

Reflection to Support Evidence – Virtual Field Trips Quest

Course Learning Outcomes Satisfied:

- Research and identify emerging technologies with educational applications not yet adopted by mainstream education or in early adoption phases.
- Consider potential design/implementation opportunities and challenges of emerging technologies/pedagogies.

OLTD Learning Outcomes Satisfied:

- Plan learning opportunities most suitable to the strengths and challenges of a variety of environments
- Select strategies and resources appropriate for environment, learners and learning outcomes
- Develop and design intentional learning activities suitable for the appropriate environment and the learner

For my second piece of evidence for OLTD 509, I chose the Virtual Field Trips quest that I created during the 4th week. This quest had students investigate possibilities of interactive 360° field trips online as a form of low cost experiential learning.

Many of the emerging technologies discussed in this course, while coming down in cost, are still expensive to implement. My goal was to have students try out a few examples of virtual field trips and then find some of their own that they might be able to bring into their teaching. They would also be able to identify whether they thought this might be a sustainable form of experiential learning for their teaching medium (f2f, blended, or online). For this to happen, the technology needed to be easy enough for both the students and teachers to learn quickly, and at the same time provide authentic learning at a minimal cost. At first, my thought was to give them a whole list of sites to visit, but I came to the realisation that if I did that, the students wouldn't be encouraged to find and add their own resources. I wanted this quest to be mostly student-led, so I limited my links to a select few to whet their appetite. In the end, those who took the quest provided me with valuable feedback and some great resources to check out. The general consensus was that there were a great number of possibilities with virtual field trips but that nothing could replace the smells and feelings of an in person experience. However, where the physical field trip may not be a possibility, it is a lot more engaging than textbook-based learning.

Through making this quest, it was clear that is important to select a few high quality resources to guide student learning, rather than a whole barrage of information that might be intimidating. By doing this, the learning can be guided but it allows the student to have more ownership of their learning. The learning outcomes should be manageable and purposeful so as to ensure the highest possibility of success on the part of the student. It continuously surprises me how often I hear people say that a new or emerging technology is great, but they wouldn't use it because they don't have the time to spend learning how to implement it. It is by exploring and trying out these technologies and innovations that we can find out for ourselves whether they might enrich our teaching practices. By creating opportunities like this quest for teachers to experience new and emerging technologies, we can get more of them into use in schools, providing their merit can be shown through this process.