

Q410-12 Seminar: Learning with the Internet

Reflection Paper Bill Lynch

This semester has been a real growth experience for me. After a successful graphic design career I began teaching at the Art Institute of Houston, Texas five years ago. I began pursuing my master's degree in educational technologies two years ago and my life has not been the same. Teaching has been the most rewarding and satisfying endeavor I have ever undertaken and my continuing education has enhanced these feelings to new heights. This semester I have acquired more tools and resources than ever. This knowledge, resources and subsequent applied methodologies have been evident in and out of the classroom.

I have enjoyed conversations with colleagues this semester involving classroom technology management and teacher methodology. It appears there is a growing trend among technology instructors (computer programs, etc.) to open up to a variety of media and methodologies in the classroom and use the various tools in combination to provide learner-centered attainment of goals and objectives. As the Internet increasingly becomes a part of the classroom it is important for educators to identify appropriate use of this tool and provide competent classroom management.

Structure in the use of the Internet is extremely important for learners to stay on task and have a favorable value perception of the lesson. I have found that powerful and effective Internet projects do just this and more. They must first stimulate interest, be easy to navigate, visually appealing and show relevance. After this is accomplished content development in relation to student utilization

and goal attainment is paramount. A powerful and effective Internet project gets the student excited about learning and provides them with both tangible and intangible deliverables. It has been a joy using the Internet as a tool in the classroom and facilitating students through these projects, such as the WebQuest I created this semester.

I plan on teaching for the rest of my life. With this comes the realization that I will constantly be seeking knowledge. A teacher that is not learning cannot possibly continue to teach for long in our modern world. The Internet as a learning tool is evolving at an extremely rapid rate. Keeping up with every technological advance or theory is futile. However, as we have found out in this class, there are numerous web sites and resources allocated on the Internet for teachers to attempt just that. Also, there are educational technology organizations I belong to such as the Association for Educational Communications and Technology that have online resources and Internet seminars. Staying up-to-date on new and evolving uses of the Internet is one of the exciting things about being involved in educational technologies and an important responsibility.

I graduate next semester and have constantly applied everything I have learned in my master's program in the classroom and with my interaction with other teachers. This has not gone unnoticed, as I have recently secured a position as Professor of Visual Technologies at Dixie State College in scenic St. George, Utah. My wife had accepted a position at a Neurology Clinic in Ivins, Utah (a suburb of St. George) last year and we have been planning on moving for some time. The graduation and subsequent position are highlights of my life. This semester I have come to the realization that educational technologies and my future are intertwined. As I leave this class, my goal is to continue my education and teaching because it is no longer what I do, it is because of what I am.