

OLTD 508: Mobile Technologies & Game-Based Learning Reflection # 1

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OLTD Program Learning Outcome(s):

- *Be familiar with common terms, definitions and elements related to mobile learning and gaming environments.*

Evidence to Support Outcome:

The evidence I have selected to demonstrate competency with respect to the above-noted learning outcome is a Piktochart that was created for Part A of Assignment #1: Mobile Technologies. Students were asked to consider some of the enduring issues and challenges that exist, and how educators might be able to leverage the affordances of a mobile device in the classroom to enhance learning and to meet educational goals. The infographic I created is entitled *Does BYOD/BYOT Create a "Digital Divide"?*

Reflection to Support Evidence:

The creation of the Piktochart has allowed me to become familiar with common terms, definitions and elements related to mobile learning and gaming environments. In particular, the infographic represents my thoughts and research on whether BYOD/BYOT policies create a “Digital Divide”. My reflections revolved around the question of how educators can overcome the digital divide to offer all students an equal opportunity to gain 21st Century skills and literacies. This topic has been particularly relevant to my teaching context, as a digital divide, or “an economic and social inequality with regard to access to, use of, or impact of information and communication

technologies (ICT)” (Wikipedia, n.d., para. 1), can be seen throughout B.C., and it is particularly noticeable in remote and rural communities such as the area where I live (in northern B.C.). The digital divide is problematic in many B.C. First Nations communities, and consequently, initiatives such as *Pathways to Technology* have had made great gains at “connecting First Nations to the world” (Pathways to Technology, n.d., n.p.).

It has been said that for those living in impoverished communities, accessing the Internet from a mobile device is the easiest and cheapest way to connect to the Web. Interestingly enough, a Wireless Reach Initiative in North Carolina showed low income students’ test scores increased by 30% with smartphone use (Mashable, n.d.). This data seems to be supported by Pew Research Data (Kridel, 2013) that indicates that smart phone penetration is consistent across youth demographics. Kridel (2013) states, “ BYOD democratizes mobile technologies by making them available to more” (para.1). Thus, it is felt that mobile technologies can minimize hardware-related costs, increase access due to decreased costs, provide opportunities for collaboration and authentic learning, and provide enhanced engagement opportunities for students.

As an educator, this evidence piece is a reminder that we need to consider access to technology and the Internet, including reliable bandwidth, when we are planning learning opportunities. More importantly, we need to look at how we can use technologies available to our students to increase engagement opportunities and success. After all, educators can contribute to the perpetuation of the digital divide if they don’t: 1) ensure that current technology is being used, 2) maximize student sharing of existing technology, 3) increase access time, 4) notify students of additional community access

areas for technology, and 5) advocate for technology equity. As educators, we need to understand common terms, definitions, elements and aspects of mobile learning, so we can continue to advocate for our students, and ultimately, so we can work towards narrowing or bridging the digital divide.

References

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