**Running Head: Participation Portfolio**


**Assignment # 4 – Participation Portfolio**

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**Ventures in Learning Technology**


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## Assignment # 4 - Participation Portfolio

Online forums, such as the ETEC 522 blogs, have been designed with the intent to foster communities of inquiry, where learners are invited to communicate their learning clearly, logically and profoundly. Evaluating the quality of my posts, has allowed me to evaluate my role in engaging in critical discourse and reflection. I have divided my participation portfolio in four parts, providing 2 posts per segment as a sample of my communicative engagement within ETEC 522. Posts are in *Italics* and identified by week and subject matter.

**Presence**

I find implementing a social presence within online forums is important. Through my posts I tried to share experiences with my peers to foster open communication and help build group cohesion through meaningful posts. The first post demonstrates how I helped identify with the learning community by responding to my peer's posts directly, while demonstrating my interests and expertise. The second post demonstrates how I made an effort to develop a better interpersonal relationship with the learning community through a meaningful exchange.

**Week 11 - SGL**

*Hi Danielle,*

*It has long been argued what it is exactly that motivates students to learn. I believe that it is important to engage the student by getting them involved in their learning. Just feeding information (such as readings) may not be enough. But as you say everyone is different, there may indeed be individuals who learn quite well this way.*

*I believe SGL can work best from an educational perspective if we pay attention to theoretical frameworks that describe, explain, and provide solutions to improve online course content and delivery. The epistemic engagement approach fosters the idea that learners are collaborative knowledge builders within a community of inquiry. Not all online workshops\courses\seminars offer this opportunity. I believe that for SGL to succeed there needs to be some measure of equilibrium between social, teaching, and cognitive presence within online forums. I also think these forums need to be supported by an adequate discourse, content and environment for students to achieve higher learning. (Lipman, 1991)*

*Marie-France*

## <u>Week 5 - Blogging 4 Education</u>

> *Great work! I found this week to be interesting and interactive . . . Blogging 4 Education has been very useful – most of all it has opened my eyes to a multitude of possibilities for using blogs.*
>
> *•How has this experience impacted your perspective on blogging in education?*
> *I had no idea there were so many blogs out there linked to primary, elementary and high school education. I think blogs could easily be integrated in any curriculum and lesson planning . . . the possibilities are endless!*
>
> *•How do you see yourself using blogs in education?*
> *In my case it will be harder to integrate blogging for FSL students, particularly because of the rigid military curriculum, however I'm sure there are blogs out there that could be of interest to teachers looking to share experiences and reflect on their teaching practice.*
>
> *•How will blogging develop over the next 5 years?*
> *I believe blogging will become part of the regular curriculum within schools and this will allow students to connect globally, broadening their learning experience.*
>
> *•Do you have any inter-school blog ideas?*
> *I was very much impressed with the blogs that offered students the opportunity to communicate by radio or filming. I think that is the way to go – This really offers students the opportunity to voice their opinions creatively and collaborate as a group to discuss a subject. I found that many of the blog sites visited merely offered an opportunity to text their opinion, with no real communication between peers. Using blogs as a way to build on knowledge, as part of a blended learning environment to support further discussion in class would also be a good idea.*
>
> *Marie-France*

## Demonstrated Knowledge

My posts reflected my experience and knowledge as an adult educator in conjunction with course

theme and objectives. The first post demonstrates how I sought to understand the course material

through my experiences, expressing my opinions and views in a personal manner, and offering

creative solutions, concepts and ideas. The second post demonstrates how I have a critical mind,

which means I like to look at things in depth and from different angles, providing a variant to

help broaden the discussion.

### Week 10 BYOD

*How does attitude towards technology affect how and how much I integrate technology into my classroom.*

*My attitude is that BYOD is a great initiative and we are beginning to see signs that students are bringing in their own devices to school. Since I work on a military base and I teach the military, many students have the means to bring their own devices – so really this new trend is not costing the school money.*

*Several things have happened since this trend has occurred, firstly the Ipods issued at the beginning of the year are becoming obsolete – no one uses them anymore. They were issued so students could listen to module sound clips and also record themselves, but this can be done over a wide variety of technological gadgets. Ipods are small and difficult to manipulate, while tablets and phones and so on are much more user friendly. Also these types of gadgets offer access to the internet where our language students can access online dictionaries, read online papers, prepare a presentation, research documentation and so on. Wi-Fi network is available at school, so students can also access their personal 'clouds' to share information with students.*

