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Web 2.0 Tools

Web 2.0 has many definitions, but, in essence, it is a term that implies that users of the Internet can gain and give information. Wikipedia, one of the most visited Web 2.0 websites, is by definition a wiki, which is a prime example of a Web 2.0 tool. Within a wiki, collaborators can create meaningful information by contributing facts to an ever-growing number of topics. Therefore, in the new Web 2.0 world, the Internet is not only a place for gaining information, but also a place for sharing information. Common Web 2.0 tools that are used in many classrooms can include:

- Wikis: webpages that can be edited by many.
- Blogs: web-logs.
- Podcasting/vodcasting: an audio or audio/video recording.
- Google tools: Google docs, sites, spreadsheets and forms. (Google regularly adds tools.)
- Social networking: Facebook, Twitter, etc.

With the growing popularity of Web 2.0 tools in the classroom, a school's AUP will need to address the issues of Web 2.0. Often "blocking" sites is the choice of technology directors. There are many Web 2.0 sites designed specifically for education (often by educators) and are therefore safe and relevant for today's classrooms.

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	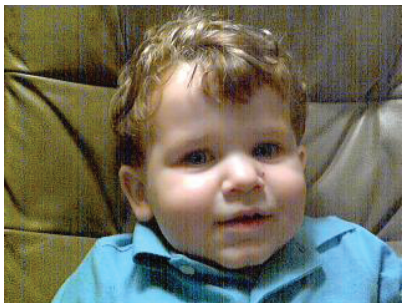	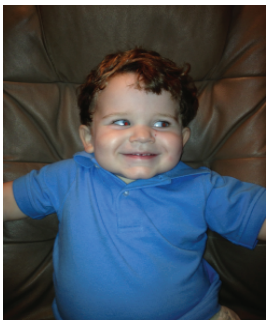
Web camera with 640X480 resolution and 0.3 MP for still pictures	Web camera with 1280X720 resolution and 3.0 MP for still resolution	Web camera with 1280X720 resolution and 8.0 MP for still resolution

Zoom and Control

Zoom: Most webcams will state if the camera has optical and digital zoom capabilities or permanent fixed focus. If your videoconferencing project is one that you, the teacher, or a small group of students will be sitting in front of the computer, zoom capabilities are less important. However, if you would like to conduct a project where an entire classroom is being shown, you would want the capacity to zoom in on one area of the classroom. For example, when beginning to work with videoconferencing, I wanted my teacher education majors to watch a wonderful teacher as she incorporated an interactive whiteboard game into her lesson. I set up a webcam in the teacher's classroom, provided her with a wireless microphone, and thought I had a great idea. Unfortunately, my teacher education students could see little of what she was doing. The camera was a fixed focus camera, pointed on the classroom as a whole. We were unable to "follow" the teacher or students while the lesson evolved.

Tilt and Pan: The extra features of tilt and pan are also important when implementing certain types of videoconferencing experiences. Most webcams are equipped with manual focus, which will automatically track an item or a face and focus on that item. However, some webcams have the capability to be controlled by an external computer or joystick, allowing it to tilt in one direction or another, pan in and out, focusing on important moments in the classroom.

