Some things educators can do

Learn About Web 2.0

It's not going to go away, and it is pretty amazing. It may seem overwhelming, but it's worth taking the time to jump in somewhere and start the process. Classroom 2.0 (www.Classroom20.com) is not a bad place to start, since it's a social network for educators who are interested in learning about Web 2.0, as it turns out... :) I do like social networking as an easy way to enter the world of Web 2.0, and a good list of educational social networks can be found at http://socialnetworksined.wikispaces.com.

Lurk

There is nothing wrong with „lurking," and a lot to recommend it. If you go to Classroom 2.0 or some other site, that doesn't mean you have to become a contributor right away. If you've spent years evaluating students on their writing, it can be a little scary to put up something you have written for the whole world to see–especially if you don't have hours and hours to refine it. So wait and watch a little.

Participate

After some purposeful lurking, consider becoming personally engaged. Be brave. Post a comment, or reply to a thought. It can be short! While Web 2.0 may seem short on grammar, spelling, and punctuation, your skills in those areas will help you to communicate well, and you will discover that contributing and creating take on significant meaning when you are participating in a worthwhile discussion.

The Answer to Information Overload Is to Produce More Information

Teach Content Production

When you have understood the previous suggestion, you'll realize the importance of starting to teach content production to your students. This is important on many levels, not the least of which is teaching how to make decisions about sharing what you produce (copyright issues, and be sure to learn about Creative Commons licensing)–so that your students can appreciate the importance of respecting the licensing rights of others.

Make Education a Public Discussion

Maybe the general public hasn't spent much time discussing or debating education and learning lately, but it's about time for that to change.

Help Build the New Playbook

You may think that you don't have anything to teach the generation of students who seem so tech-savvy, but they really, really need you. For centuries we have had to teach students how to seek out information – now we have to teach them how to sort from an overabundance of information. We've spent the last ten years teaching students how to protect themselves from inappropriate content – now we have to teach them to create appropriate content. They may be „digital natives," but their knowledge is surface level, and they desperately need training in real thinking skills. More than any other generation, they live lives that are largely separated from the adults around them, talking and texting on cell phones, and connecting online. We may be afraid to enter that world, but enter it we must, for they often swim in uncharted waters without the benefit of adult guidance. To do so we may need to change our conceptions of teaching, and better now than later.

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