***E-tivities:* An Overview**

By Gilly Salmon | [www.e-tivities.com](http://www.e-tivities.com)

**Book Summary**. Gilly Salmon’s *E-tivities* (2013) is especially pertinent to educators in institutions of higher education, as well as individuals involved in corporate training, who are aspiring to engage learners in an online environment. Rather than focusing on the importance of ‘content’ in a learning environment, Salmon emphasizes the central role of ‘activities’ – or ‘e-tivities’ – to promote learning. Her book provides practical guidelines for engaging learners, developing strong and low-cost activities, and achieving greater participation and learning through an online environment (Education Book Review, 2012).

**Main Points**

* *E-tivities* reimagines traditional ideas of education by learning through an *online* environment, while also emphasizing the ‘teacher’ as a facilitator and e-moderator rather than as a content expert. The book instead focuses on *learners*, who contribute most of the knowledge through problem-based learning.
* E-tivities are created for at least two people (usually more) who are typically not in the same location. However, it can be combined with location-based learning.
* E-tivities are designed before the course begins, are scalable and customizable, and are easy to reuse and edit. They can be sequenced to form a whole course, replacing or supporting all other learning methods, or they can be used for one or two online activities.
* Emotions may be shared more readily in an online setting versus face-to-face, which promotes reflectiveness.

**Five Stage Model (pp. 16-17)**

* Different e-tivities are designed for each stage of the Five Stage Model – a structured developmental process requiring varied levels of e-moderator support and participant engagement. At each stage, the e-moderators preparation and direct involvement should decrease as participants’ comfort level and engagement increase. Assuming participants receive clear instructions on how to work together, understand the purpose and goals of each e-tivity, and receive necessary technical support, they will likely move through the five stages with success. (Ideas for e-tivities at each stage: Salmon, 2013, pp. 97-128.)
* *Stage 1: Access and motivation*: Most important at this stage is that the learner is able to access the technology and that he/she has purposeful reasons to participate and engage on a frequent basis – likely with one or two others.
* *Stage 2: Online socialization*: Individuals begin to establish their online identity and to connect with classmates, realizing the benefits and requirements of working with others.
* *Stage 3: Information exchange*: Participants exchange information with a mutual benefit for learning opportunities. A cooperative effort is seen as each learner supports the goals of other learners.
* *Stage 4: Knowledge construction*: Knowledge construction begins as group discussions and activities become more complex, collaborative, and team-oriented.
* *Stage 5: Development*: Collaboration, teamwork, and comfort level are at their peak. Participants are active in exchanging ideas, pursuing goals, and reflecting.

**Getting Started | Creativing E-tivities | The Invitation**

* Determine the purpose and goal of each e-tivity. Start with the end goal in mind.
* Create a storyboard to organize a draft format into a learning sequence; consider which stage of the Five Stage Model (the scaffold) is appropriate for each e-tivity.
* Write the e-tivitiy in an easy-to-follow manner using the invitational framework (the invitation), pictured to the right.
* Use catchy and easily understood titles for each e-tivity. Use numbers to indicate the stage, timing, and order of e-tivities.
* Be *very* specific about what you want the online learners to do. Use action verbs.

(Invitation examples: Salmon, 2013, pp. 140-147. Image shown here from <http://www.gillysalmon.com/e-tivities.html>)

**Ten Technologies for Working Together (pp. 62-68)**

1. Wikis (Wikispaces, Mediawiki, PBWorks, Googlesites)
2. Voice boards (Wimba Voice Board, VoiceThread, Vocaroo)
3. Blogs (WorkPress, Blogger, Edublogs)
4. Micro-blogs (Twitter, Tumblr, Plurk)
5. Text Messages on mobile phones
6. Multi-user games (World of Warcraft, Camelot: Battle for the North)
7. Three-dimensional multi-user virtual worlds (Second Life, OpenSim)
8. Synchronous virtual classroom (Adobe Connect, Live Meeting, Wizid)
9. Mind and concept mapping (MindMeister, SpicyNodes, iMindMap, Cacoo, MindManager, FreeMind, Cmap (for concept mapping), bubbl.us (for brainstorming), Prezi (for mind mapping and presentation)
10. Social networking (Facebook, LinkedIn, Ning, FriendFeed, Yammer)