*Seems too good to be true . . . there are indeed several concerns that arise from this new trend – at our school at least. Most teachers are not familiar with these gadgets and do not know how to guide their use so students can use them as tools to reinforce and support their learning.*

*Although the school has a Wi-Fi network I'm not sure it would be convinced to establish networks with filtered access beyond providing this service for teachers with laptops. The IT department is already complaining it has too much work; it would take a lot of convincing to make them accept handling a high-density environment – accommodating the spikes in network environment. This also means they would need to develop a security and tech support strategy and these types of things take a long time to establish within the government. At the moment everyone uses the same 'password' to access the internet . . . not the most secure system.*

*Our biggest challenge however would be to train teachers and show them how to implement BYOD within a course curriculum that is very restricted – essentially by time, and also by strict assessment deadlines.*

*I do think that it would be best to initiate the BYOD program in stages. Perhaps starting with a pilot project with one class, with one teacher willing to board the BYOD train, and then extending it to two and so on. A successful program can change attitudes . . .*

*I would personally like to launch a BYOD pilot project this winter for my final MET project. I do believe the fostering of technology within the classroom in this manner could greatly enhance a student's learning experience.*

## **Week 3 Analyst Bootcamp**

- ***Learning Unlimited***

*I would support a venture of this nature, but I am not convinced in supporting this specific one based on the elevator pitch.*

*Although I find the idea of a learning venture/collaboration between universities and high schools both important and a good idea to motivate learning, I found the elevator pitch lacked many important elements to convince me.*

*Message*

*The CEO of Learning Unlimited outlined the program and briefly described and gave selective examples of courses offered over the course of a weekend. However, I found that the images chosen and the learning subjects\workshops shown appeared more like a summer camp than an introduction to how stimulating and engaging learning can be or what higher learning can offer within universities and colleges.*

*I found that the message was not particularly passionate or persuasive and that the images chosen were of poor quality.*

*CEO & Team*

*The CEO does not particularly convey capability, confidence or experience. Focusing a bit more on volunteer teachers working in collaboration with various universities, in my opinion, would have added credibility and further demonstrated the venture's success.*

*Concept*

*The venture concept is feasible, since it is possible to find volunteer teachers and get the collaboration of high schools and universities –*

*Marketability*

*Who profits from this venture? Is it a purely a 'good deed' intended to promote learning – or is it a business venture? This is unclear in the elevator pitch. The CEO describes this venture as a 'College student movement' – How does this movement spread or how is it funded?*

*Venture Plan*

*The venture plan is well outlined, providing a good idea of growth in the last year with an estimate for expansion in the next 5 years. However, I am not sure to whom this pitch is destined? Should this interest high school principals and teachers who then*

*encourage students to enter their program? Is it destined to teachers so they volunteer or to universities so they lend their classrooms for the workshops?*

*All in all I tend to have a soft spot for any venture that promotes learning for learning sake, and find the idea presented by 'Learning Unlimited' has great potential. I think the elevator pitch should be spruced up and clearly think about who their audience is. Are they trying to address high-school students and teachers; or/and motivate college\university students to become volunteer teachers in the program; or/and promote the program to universities so they lend their facilities to accommodate this program. Perhaps an elevator pitch for each could be created . . .?*

**Original Voice**

I was amazed at the variety of experience, knowledge and goals within this group and this really made the learning more interesting. The first post is an example of me communicating my thought processes, personal reflection, and the ways I make meaning of my learning. The second post demonstrates how I contributed to the ongoing discussion to develop argument, knowing that critical inquiry occurs when learning peers question each other and their own beliefs.

**Week 2 – The Edtech MarketPlace**

- *Review of Top ten Tech predictions for 2011 – By Chris Dawson*

  *I personally have some difficulty with the idea that education is a marketplace. For many years I believed that classrooms should be commerce-free, but I now realize, particularly since starting this MET program, that the digital learning experience has a price-tag. With all the upcoming technological trends it is thus important to evaluate their educational value whether from a venturer's, a learning technologies specialist's or an educator's perspective – as all three seem intricately linked. I chose to review the Top 10 Tech predictions for 2011: Chris Dawson's Top 5 Ed Tech Predictions for 2011, as well as Adam Garry's Top 5 Ed Tech Trends. I felt that this type of technical review would be complimentary to my view as both an educator and a prospective venturer. Since the 5 trends presented concentrate on learning platforms I also thought that this would also lend itself well to adult learning and teaching – where my interests lie.*

