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CEP806

Module 3 – ATR

### **Appreciating Module 3 Readings**

As the course has progressed over the last twelve weeks, so have the readings. Module 3 focuses on the on-line and face-to-face interactions of learning via the internet. Communication technologies have popped up everywhere we go. Why not utilize this interactive and collaborative media to try to educate? As with any new method of instruction, there are pitfalls, bonuses, things to avoid and key points to utilize. The trick is to try to find out which media is right for your setting and modifying the tasks so as to offer a rewarding and educational experience for your learners. This module was a bit different for me due to the abundances of articles I came across that I wanted to reference for my ATR. I found that this time, I could actually relate to many of the situations that the readings were describing. It was actually harder to narrow down my choices than try to find more sources on the internet.

The first reading that caught my attention was one that related an increase in student satisfaction. Anytime we as educators can increase the feeling of satisfaction in our classrooms, this is a winning situation in my opinion. More often than not we hear students say, “When am I ever going to use this?” or “Why are we doing this?” To be able to hear positive feedback for a change would be wonderful. In the University of Leicester article, *Social Networking Utilized by Academic to Improve Student Satisfaction*, Dr. Alan Cann is using FriendFeed “to deliver course-related information and provide a forum for discussion and feedback amongst students via a social media space.” The author relates how professional the students have been with using the application, and have opened doors to new and diverse discussions via their own homepages. Just like our discussions in this class with Facebook, deep and meaningful discussions could be carried out with the entire class, along with the faculty. This would truly be an enriching experience and would be very helpful if the students were open to the idea and they actually went online to post and discuss.

Very similar to the results of the social forum idea at the University of Leicester, another article notes the gains in content knowledge and the overall increase of student motivation and satisfaction of a technology rich program. This article is by Megan Mistler-Jackson and Nancy Butler Songer, and is entitled *Student Motivation and Internet Technology: Are Students Empowered to Learn Science?* In this multi-faceted study, 6 students in the subject group are put through various technology-rich leaning activities and

their retention, motivation and performance was gauged by the instructors. The authors point out that “We believe that our results suggest and increase in self-efficacy, or empowerment, on the part of our focus students in this case study.” If students are empowered and motivated to try new things and learn new technologies, an extremely rewarding atmosphere of learning can be fostered; confidences can be built over time, relationships with peers can be developed, and a higher sense of respect and value will allow students to share in the overall rewarding experience. The study indicated that students would rather talk to other students interactively to initiate and foster participation and mutual respect. The feelings and opinions of the students themselves were not the only selling point. Content knowledge was shown to increase at a greater rate than those who did not participate in the technology-rich applications. As I have often observed in my own class, an entertained and involved student is a happy and receptive student.

The last reading I am investigating is *Making the Case for Mobile Computing*, by Kathleen Kennedy Manzo. In a society where today teens are plugged in 24/7 with smart phones, netbooks and hand held gaming devices, why not try to use the allure of these technologies to try to educate through their use. This article points out the misconception that, “cell phones and the like are only a distraction.” There has not been a lot of data collected concerning the effectiveness of these distractions in the classroom. “Mobile-learning proponents are now working more aggressively to document the effect that small, hand-held technologies can have on learning, and to come up with evidence-based recommendations for using them.” In my building, there are many teachers that will go into hysterics at the mere sight of a cell phone. These are the educators that we need to show what an appropriate use for the mobile technology actually is. Those people will then see how those devices can be used to “improve students’ motivation, engagement, conceptual understanding and problem solving skills.” If we are truly going to prepare the students for the real world where the mobile devices are king, we must be able to prepare those students to use them to the best of their advantage.

We need to come to terms that mobile computing and online technologies will continue to grow in the future and that our younger generations will be dependent on their use to survive and cope. Why not try to reach them on their own terms? We just need to make sure that the use of the technology is applied and implemented in the correct situations to stimulate a learning environment and to enrich the experience of those involved. Abuse of the technology could easily run rampant in any situation. I believe that if we take the initiative to address cheating, plagiarism, and superficial applications, students will receive the most out of the privilege that technology can offer.

## **Work Cited**

- University of Leicester. "Social networking utilized by academic to improve student satisfaction." *ScienceDaily*, 12 Apr. 2010. Web. 21 Nov. 2011, <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/04/100412084529.htm>
- Mistler-Jackson, M., & Songer, N. B. (2000). [Student Motivation and Internet Technology: Are Students Empowered to Learn Science?](#) JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN SCIENCE TEACHING VOL. 37, NO. 5, PP. 459-479.
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