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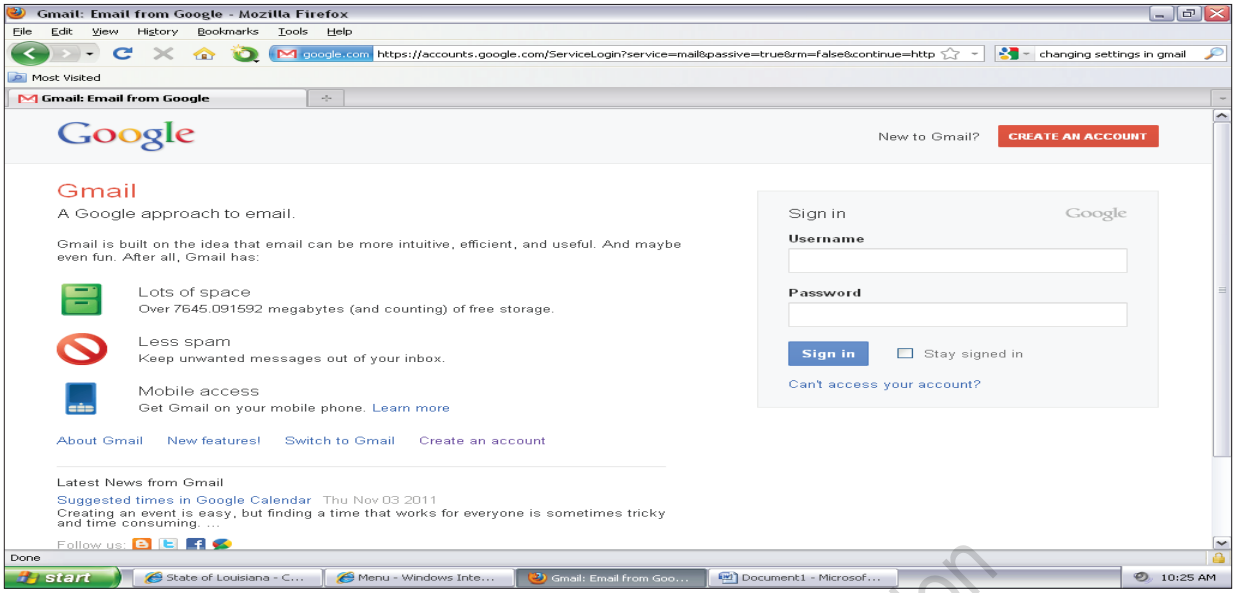

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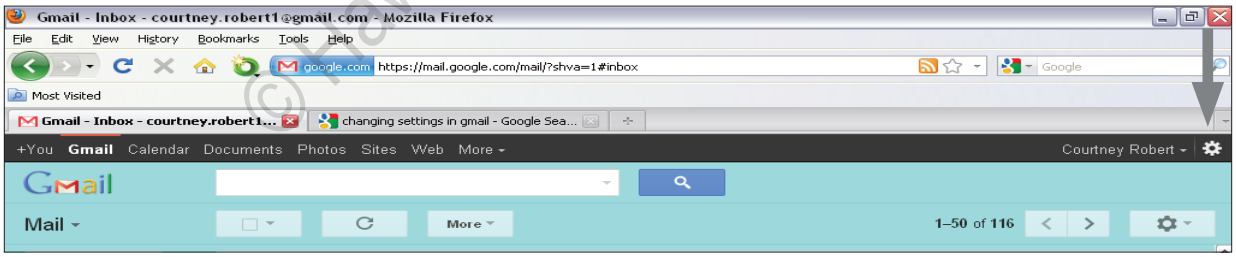
Checking Chat Settings

Checking your Google Chat settings is imperative for both you and the person you are chatting with. Many problems with connectivity can be avoided by following these simple steps before your first chatting session.

