

to transfer knowledge and methods to different learning situations (DeSeCo 2005). However, some studies tell that Norwegian students perform poorly when it comes to developing “strategies” for controlling the information they receive, and relating this information to previous knowledge in a critical way (Knain 2002:45). Still, any rationality is based on presuppositions about the relationship between a given behaviour and expected effects. Questions like “why quite a few learners do not perform critical analysis of the information they receive” may therefore be answered by how the system reward different behaviour. If the learners have experienced that the educational system tend to reward those able to repeat, or replicate information, then they are likely to conclude that the pay-off from critical investigation will not be worth the effort. From an individual point of view this makes sense, even though a more objective rationality may conclude otherwise.

Strategies and Tactics

The mediation, presence and circulation of cultural representations (e. g. as taught by educators) do not tell all about the significance of these artefacts to their users (e. g. the learners). If we are going to understand the use of artefacts we have to analyze the manipulation of an object by users who are not the object’s initial producer (de Certeau). To help us understand and investigate cultural objects Michel de Certeau introduce strategies and tactics² as concepts in analyzing the nature and politics of cultural production within “the practice of everyday life” (de Certeau, 1984: xix).

Strategies are manifested through institutional means of control that become possible through the constitution of social and technological systems, making it possible to control “space”. Strategies serve as a base for external relations towards competitors, the public in general, voters, objects for research, etc. An example of strategies, used by de Certeau, is the appropriation of language through the fixed system of linguistics, where writing becomes the representation of the formal powers of documents (de Certeau).

However, the operation of any economic, political, or technological system needs to give some space for movement. It is not possible to reserve these spaces exclusively for the dominating part without enforcing a totalitarian regime. These limitations to the application of strategies make individuals able to develop *tactics*, which de Certeau describe as individual techniques of knowing how to operate within processes of the dominating system. Common examples of such techniques are informal communication, improvisations, unauthorized

simplification of procedures, “forgetting” orders etc. de Certeau describes tactics as a constant search for situations that are possible to manipulate, and thereby changed into individual opportunities (op. Cit.).

Strategies and tactics in education

The new ways of accessing information through computer networks are difficult to control, fostering new ways of information retrieval, questions of authority, and re-use etc. challenging the educational institutions traditional authority (Säljö 2001). This makes self-regulation an even more complicated achievement, calling for another, more complex, understanding of the different aspects of “learning and studying strategies”¹ within education.

When talking about the learners’ ability to develop individual “learning-strategies” we tend to refer to practices that correspond to the results society wants in return for spending resources on the educational system. In other words, we want the learners to behave according to the educating system’s *strategies*. From the learners’ point of view, “learning-strategies” are applied as *tactics* that become possible because the central strategies do not penetrate all parts of the educational system.

Inspired by de Certeau’s terminology I would like to use a distinction between educational strategies and learning tactics.

	Control	Adaption
Educators	Educational strategies	Educational tactics
Learners	Learning strategies	Learning tactics

Educational strategies are manifested through a system of national plans for education, the curriculum, routines for evaluation, by economical means etc. On the other hand *learning tactics* are the learners’ individual adaptations to this system, and these adaptations may differ significantly from the behaviour society and educators try to encourage through their strategies.

This does not imply that educators always act according to strategic thinking, or that learners always behave in ways that can be explained as tactics. It is more like *controlling systems* versus *individuals*, and consequently educators also will have to behave according to tactics when they try to operate within restrictions put upon them by a system. An example is the complicated interplay between the financing of the institutions in Norwegian higher education

and the educators assessing of the learners' performance. Another example is how educators relate to the plans made by education authorities (Bachmann 2004). We may therefore extend our vocabulary even further by introducing *educational tactics*, and finally *learning strategies*. The first being tactics developed by educators having to do their job adapting to regulations enforced by the government and the educational institutions. The latter will be learners in situations where they do not have to think about how their performances are evaluated. A typical example would be the freedom of learning as part of a hobby, where individuals make decisions about what, and how to learn out of sheer interest, without having to think about someone evaluating their achievements.

One of the major questions, especially when introducing new technologies in education and learning, is whether it possible to make educational strategies and learning tactics come closer together. Before introducing how we have tried to facilitate these processes in a specific virtual learning environment – eLogg - I would like to introduce why *personal publishing* has caught our interest.

Potential in personal publishing

Personal publishing, opposed to traditional publishing, do not involve any editorial unit, the content is structured, elaborated and adapted to be consistent with individual communicative needs, although normally based on “dialogs” that include a number of participants.

