying factors that have influenced the development of DE during our Week 2 discussions with Otto Peters. This could be a good starting point for beginning to fill your group grid.

To begin the group project, you may want to brainstorm in a synchronous session (e.g., chat, Skype), record notes, document the resulting ideas in your grid, and add any additional thoughts individually, or you may want to use a combination of asynchronous communication in your group area and development of running lists. Once you have reached a common understanding of the task, you can discuss and agree upon the most effective method of sharing your knowledge.