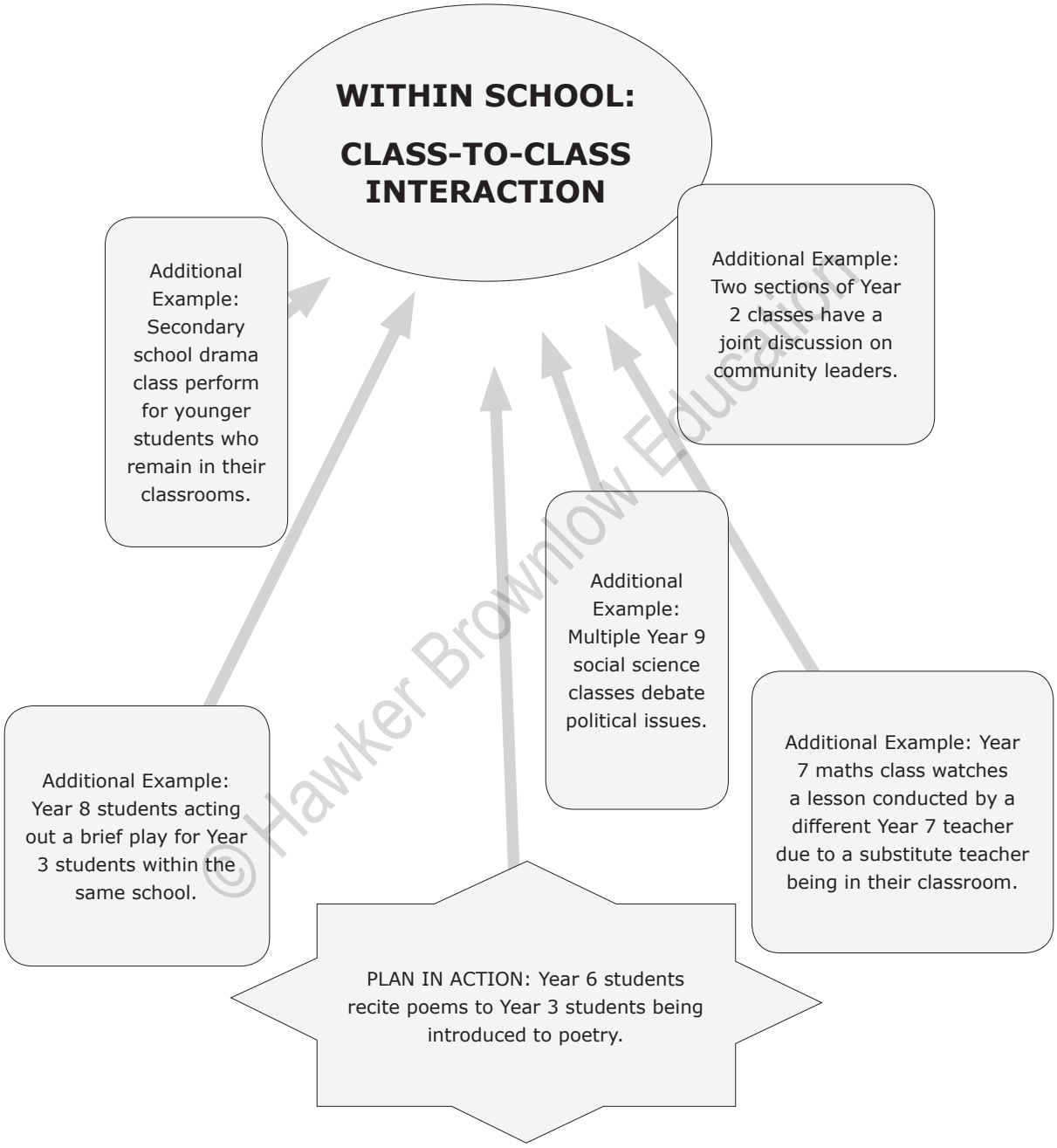
1. Sign into your Gmail account.
2. Click on the gear at the top right corner of your account. Choose "Mail Settings".



3. Choose "Chat" from the tabs at the top of the Settings interface.

Within school - class to class interaction

Videoconferencing programs that include one web camera in each of two classrooms located within the same school.