**Ten Technologies for Sparks (generating discussion and contributions) (pp. 68-72)**

1. Crowd-driven wikis (Wikipedia, Formspring)
2. Social bookmarking (Delicious, Diigo, Symbaloo, Springpad, Pinterst, Medeley)
3. Recommendations and contributions (Scoop.it, Pinterest)
4. Massive contribution and collections (Flickr (images), YouTube (videos) , SlideShare (presentations), SoundCloud (audio) , Khan Academy (educational videos), Kickstarter (entrepreneurial ideas), Dribble (designer portfolio), Behance (artwork portfolio)
5. Syndication and update (Google Reader or Trapit)
6. Digital collaboration (Google Docs, Microsoft Sky Drive, Zoho, MoPad, DropBox)
7. Random discovery (StumbleUpon)
8. E-portfolios (PebblePad, Mahara)
9. Mobile apps (thousands available for Apple, Windows, and Android)
10. Location-based imaging (Google Earth, Google Street View, Android Footprints)

**Reference | Additional Online Resources**

* Salmon, G. (2013). E-tivities: The Key to Active Online Learning (2nd ed.). Routledge.
* Education Book Review: E-tivities by Gilly Salmon (2012): <http://youtu.be/MOQaQX9Hr78>
* Creating Invitations for E-tivities. Gilly Salmon stresses the importance of creating clear and intriguing titles, sequencing activities, and explaining the purpose of activities to online learners for greater engagement: <http://youtu.be/Rf7CVJfVCtE>.
* Gilly Salmon e-tivities. Review. Explanation of the five stage model of teaching and learning online: <http://youtu.be/Z789GKOQqmU> .
* Scaffolding for learning. Gilly Salmon uses building blocks to visually and verbally walk through the five stage model of teaching and learning online: <http://youtu.be/4pKsZ6dVhlI>.

E-tivities: Reflection, Application, and Handout

Indiana University

**Reflection on *E-tivities* and Application to Internship Courses**

My office – career development at Marian University – is planning to integrate many of our resources into an online setting in order to expand our reach and availability to students. When I was choosing a book to read, I knew Gilly Salmon’s (2013) *e-tivities* had the potential to help me learn best practices for online engagement, which could shape the development of an online, collaborative environment for students. My initial focus (and the focus for this assignment), is on creating an online component for students completing internships each semester.

**Current Process for Internships at Marian University**

 Marian University is a small, private, four-year Catholic institution on the northwest side of Indianapolis. We have around 2700 students, with 1300 being traditional undergraduates. Approximately 160 of these undergraduates complete internships each year.

 Internships at Marian University are a very individual activity. Depending on the student’s discipline, he or she will have different requirements to satisfy under the direction of that major’s internship faculty advisor. For the most part, this process works fairly well. However, based on research I completed for another course last year, I believe internship courses could be enhanced in two ways: 1) by providing opportunities for collaboration between students who are completing different internship experiences and 2) through additional opportunities for personal reflection.

 I would like to propose that all students who enroll in an internship course at Marian University work for their employer for the prescribed time period (as they do now), but that they also simultaneously engage in an online component with other students who are interning at different locations (new component). At the beginning of the semester, the e-tivities built into the online component would begin with icebreakers, goal-setting, and getting to know one another. Their expected engagement and contributions would increase in the middle of the semester to include opportunities to collaborate and learn from the vast number of experiences and knowledge being gained through the many internship opportunities. Reflections would be built into the online component each week to track the student’s experiences, successes, challenges, and knowledge gained. Finally, the course would wrap up with a final e-tivity to revisit and reflect on goal attainment throughout the internship.

**Explanation of E-tivity Invitation: COL 360 Internship Course**

Gilly Salmon spends a great deal of time speaking about e-tivity invitations, which are imperative for planning strong e-tivities and clearly communicating both their purpose and the student’s role in each one. Based on the framework provided by Salmon, I have included a mock-up of the final e-tivity invitation I would use during the COL 360 internship course – assuming we add the online, collaborative component. (See Addendum A.)

Salmon’s invitation includes 10 sections (see Addendum B, page 8):

1. *Number, spacing, and sequence*: the week and sequence of the task (e.g. 5.3 would be week 5, task 3)
2. *Title*: a brief, catchy descriptor
3. *Purpose*: an understanding of what the online learner will gain from this e-tivity
4. *Brief summary of overall task*: Instructions on how to take part and what the participant needs to do
5. *Spark* (to initiate conversation): a “spark” to light the fire of conversation; should be linked to the topic for the week
6. *Individual contributions*: clear instructions for what each participant should do in response to the spark
7. *Dialogue begins*: request a response from an individual to others in the course
8. *E-moderator interventions*: clearly state what the e-moderator will do and when
9. *Schedule and time*: total time required to complete the activity (elapsed calendar time and total activity time); also include due dates
10. *Next*: Link to the next e-tivity or requirement