Weblogs is a form of personal publishing where the users rapidly become active producers of information, and where individuals are given opportunities to participate on their own premises, in terms of form, content, pace and frequency. This makes weblogs particularly interesting from an educational and learning perspective because they form an individual basis that exploits some of the most essential assets of networked digital media: communication by hyper-linking (Hoem & Schwebs 2005).

Weblogs exist as a result of the users' active production of media content, also including frequent re-mediation of content produced by others. This production may be carried out in multiple ways, ranging from postings in the users' own weblogs, comments by hyperlinking, and comments in weblogs controlled by others. This makes the users able to take advantage of different communicative features according to how they want to get involved in the communication. Combined with an extensive use of hyperlinks this makes weblogs offer flexibility well adapted to a variety of net based learning resources.

In USA, where personal web-publishing still is more common than in Europe, more than half of all teens who use the Internet are also *content creators*. These youngsters have either created or worked on a weblog or webpage, shared original creative content, or remixed content they found online into a new creation (PEW 2005a:1). One in five online teens has created their own weblog. For many these weblogs function as a personal, but often publicly displayed, journal that can be used as a forum for exchanges with friends, posting ideas, sharing personal experiences etc. 38% of all online teens say they read weblogs (ibid.).

Looking at the figures from Livejournal (Livejournal 2005), one of the largest sites for personal publishing, we clearly see that most of the users are teenagers, or in their early twenties, still at an age where education is a major part of their everyday life. Some may argue that most of the content published is mostly of a social character, and consequently that the published information will be of limited value in educational settings. I will not confront this line of argument in this paper, but point to the continuous development of digital fluency among these teenagers.

When discussing the design and use of virtual learning environments a significant task become to take advantage of the productive potential seen in personal publishing and use this in ways that benefit the results we want in education.

Trying to merge educational strategies and learning tactics

It would be naive to believe that the introduction of technical solutions based on a specific publishing concept would lead to immediate, and profound changes in the educators' and the learners' behaviour. Nevertheless, every artefact is a carrier of prescribed³ meaning and intentions and these prescriptions have to be considered when introducing technical artefacts in education.

Cultural behaviour, like education and learning, may be changed by the use of technical artefacts, but how these changes are manifested, and when or where they occur, is always difficult to predict. There is also a mismatch between changes applied through different artefacts and changes in culture over time: The characteristics of artefacts may change quickly but the implications of these changed artefacts may take several decades in order to produce significant changes in culture. Nevertheless it is one of the educational system's main

purposes to contribute to facilitate some changes in society, and maintain others, making it essential to design any learning environment in ways able to foster long term processes.

I have argued elsewhere (Hoem 2005a) that there are some substantial differences between personal publishing systems and most Learning Management Systems when it comes to *communication patterns* (op. cit :45). Learning Management Systems are normally designed to provide necessary functions from an administrative point of view, features that are useful, but nevertheless designed on the basis of educational strategies. The result is often that the communication patterns with bias towards *transmission*, where production and distribution of information is controlled by central units. In most personal publishing systems, like tools for weblogging, individuals are given more diverse opportunities when it comes to controlling how information is produced, distributed, and re-used.

To support our thinking about the design and implementation of a virtual learning environment we have chosen a perspective focusing on nine *communication patterns*⁴: (see Hoem 2005a for a more thorough explanation)

		Control of production & re-use		
		<i>Information centre</i>	<i>Individual user</i>	<i>Collective</i>
Control of distribution & consumption	<i>Information centre</i>	Transmission	Registration	Commenting
	<i>Individual user</i>	Consultation	Dialog	Collaboration
	<i>Collective</i>	Syndication	Sharing	Emergence

All these patterns will be present in education and learning, at all levels, and in various degree. However, it is then important to understand that it is impossible to design any communication environment in a way which facilitates all patterns simultaneously. Designers who intend to design at system which is considered to be uniform, and user friendly, have to make choices favouring some patterns at the cost of others.

In order to facilitate the development of self-regulatory skills we want the learners to constantly change between accessing information, reflect critically upon it, and make revisions and re-contextualization. These are the basis of the critical skills that we want learners to develop on all levels in education.

Both self-regulation and critical reflection are activities of a tactical nature, involving questions about authority, the ability to make individual decisions, and a constant awareness of the influence of peoples changing roles and their actions. These competences have to be learned through individual experiences where the learners actively perform different productive tasks on the basis of material from a variety of sources. Reflection also determine a recognition that there always will be different ways of understanding a specific problem, and these alternatives are much more likely to become evident when a number of people collaborate. In other words, reflection includes both individual and collective efforts, where a number of people contribute through production, re-contextualisation, and re-mediation of shared information resources.