  *Overview of Adam Garry's Top 5 Ed Tech Trends\Predictions for 2011*

  *Learning initiative vs. tech initiative*

*I completely agree with Adam Garry, Dell's manager of global professional learning, as he relates that learning platforms need to be well designed and integrated to provide a basis for learning with technology. I love their quote '1:1 should be a learning initiative instead of a tech initiative' – I agree. So many times teachers simply throw in technology just for the sake of it, but technology should be an integral part of learning.*

### Personalized learning vs. differentiated instruction

*The idea of truly personalized learning, according to Adam Garry, is an achievable goal, as we step away from LMS to learning platforms that allow students to access a multitude of digital learning tools. I particularly found it exciting to imagine platforms that can offer personalized formative and summative assessments, as well as provide learning based on students' learning styles and specific needs. Adam also relates that Web 2.0 tools could further provide more authentic opportunities for learners to assess their learning. Product-based web 2. 0 tools can encourage students to 'show' their learning in creative ways, allowing them to demonstrate their understanding beyond standardized tests.*

*As an educator I believe that this is the way of the future, and from a venturer's point of view I can imagine many possible learning ventures that could cater to this form of learning and teaching.*

*Of course the 1:1 learning theory is for many school boards and learning institutions financially impossible, for the idea of personalized learning requires restructuration of the school system – a challenge and long-term goal at best. The integration of such technology is also a big reminder of the digital divide that exists . . .*

### Overview of Chris Dawson's Top 5 Ed Tech Predictions for 2011

*This report on the top 5 Ed Techs for 2011, is simple (for the newbie like myself) and can be of interest to both educational specialists and venturers alike.*

### Tablets

*Dawson feels these devices are going to be essential when envisioning the 1:1 learning initiative. The tablet is both a tool that allows easy access and creation of content, while it also provides easy access to the internet and to e-textbooks. Some tablets are compared, such as the Inspiron Duo, the Android 3.0, the second generation I-Pad – but further research would need to be made to really compare the pros and cons of the different makes. Dawson promotes these devices as inexpensive, but I believe that the initial investment would be beyond most school budgets.*

### Thin computing

*Thin computing is a whole new concept to me, and as an educator offers particularly attractive applications providing the possibility to store large amounts of information,*

*and ways for students to communicate. The author covers a wide variety of products, such as Windows MultiPoint Server, Linux-based MultiPoint competitor, Google's Chrome Notebook, VNC and Citrix applications, which, according to Dawson, appear to be relatively inexpensive devices and IT products. Unfortunately, this report does not offer much detail about these devices and products and further exploration of each would be necessary to see which one fits best for specific educational settings.*

### Cloud-Based Tools

*Chris Dawson boasts that Google Apps, Live@Edu, and Journ(i)e are social learning platforms that allow students to submit their work online. I feel that this is a way educators could motivate students to learn in creative ways. Because these are free apps they also provide an inexpensive learning platform. Despite the popularity of these tools, once again educators have to be willing to explore and become familiar with these apps to properly integrate them within their course curriculum.*

### E-textbooks

*According to Dawson, Kindle is a limited tool; although it provides a great way to carry a great deal of reading content there are now other tools that offer more. The iPad, tablets, Google eBooks, open source books, as well as sites that produce teacher and student content provide a variety of digital assets that are for the main part free and accessible. As an educator I believe the fact digital assets are more easily accessible is of outmost importance. This trend particularly opens up learning venture possibilities for the broader community of global educators.*

### References

*Dawson, C. (n.d.) Top 10 Ed Tech predictions for 2011.Retrieved May 15 from ZDNet Education.*

*http://www.zdnet.com/blog/education/top-10-ed-tech-predictions-for-2011/4382*

## Week 11 - SGL

*First of all Kudos for a job well done. I think your activities really cover the topic of SGL quite well, and questions asked provide a good way to initiate dialogue.*

*How do you envision the future of Self-Guided Learning (primary/secondary/post-secondary education)? In what areas of education do you think SGL presents a promising venture opportunity?*

*As an adult ESL educator I believe SGL elements will be more and more integrated within class content. In my experience, this will happen in a blended environment where technological tools take a leading hand in both teaching and learning.*

