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Elluminate: your grandkid's classroom

Collaborative learning conference and education tool reaches 25,000 users

Technology trends and news by [Matt Bowman](#)

December 8, 2009 | [Comments \(0\)](#)

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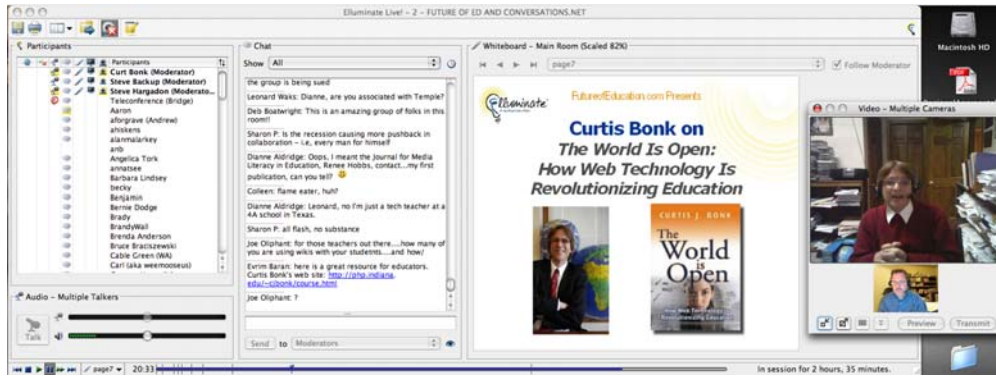


Wondering what school will be like for the next generation? Check out [Elluminate](#).

It gives an instructor the ability to hold a web conference with up to 300 participants, host interactive displays, video streaming, private-but-moderated chats between participants and just about every function a teacher could want in an online classroom. Last week, the company announced its social network, LearnCentral, which launched in June of this year, has reached 25,000 members worldwide.

The company says its mission is to help “create a 21st century teaching, learning, and collaboration environment” and is being used for corporate training and seminars as well as instruction. I watched one of its recorded sessions—a [seminar with “World is Open” author and Education 2.0 guru Curtis Bonk](#)—to check out the functionality.

In the screenshot below, the far-left column list participants, who interacted with emoticons (smile, applaud, etc) during the seminar. The next column to the right displays the live chat, and the “White board” can be made interactive by the moderator, or used for simple display. At one point, participants were invited to plot their locale on a map, and little red dots filled up the U.S. and a few regions in Canada and England. When the presenter was speaking about his webpage, another window popped up on screen displaying the site.



During Q and A, participants indicate their desire to ask a question and the moderator can make individuals audible to the whole crowd. The functions that enable students to talk to each other while moderated seemed like a particularly interesting pedagogical tool that could enable social learning while enabling a teacher to correct any erroneous notions proliferated within the class.

A number of higher institutions including Babson College, Penn State, and University of Illinois, Springfield, as well as several k=12 schools are using the platform—a sample list is [here](#). Sun Microsystems and EMD biosciences use it for training, Princeton Review uses it for its test prep courses, and Alabama and Ohio use the platform for professional development in their state education departments.

Elluminate was founded in 2001 by serial entrepreneur Nashir Samanani and Mike Mabey who worked together at EraSoft Technologies. The privately-held company said it doesn't comment on financials, and declined to say if they've received any venture funding.

Classroom image credit: [Cornell.edu](#).

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