The individual ability to produce information, and use this information as a resource for communication is also the core of digital fluency (Resnick, 2002), emphasizing communication as the bridge between different praxes and socio-cultural learning theory. I will argue that self-regulated educational- and learning-culture that we endeavour is characterized by the communication patterns found towards the lower right of the table shown above. This occurs in communication environments with less centralized control where all users are given the ability to control production and distribution of media content, giving space to individual learning styles.

Communication patterns in eLogg

Among the communication patterns presented “transmission”, “registration”, and “consultation” may be characterized as *strategic communication patterns* where the control is centralized. On the other hand will “sharing”, “collaboration”, and “emergence”, where the users are in control, be patterns of much more tactical nature. The *tactical communication patterns* imply that more control is given to the learners, and are likely to be those supporting the development of self-regularly skills the most. However, most learners will need some guidance, calling for some functions that make the educators able to direct the learning-processes without interfering in ways that may the control away from the learners.

A central part of the research project Dramaturgy in Distributed Learning has been the designing of a publishing system, eLogg⁵ The system was developed in co-operation with a reference group of teachers, and we soon realized that the teachers were not eager to use, nor promote a system facilitating tactical communication patterns. For example, when the reference group were introduced to wikis their immediate reaction was that this kind of

software would be unsuitable for their didactic purposes where identifying each learner's contribution is considered important. The idea that every user should be able to edit any page, a central principle in wikis, also seemed to make the teachers feel unconfident. Several discussions made it become evident that the teachers tended to emphasize functionality that resemble the strategic communication patterns. This made us conclude that designing a system focusing on tactical communication patterns would be a waste of time, as long as these patterns do not correspond to didactics familiar to the teachers.

It seems like the majority of teachers are most comfortable with systems that make them able to apply didactics in a strategic way. One may argue that one consequence is that most of the learners then most likely will respond according to tactics. This may make the learners fully capable of handling a specific system, but we will have to see whether they are provided with a set of skills that make them competent in settings outside education. From a perspective including the cultivation of *media literacy* we wanted the young learners to be introduced to a communication environment that resemble some of the functionalities known from publishing in open systems, like on the public parts of Internet.

“Syndication”, “dialog”, and “commenting” are the communication patterns where strategies and tactics meet, and our assumption is that learning environments facilitating these *adaptive communication patterns*⁶ will be able to provide some common ground where educators' and learners' interests meet. Such environments may be most likely to become successful in educational settings, and the following will briefly describe how we have tried to implement functions that facilitate adaptive communication patterns in eLogg⁷.

Commenting in eLogg

“Commenting” occurs when a central service controls the information, but the users are able to contribute with additional comments⁸. An initial assumption, based on the use of comments in weblogs, was that the combination of several different, but user friendly, commenting functions could be used to facilitate collaboration where the individual contributions would be easy to identify. In eLogg we decided that the general rule should be that the users are able to comment any post they are able to read. However, the owner of the post being commented always has exclusive control over the comments, meaning he is able to block the commenting feature on specific posts, and he may delete comments that he does not approve. Users have to

be logged on to the system making it impossible to comment anonymously, and every comment has a link to the log of the one making the comment.

Comments are also important in dialogic patterns, where they may re-contextualise the meaning of a post through other user's response. They also provide an alternative to posting⁹, and, perhaps most important, comments are an effective way of giving the users a concrete manifestation of the posts visibility to others. The latter function makes the learners aware of their audience, and may be highly motivating both in educational and social settings.

Dialog in eLogg

Dialog occurs when individual users are able to produce and distribute information. Ideally the flow of information runs in several directions, giving all users equal opportunities to exchange information¹⁰. Giving every user their own virtual space where they are able to control how the content is published, influence on parts of the design, and the posts' context is essential if dialogic patterns shall occur.

We put quite a lot of energy into building easy *trackback* functionality¹¹ into eLogg. *Trackbacks* makes it possible to automatically make hyperlinks between a post and other post written in relation to this post. We use this functionality when the teachers give assignments, and to make it possible to make the learners able to keep control over their comments (Hoem 2005a:38).

