

Assignment 1 Discussion – Authentic Learning

Discuss which of the 10 characteristics of authentic learning you think is most critical in an e-learning environment. Support your reasoning for this selection. Give an example of how you could incorporate this characteristic in an online course at your particular learning organization.

I consider the creation of polished products as the most critical of the ten characteristics of authentic activities that Reeves, Herrington and Oliver (2002) identified for e-learning environments (or any other learning environments). From my experience teaching mathematics, onsite and online, providing real-life contexts to the course content (through the use of real-life word problems) has not been sufficient to empower my students with authentic learning experiences. Unfortunately, many of them believe that experiencing such real-life contexts are a remote possibility or it will never happen. For such reason, I believe that creating polished products valuable in their own right is what makes abstract ideas or knowledge tangible; what gives us the opportunity of actively using all our abilities, curiosities and experiences to do our best effort on something that is proudly ours; what enables connections with other disciplines and people when constructing and exhibiting our products; and what demonstrates our true potential as contributing and productive members of society.

Peterson (2007) stated knowledge that is not applied is inert and trivial. Life is about making decisions and doing things that have concrete outcomes (Gordon, 1998). Interestingly, my doctoral studies have been filled of authentic learning experiences because each of my courses has involved the creation of polished products. The knowledge I have acquired from each of these courses has been applied to my job setting with a concrete purpose: improve my teaching practice. Each of the polished products that I have created, such as the website in LTM5000, technology integration plan in LTM5003, the blog in LTM5005, etc., were the result of my decision to be a better educator and to create a productive and active classroom learning environment. Creating these polished products has enabled me the opportunity to move out of my comfort zone as an educator to explore and try new things that otherwise I would not have experienced. The activities to create polished products in my doctoral courses have given me the purpose and meaning in my studies; therefore, these activities have become the course (Reeves, Herrington and Oliver, 2002).

In ELT7003, I will focus on re-designing a university preparation course I teach every fall term. My goal is to help students shake off their passive approach to learning that they were accustomed during most of their schooling years (Conrad and Donaldson, 2004) and often hinder their chances to succeed in college. To accomplish this goal, I will design e-learning activities in which each activity leads to the creation of college survival guide by the end of the course, which students will publish online for their own reference and other students.

References

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