Podcast Discussion 1

The first point in Ben and Steve's podcast which caught my interest was the idea that we need to shift away from our traditional Industrial Revolution educational system design. I think most of us would agree that we have to adapt to meet the needs of our current learners, and technology needs to play a role in the redesign. Should we just embrace what's out there without caution? Ben mentions that students will sometimes use false information, perhaps unknowingly, because they like where they are getting it or feel comfortable with the way they are getting it. As discussed in an earlier post, teaching students to evaluate the reliability of information is difficult.  
  
On the other hand, I completely agree that students should be allowed to give direction and play roles in the development of their own personal curriculum. I see no problem with allowing students to explore their true personal interests within reason and designing instructional frameworks which allow for that exploration. Also, allowing them to share with others could have tremendous educational benefits. Clearly, Ben discusses numerous tools that allow students to share with a virtually limitless audience.  
  
Should parents be concerned when their children aren't bringing home assignments which have been evaluated by their teachers? I can certainly see why they would be. Yes, I like the idea of his Academy of Discovery and his points about authentic learning, but should students still engage in "learning the right way" as some of his pointed out? Will students be able to meet the goals of standardized testing? Ben believes they will. I was very impressed when he addressed a specific state standard involving analyzing dictionary entries and his explanation of how his students met that objective in a very non-traditional way.  
  
Can social networks play a positive educational role? Can we effectively monitor? I might be thinking for days about his ideas on a social network for students and their beliefs. Lastly, can students be responsible for designing or developing instruments to measure what they are doing and learning? I would say that some can.