User-control is essential in eLogg in order to make the users able to adapt the system to their needs, and to make them feel confident. An important aspect is the control and easy access to the learners own material. To help this every post in eLogg may be categorised, a functionality that is intended to make it easier to find older posts, and automatically generate a context for related posts. The learner can choose among some predefined categories that correspond to subjects, and are shared among all the learners in a given group. The subject-categories may not be changed by individual users, but each user may define additional categories that may be used in their own logs, in addition or instead of those defined by the system administrator.

The idea is that no post, even if it is an answer to a specific assignment, can be considered a final documentation of the learner's ability to mediate his knowledge. On the contrary, the meaning of individual posts may change over time either by the owner editing the original or through a re-contextualisation, by comments provided by others, or even by comments by the

user who wrote the initial post. The post may also be put in another context if the owner decides to include it in a project where the context becomes posts provided by the other project members or made collectively by the project team.

Syndication in eLogg

Syndication occurs when information is produced by an information centre, but when it comes to controlling distribution the information centre lets the users take control over the information and re-use it for different purposes. The re-use of post from individual logs in projects, as mentioned above, is also an example of syndication in eLogg¹². The other members of the projects will not be able to edit these posts, but they will be able to decide where the posts should appear in the text, and they may delete the reference to the post from the project.

Another feature is the implementation of blogrolls, a function well known from weblogs¹³. Due to our own use of weblogs we were quite confident about the importance of blogrolls when it comes to developing, and maintaining a collaborative environment. The users of weblogs often write their posts in response to others, and the blogrolls way of displaying activity significantly reduce the time from a post is written to it is read by others, potentially generating comments and related posts.

During the development of eLogg the blogroll was implemented in several different ways. The teachers in the reference group were sceptical to the first implementation, mostly because they were afraid that this feature could stigmatize those who did not publish often. The result became a negotiated solution, more like the functionality known from “latest news”-listings in online newspapers. The users names are displayed in an order corresponding to when the latest post are written, but the “flagging” of posts posted within a given timeframe was not implemented. Those who may be displayed on the blogroll will always be all learners in a group (normally 20-30 persons), and in addition the blog-owner may add others who’s weblogs he would like to monitor. However, the blogroll does only show a limited number of names, solving a potential problem caused by the displaying of the ones who seldom post at the bottom of the blogroll.

Conclusion

I have argued that when discussing the design of different learning environments with the ambition of facilitate the learners' self-regulatory skills we need a more precise vocabulary than the widely used term "learning strategies". During the development of eLogg we have used a distinction between strategies and tactics, and identified three different groups of communication patterns: Strategic, tactical, and adaptive communication patterns.

Deciding to use communication patterns as a principle for design may seem radical, as long as the patterns do not tell anything about how education and learning actually take place.

However, these processes are complex, involving a multitude of different perspectives, and even if we were able to describe the actual learning-processes these descriptions would be difficult to operationalize in practical discussion about design issues. Working with communication patterns provides a vocabulary adaptable to the designers' terminology as well as corresponding to social constructivistic theory, both emphasizing the importance of communication in all kinds of learning.

It is of course difficult to provide facts "proving" that a system designed to facilitate adaptive communication patterns results in increased self-regulatory skills. However, after following the use of eLogg in primary schools, we see numerous examples where the young learners demonstrate a high degree of independence and control when they produce information and communicate this in a shared environment.

Overall the use of strategies and tactics in relation to communication patterns as guidance in the thinking about the design has been fruitful, even though many of the ideas that followed have been abandoned as a result of negotiations between educators, researchers, developers, and designers. In retrospect it becomes evident than even during the design process, when the development team believed they were in the position to plan strategically, they were often forced to think and behave according to tactics. Nevertheless, we believe the principles and initial ideas behind the design and development of eLogg is worth following in future projects.

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HEL...

I Love

 You.

OPPSLAGSTAVLE

Ingen meldinger.

ARKIV

September 2005 (3)

SISTE INNLEGG

Ny tekst

21. september 2005

intervju

Hei og velkommen Eminem. Du som er verdens mest berømte rapper i verden. Her står vi uten for huset dit.. Hva heter du egentlig?? Hva heter datteren din?? Bruker du briler??? Hva heter de mest kjente sangene dine??? Har du adoptert din onkels sin datter??

[Les mer...](#)

Endre [Skrevet om dette: 2]

14. september 2005

hei

hva gjør du på fritiden jeg spiller håndball, er med venner ,ser på tv og er på dataen!!!

