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Critique 3

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Article

Tomlin,P.(2012). The fine art (and architecture) of mobilizing student learning. *Library*

Technology Reports, 48(8),48-53.

Synopsis

This article is a narrative of a research project done in the fall of 2010 at the Art and

Architecture Library at Virginia Tech. This research focuses on the implementation of iPads to

the university library.   It examines ways in which the academic library intersects with mobile

learning and student engagement. The author reviews the development, implementation, and

response of the project among library users. This article discusses the issue of utilizing the

tablet computer for mobile learning, mainly in the fields of art, architecture, and design

(Tomlin, 2012). The project done at this university supports the constructivism learning theory

in which is based on observation and scientific study (Gredler, 2009).

Use of Theory

The purpose of this research was to observe the impact done in learning and student

engagement while loaning iPads at the university library. By facilitating technology tools to

students, this research is able to support the constructivism learning theory; in other words, it

uses the Constructivism as a model for teaching and learning. (Brooks, 2004) "Constructivism

learning theory is a philosophy which enhances students' logical and conceptual growth. The

underlying concept within the constructivism learning theory is the role which experiences-or

connections with the adjoining atmosphere-play in student education." ("Teachnology:

Constructivism learning," 2012)

Tomlin, the case study researcher, heard that technology was making an impact with education. He decided to follow the pedagogical theory and practice mobile learning. Through a loaning iPad program, the university library was able to make 20 iPads available for general circulation. From the beginning, the Art and Architecture Library's iPad project was considered as a case study in utilizing mobile technology to target the specific information needs in both formal and informal learning (Tomlin, 2012). This statement shows one of Skinner's theories where he specifically defined learning as a behavioral change. "Learning is not doing - it is changing what we do" (Gredler, 2009). The researcher wanted to try something different by providing new tools in order to study behavioral changes.

The following are observations made by Tomlin during the case study. At first, most students and faculty checked out the tablet for individual and informal use only. Once the faculty was informed of the iPads loaning project, they requested them to explore the device's potential in the classroom. In other words, they were applying media in instruction; computer-assisted instruction (Gredler, 2009). The iPad was utilized in discipline-specific teaching and learning environments, both within and beyond the classroom or studio. For example:

Industrial design students incorporated the tablet into competitions and design lab work where they worked in collaborative projects and were able to present with dynamic slide shows. Architecture courses used the iPads during sketching sessions in and around campus by using visualization apps where students modified drawings collaboratively to provide a physical studio space. In this case the professors were following the constructivism learning theory where instead of giving a lecture, they functioned as facilitators whose role was to aid the student when it came to their own understanding. By doing this, the focus was set on the learning rather than the teacher and lecture. ("Teachnology: Constructivism learning," 2012)

 Art history courses used a note iPad app for collaborative brainstorming to analyze a designated work of art; they were able to post comments where the whole class could see real time class discussions appearing online. Instead of having the students relying on someone else's information and accepting it as truth, the constructivism learning theory supports that

students should interact with other students so that they can learn from the incorporation of their experiences ("Teachnology: Constructivism learning," 2012).

Tomlin was able to see that the implementation of iPads could provide interactive teaching capability for the essential events in intellectual skills for learners (Gredler, 2009). These examples suggested the diverse forms of student engagement and specific disciplinary modes of research produced by the tablet. In each case the device's portability and distinct adaptability presented learning opportunities and creativity that enhanced traditional teaching and research scenarios (Tomlin, 2012).

Evaluation

The Art and Architecture Library's iPads exceeded expectations, they circulated more than 500 times within the first year of their release. First-time users completed a short survey upon returning the device. Eighty surveys were completed where it revealed that the iPad was utilized effectively with content courses. They provided a point of entry into informal discussion. Portability, interactivity, and collaboration provided hands-on approaches of learning and research throughout the academic community (Tomlin, 2012).

The project done at this university supports the constructivism learning theory in which is based on observation and scientific study (Gredler, 2009). During this research teachers functioned as facilitators in implementing technology as part of the instruction. This encouraged collaboration and student engagement by promoting learning. It also helped in developing the skills and confidence by giving the students the opportunity to analyze the world around them. "Classroom applications of constructivism support the philosophy of learning which build a students' and teachers' understanding" ("Teachnology: Constructivism learning," 2012).

Works Cited

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