The e-tivity example I have created for students in the internship course (Addendum A) – *If I knew then what I know now* – is expected to be completed as the first activity in the 14th week of the semester-long course (14.1). Its *purpose* is to make clear connections between knowledge gained through the internship experience and its effect on the student’s future plans and goals. It is also anticipated that the e-tivity will help the students in their final reflection paper and in preparation for their internship presentation. The *brief summary of the overall task* is to solidify the knowledge gained during this internship and online course through reflection, key take-aways, and next steps. The *spark* is for each student to revisit e-tivity 1.1 where students were asked to list their personal learning goals for their internship, along with all other postings indicating their progress. The *individual contribution* is to repost the learning goals from e-tivity 1.1, and – in a 400-500 word reflection – describe 1) where students have achieved their anticipated learning goals, 2) where they were unable to reach these goals, 3) additional (unexpected) experiences gained and/or goals attained, and 4) how this experience has affirmed or altered their future plans and goals. *Dialogue begins* as students are asked to respond to at least five classmates with comments and suggestions based on their entries. This might include suggestions for additional courses to deepen their experiences or advance toward their stated future plans and goals, an employer or organization of interest they may want to research, or an individual with whom they might want to connect for networking purposes. For the *e-moderator’s* part, I would award up to 10 points based on the quality of the students’ initial forum posting and up to two points for each of the five comments based on their insights and contributions, for a total of 20 possible points.

**Explanation of *E-tivities* Overview**

 In addition to this reflection, I have included a two-sided overview of the *e-tivities* book, which can be provided as a handout to others who are interested in online learning. From this handout, readers are able to read a book summary, review bullets of the main points made, gain an introduction to Salmon’s Five Stage Model and her framework for online invitations (narrative and images for both), review 20 suggestions for encouraging collaboration and discussion, and pursue further knowledge through links to additional online resources. (See Addendum B.)

**Conclusion**

 Gilly Salmon’s book was a wonderful resource for providing an introduction to the benefits of online learning, as well as through practical examples and best practices for implementation. I am excited about the real possibility of initiating an online, collaborative component for students completing internship courses, but I was very previously unsure where to begin. By simply following Salmon’s framework for one e-tivity, I gained a lot of clarity for how this could work. I have a lot of work ahead of me to make this a reality, but this is the most clarity I have had to date. For the first time, this feels like more than just an overwhelming goal. I just need to take Salmon’s advice: with the end-goal in mind, begin to create your storyboard.

References

Salmon, G. (2013). *E-tivities: The Key to Active Online Learning.* Routledge*.*

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| **Numbering, pacing and sequencing** | 14.1 |
| **Title** | If I knew then what I know now… |
| **Purpose** | To make clear connections between knowledge gained through the internship experience and its effect on your future plans and goals. This e-tivity will also help you in your final reflection paper and in preparation for your internship presentation.  |
| **Brief summary of overall task** | Completing this internship course has allowed you to gain experience while applying classroom concepts within a work environment. To solidify the knowledge you have gained, below is your final e-tivity to reflect on your progression throughout this course and to articulate the key take-aways and next steps.  |
| **Spark** | During e-tivity 1.1, you were asked to introduce yourself and to list your personal learning goals you hoped to achieve during your internship. Revisit that posting.Review each e-tivity throughout this course along with the journal entries you have recorded during each week of your internship. These will remind you of your progress throughout this experience.  |
| **Individual contribution** | Re-post your learning goals from e-tivity 1.1 into the Forum/Week 14 section of OnCourse. Describe 1) where you have achieved your anticipated learning goals, 2) where you were unable to reach these goals, 3) additional (unexpected) experiences gained and/or goals attained, and 4) how this experience has affirmed or altered your future plans and goals. (400-500 words)Complete your forum posting by Monday, November 24 at 11:59 p.m. |
| **Dialogue begins** | Take a look through the postings of others. Respond to at least five classmates with comments and/or suggestions based on their entries. This might include suggestions for taking additional courses to deepen their experiences or advance toward their stated future plans and goals, an employer or organization of interest they may want to research, or an individual with whom they might want to connect for networking purposes. Each entry should be 100-150 words.Complete your five comments by Sunday, November 30 at 11:59 p.m.  |
| **E-moderator interventions** | I will comment on all forum postings by Wednesday, December 3.Up to 10 points will be awarded based on the quality of your initial forum posting, and up to 2 points will be awarded for the insights and contributions for each of your five comments to classmates. A total of 20 points may be obtained through this e-tivity. |
| **Schedule and time** | Total of 10 days (elapsed calendar time) from beginning to end in two parts: initial forum posting and comments on classmates’ postings. Takes about 2.5 hours total over 10 calendar days.  |
| **Next** | Complete your final reflection paper (due Wednesday, December 3) and prepare for your final presentations (on Friday, December 5 between 8:00 -11:00 a.m.).  |

**E-tivity Invitation: COL 360 Internship Course**