Suite C (née “Collabosphere”)

Despite longstanding recognition of technology’s potential to promote active, self-directed student learning models, the LMS largely continues to reinforce traditional top-down practices. More specifically, 21st century literacy practices require skills in collaborative group-based and individual content curation, remixing, and multi-modal production. These new pedagogies, in turn, demand that their impact on student interaction, learning pathways, and outcomes can be assessed.

SuiteC comprises three interrelated tools that extend the LMS through deep integrations via LTI and platform specific APIs. Students select and share content in the Asset Library, either through the LMS’s native assignment submission process or by uploading or clipping images, texts, and media files, which are stored in the LMS’s file system. Once objects are in the asset library, students are able to comment on and give thumbs up or down to each other’s submissions. This form of peer assessment is itself tracked as analytic activity, and at the instructor’s discretion, can be given point values aggregated in a leaderboard or the Engagement Index, which is essentially a dashboard of various course activities shared among all the class participants (native LMS activities can also be tracked and assigned point values).

Students form teams in the Whiteboard tool to remix and enhance assets from the Library, collaborating in real time. The LMS is not simply a repository for received content, whether delivered as files in folders or well-constructed learning modules; rather the activity of the *student* making meaning in a public, collaborative space is central to the learning environment and course experience. SuiteC may be freely installed and used by schools and nonprofits.

SuiteC engages learners with diverse modes of interacting with instructional content, peers, and for evaluating their own participation in a course, providing them greater opportunity to construct a unique learner pathway catered to their particular strengths and interests while offering nuanced insight for formative assessments. Because the configuration of the tools is designed to scaffold learners and provide an open space for student exploration, and because of the LTI integrations and Caliper analytics standards, instructors are able to leverage deep insights into student participation profiles (their learner pathway), and connect these profiles with a number of course outcomes. These insights can be used to make strategic instructional interventions in real-time or in future courses, such as recommending content a student might have missed or suggesting alternative participation pathways to help optimize one’s own learning.

SuiteC offers instructors at participating institutions a user-friendly set of tools that can be flexibly implemented in various course delivery models to augment and enhance the LMS, providing greater opportunities to engage 21st century learning principles without the complexity of navigating to external 3rd party apps. By keeping learning content and student data organized across a suite of connected tools, departments and institutions can improve their program evaluation and develop targeted professional learning and development strategies.