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Artifact in Action 5: A Towards a Living Survey of Transitional Student Reading Habits and Social Media Usage

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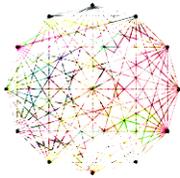
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Colin Charlton + Andrew Hollinger



A Living Transitional Student Inventory

There is a substantial amount of course management software available to teachers and students as we launch this journal in 2014. From institutionalized platforms like Blackboard Learn to customizable code like Drupal, from courses occupying Facebook to Facebook-like courses in Edmodo, teachers and students can interact online and use a lot of web 2.0 tools to analyze, construct, and share knowledge. But there are other “stations” that we’re building to get things done, as Cole shows us in her piece. What can we learn from those stations, how we build them, and how they function online as identity and learning extensions?

In order to get at the profile that Cole wants of student identity, social media usage, and learning, writing teachers can help through a sequence of surveys that begin with high school seniors and continue through the freshmen year. Finding out how students during this transitional time change (or don’t change) their behaviors, attitudes, and learning activities when it comes to social interactions (online or otherwise) can help identify what the hub Cole envisions needs to look like, how it needs to function, where it needs to be flexible, and in what ways it needs to be stable.

Beginning in spring 2014, the first year writing program at UTPA (theWP) will pilot the *In Media(s) Res Survey* for transitional students (high school to college). It will blend Cole’s questions with student reading surveys à la David Jolliffe and Allison Harl’s “Texts of Our Institutional Lives: Studying the ‘Reading Transition’ from High School to College: What are Our Students Reading and Why?” (*College English*, 70.6, 2008) to get a sense of what a student-centered hub can be.

Will it look like the Spotify of college cram chats? Will a new type of research index make sense? Does it have to be a cross-platform app? Will writing students want and respond to a different kind of social media community than we’ve seen up until now? We don’t know, but Cole and theWP invite writing students, teachers, and researchers to join the survey development underway at inmres.blogspot.com or reddit.com/r/ELATeachers for a spring 2015 pilot and fall 2015 launch.