[Les mer...](#)

Endre [Skrevet om dette: 6]

7. september 2005

Musikk

Vilken musikk liker du??? jeg liker Daniel powter Eminem Ass like thet, hailis song og Mocking Bird

[Les mer...](#)

Endre [Skrevet om dette: 1]

SIST LAGT INN

- [Sjakk](#)
- [Sjakk](#)
- [Sjakk](#)
- [Sjakk](#)
- [Sjakk](#)
- [Sjakk](#)
- [Sjakk](#)
- [Sjakk](#)
- [Sjakk](#)
- [Sjakk](#)

MINE PEKERE

- [123spill.no](#)
- [Tinka](#)
- [Mac gyver](#)
- [RICHARD DEAN ANDERSON](#)
- [Radio1](#)
- [Google](#)
- [minijuegos](#)

SKOLENS PEKERE

- [Gruble net](#)
- [Klasserommet](#)

2 de Certeau do not refer to the use of this terminology by the military, where tactics are the manners of conducting each separate combat; and strategy serves the general objective of a war (von Clausewitz, 1873/2003). Carl von Clausewitz book *Vom Kriege* is probably not an appropriate reference when it comes to the education of young people, but nevertheless a source widely used outside the armed forces, like in higher business education etc.

1 See «Studenters lærings og studiestrategier: Kvalitetsindikatorer i høgere utdanning?» (Pettersen 2004) for a discussion of these terms.

3 When people engage with technology (like computer software) they do so following a tradition, a culture-of-use. The result is every artefact contains presuppositions about how it will be used. These mechanisms may be understood as scripts, as described by Madeleine Akrich:

”Designers thus define actors with specific tastes, competencies, motives, aspirations, political prejudices and the rest, and they assume that morality, technology, science and economy will evolve in particular ways. A large part of the work of innovators is that of inscribing the vision of (or prediction about) the world in the technical content of the new object. I will call the end product of this work a ‘script’ or a ‘scenario’.” (Akrich 1992:62)

4 The nine communication-patterns are found by asking two initial questions (Bordewijk & van Kaam, 1986):

1. Is the transmitted information owned by an information service providing centre or an individual information service consumer?
2. Is the transmission and use of the information controlled by an information service providing centre or an individual information service consumer?

Bordewijk and van Kaam came up with four patterns because they did not consider the possibility that both production and distribution may be “controlled” collectively.

See also Jens F. Jensen , A new typology of information services
<<http://imv.au.dk/tvest/Nr15/3.html>>

5 Dramaturgy in Distributed Learning (DDL) is a research and development project funded by ITU. eLogg has been used by hundreds of pupils in primary schools in Bergen during 2005-2006 (Schwebs 2005).

For a description of the different functions in eLogg, see (Hoem & Schwebs 2005).

6 The term “adaptive communication patterns” is used to emphasize that these patterns are those most likely to facilitate “spaces” where education and learning can meet, by acknowledging both strategies and tactics.

7 Any communication environment will facilitate several, sometimes all, communication patterns. Designing with particular focus on the adaptive patterns do not imply that the other communication patterns are absent when the system is used for practical purposes.

8 The act of commenting does not only resemble the communication pattern “commenting”, but may also include qualities associated with the patterns “dialog” and “registration”. The communication patterns are analytical tools, not a system designed for absolute classification. When discussing the communication pattern commenting the user controlling the post that is commented may be considered as a centre.

9 The possibilities of producing information on different levels are considered important, especially when the learners are socialised into a publishing culture. Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger argue that

we are involved in a number of “communities of practice”, in some of these networks we are core members, in others we are in the periphery (Lave & Wenger 1991). New, potential members will have to begin their in the periphery. This is similar to the situation which meets a student when he log on to a virtual learning environment for the first time. Regardless technical or social reasons some areas of the community will feel easier to enter. (Hoem 2005b:3)

10 Making it easy to flux between different user roles is a central idea behind the design of eLogg. This becomes evident through the close connection between “consultation” and “dialog”, an interplay that continuously draws the communication towards “collaboration”.

1 1 For en forklaring av trackbacks / “tilbakepekere”, se
<http://www.sixapart.com/movabletype/docs/3.2/08_trackback/>

12 At the moment the owner of a post will be the only one able to import the post into a project. Initially we wanted everyone to be able to import any post into a project, with reference to the author. However we decided not to implement this from the same reasons as abandoning wiki-functionality.

13 A blogroll normally display a list of names, where the names corresponding to the weblogs that are recently updated are displayed on top of the list. Posts posted within the latest 12 or 24 hours are often given a ”flag”, an useful function because there always are differences between the different users frequency of posting. Who is listed on the blogroll is normally controlled by the owner of the page where the blogroll is displayed.