*I am a great believer in tacit Learning, I feel technology operates in the background as infrastructure, and should be an active part of the learning process. As SG learners, students need to be immersed in their world in search of authentic material that will motivate their learning. Students need to learn through observation, association, socialization and immersion - and technology can help supplement classroom teaching to achieve these learningf goals. If given SGL opportunities, students can learn when they least expect it.*

*The BYOD approach and the SGL approach go hand-in-hand in my opinion. Fostering technology in the classroom helps students mediate between their senses and the world. Student's experiences can be changed in the process and provide a wealth of learning.*

*My students regularly use online language tools to assist their learning; as well they search the web for news (video, audio, articles in their second language), which at once serves to motivate them and makes them responsible for their learning.*
*I don't really see a totally online SGL program working to teach a language however. I feel that it is important to have some form of educator to guide a learner's progress when learning a second language. This being said, there are certainly a multitude of online tools that promote SGL and complement classroom teaching.*

## Constructive Response

My role as co-creator and moderator of the Week 12 OER allowed me to act as a catalyst and facilitator in order to challenge students' assumptions and create opportunities for reflection. The first post is a sample of how I provided the right environment to guide critical thinking and meaning-making. The second post provides an example of how I encouraged personal growth, establishing an environment of trust and respect.

### Week 12- EM:MET Program

*Hi Dan,*

*I am particularly interested in your comment: "I would never consider doing a PhD online. I just don't see how anyone would consider my research to be credible."*

*Quite a few colleagues have expressed similar opinions to the effect that the value of an online PhD would not be the same as in-person. This opens up an interesting debate.*

*As I understand it, at the moment there are not many PhD fully online programs out there, and those that exist don't particularly stand out as having a good reputation.*

*I consider the MET program to be as reputable as any face-to-face Master's program, and I don't see why a PhD cannot be as quality oriented. I was also pleasantly surprised to read that quite a few colleagues have experienced more of a learning community through MET than other face-to-face Master's programs.*

*I believe that PhD programs can be just as stimulating and worthwhile experiences and certainly as reputable as on campus experiences. I agree that online PhD's would not be possible in many domains, namely the scientific ones that require lab work for example. But I could certainly see UBC offering a PhD in Educational Technology - in which case I would be tempted to enroll.*

*In the context of 'research' I think working in a global context with professors all over the world would be an enriching experience and could add value to a research. Although I agree that some research needs to be conducted in more clinical settings.*

*With the many modes of communication, close collaboration between professors and post-graduate students can be more than adequate. Webinars, Skype, illuminate or chat forums through BlackBoard are all numerous means students can take part in conferences, exchange with colleagues and work on research.*

*Any thoughts?*

## Week 12 EM: MET Program

*Hello Tim,*

*I can really relate to the idea that:*

*It is very easy to just use new tools to do old things in old ways. My motto has been "If you can't do something new and engaging with it, don't bother using it".*

*If technology is added just to 'dazzle' or show what you can do, then enriching a student's learning experience through the use of technology is lost. I must admit that it takes time, planning and energy to really foster technology in the classroom.*
*I have learned so far that it is best done in small doses and I really rely on my students to let me know how they have found the learning experience and welcome their suggestions for improvement.*

*I find the MET program has really given me the tools and theory to properly integrate technology in the classroom, but beyond this it has also allowed me to envision how technology is part of our lives and how to work with this reality.*

*I have learned to view educational theories through a technology lens and this has helped me better understand how to design motivating, interactive activities based on the constructivist*

*approach.*

*I am glad to see that you are generously sharing your learning and expertise with your colleagues. Personally, I don't quite feel I have enough 'hands on' experience with fostering technology within our rigorous military language program to share it just yet. I am still at the experimental stages of my own 'tech savvy' progression . . . but it will come.*

*Thank you so much for sharing your MET experience with us. I think a huge part of my learning - particularly reflected in ETEC 522, has been the knowledge I acquire through engaging dialogue with peers such as you.*

*Marie-France*

## Conclusion

Firstly, it was challenging to peruse and find posts that best demonstrated my active cognitive presence in ETEC 522.  I believe my participation contributed to support critical discourse and reflection. I have put lots of thought in my posts, hopefully contributing to foster higher-learning and build a community of inquiry.  I know I have been very respectful in responding to my peers and have tried to provide an organic and welcoming environment to encourage communication.  I personally find it extremely challenging to grade my participation, but based on the course rubric I would give myself 22%.  I think there is room for improvement where I should provide more research for some posts in order to further enrich the discussion.