This week in the CTRE
February 12—18, 2012
Chicago State University

Upcoming Events

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<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Moodle Basic Training</td>
<td>2/14</td>
<td>11:00AM-12:30PM</td>
<td>Online</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>3:00-4:00PM</td>
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<td>Integrating iPads into the Math Curriculum</td>
<td>2/16</td>
<td>12:30-2:30PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moodle Basic Training</td>
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<td>From Hip Hop to Facebook: Teaching Today’s Generation</td>
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Do We Need Those Thinkin’ Badges?

In November, the website Inside Higher Ed featured a column titled, “How Will Mozilla’s Open Badges Project Affect Higher Ed?”

Though here we are three months later, you’re probably asking yourself, “What on earth are Open Badges?”

In essence, the Open Badges Project is a new method of recognizing learning, skills, and accomplishments that don’t as yet get much formal acknowledgement. These can be “hard skills” like building a website, “soft skills” like critical thinking, or even community aspects like having an excellent reputation—think of them like an updated version of the badge someone might earn in Boy Scouts.

This might sound anathema to many in higher education, but with developmental backing from Mozilla and support from the MacArthur Foundation, this is no fly-by-night operation. Even the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor have expressed interest.

So the question begs asking, “What are the implications for higher education?”

(Continued on back)

From Writing to Workshop to Writing

Writing in higher education can be a double-edged sword: a celebrated article can turn a previously unknown academician into the darling of his or her respective field; just as one that is poorly produced can spell reputational disaster. Oftentimes, the key ingredient is time—the more you have of it, the more you can dedicate yourself to writing a terrific article.

Rachel Toor, Assistant Professor of Creative Writing at Eastern Washington University, suggests maximizing your time by creating a small workshop for you and your peers to support and guide each other to achieve your writing goals. She suggests including people from varying disciplines, keeping groups small (no more than 8 people), and maintaining an “editorial” atmosphere whereby members mark up others’ work ahead of time and focus on problem-solving.

To learn more, read Prof. Toor’s Chronicle of Higher Ed article.

APPEALING APPS

App: Pages
Price: $9.99

Described by Apple as being “the most beautiful word processor you’ve ever seen on a mobile device,” this app allows you to write papers, create newsletters, and more, regardless of where you are.

Images: Google App Glide, Open Badges Project, Writing
Looking Forward

Friday Faculty Fest

What: “From Bebop to Hip Hop, From Google to Facebook: Teaching Today’s Generation”

When: Friday, February 17 (12:00-2:00PM)

Where: LIB 301

This Friday, Rev. Otis Moss III, pastor at Chicago’s Trinity United Church of Christ, will be leading a workshop on understanding the cultural shifts taking place among today’s young adults as shaped by popular culture and social media.

What sets this generation apart from previous ones? What are the larger social implications of the growth of Facebook, Twitter, and Google? How can we as educators reach and engage students without compromising pedagogy or expectations? These are just a few of the questions that Rev. Moss will be exploring in his workshop.

Lunch will be served, but please register in advance.

Click here to RSVP.

Do We Need Those Thinkin’ Badges?

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Far be it from anyone to suggest that it’s the death knell for a formal college education, but no doubt if Open Badges catches on in a big way, there will be reverberations to confront. Especially if it becomes common practice to showcase one’s badges in a job interview, for example, then institutions of higher learning may be compelled to embrace them, at least marginally.

Assuming that there would be skepticism and pushback, a white paper titled, “Open Badges for Lifelong Learning” was authored by Mozilla, Peer 2 Peer University (P2PU) and the MacArthur Foundation, providing a justification for such an undertaking. “With the Web and its core principles of openness, universality, and transparency,” it states, “the ways that knowledge is made, shared, and valued have been transformed and the opportunities for deeper and relevant learning have been vastly expanded” (4). Open Badges are meant to recognize that learning.

What Mozilla and P2PU are most interested in, of course, is establishing a regulated system by which these badges are created and awarded. John Doe can’t simply create his own badge for Xbox 360 because he destroyed enough alien spaceships; rather, badges are created only by such organizations as traditional educational institutions, professional bodies, and after-school programs.

To learn more, visit the MozillaWiki Badges page.

Images: Rev. Otis Moss III, Mozilla Logo, Peer 2 Peer University Logo.