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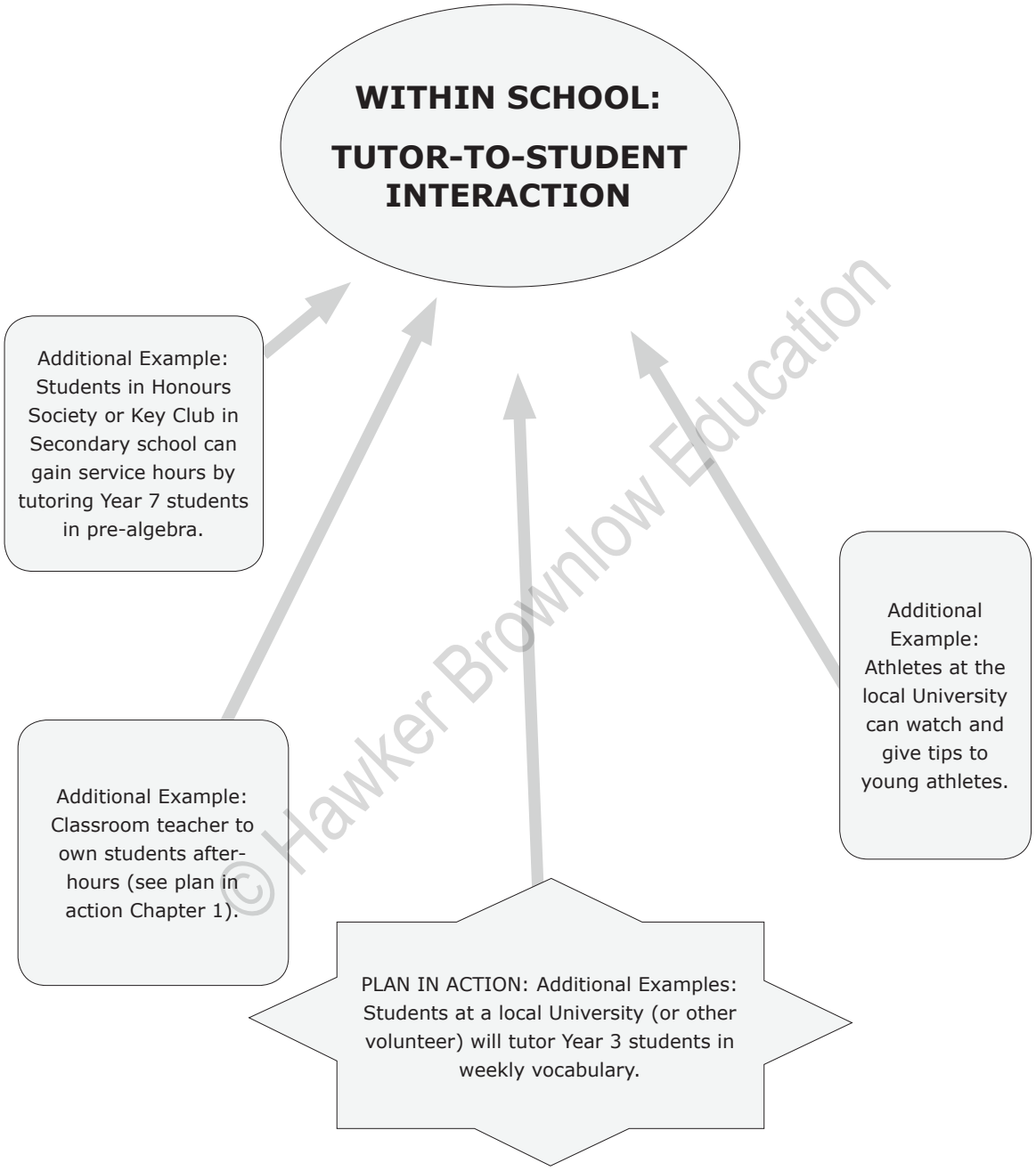
Among schools - tutor to student interaction

This type of videoconferencing is perhaps the most difficult to set up, but also perhaps the most powerful for learners. As a service learning project, or through volunteers, local tutors can give brief but frequent individual tutoring sessions to classroom students.



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PLAN TO ACTION

WITHIN SCHOOL - VIDEOCONFERENCING:

STUDENT TO CLASS INTERACTION

Title: Virtual Storytime

Year Levels: 1–5

Subject(s): Reading

Videoconferencing Type: Within school - student-to-class interaction.

Essential concepts:

- Central concepts, tools of inquiry and structures of content: Candidates know, understand and use the central concepts, tools of inquiry and structures of content for students across the P-6 Years and can create meaningful learning experiences that develop students' competence in subject matter and skills for various developmental levels
- English language: Candidates demonstrate a high level of competence in use of English and they know, understand and use concepts from reading, language and child development, to teach reading, writing, speaking, viewing, listening and thinking skills and to help students successfully apply their developing skills to many different situations, materials and ideas
- Adaptation to diverse students: Candidates understand how primary students differ in their development and approaches to learning and create instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse students
- Active engagement in learning: Candidates use their knowledge and understanding of individual and group motivation and behaviour among students at the P-6 level to foster active engagement in learning, self motivation and positive social interaction and to create supportive learning environments

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Objective: After hearing a virtual storytime, the student will recall important plot information.

Resources: Children's Storybook Online: Readers can choose one of these online storybooks and share their computer screen while the students hear their voice. All are illustrated and have large words for students to see.
Website: http://www.magickeys.com/books/

AOL kids: Online read-to-me books, games, music and worksheets.
Website: http://kids.aol.com/KOL/1/KOLJrStories

Storyline Online: Popular children's books read by celebrities.
Website: http://www.storylineonline.net/

Story Book Online: Allows various students to write parts of the same story, read stories (some with video of a character reading the words) and games and activities.
Website: http://www.storybookonline.net/

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