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| Entry Title/Number |  Reflections on OMDE603 Blog (#7) |
| Date | 7-July-2013 |
| Module/Week | n/a, OMDE603 |
| Category (Tag) | Logistics (none) |
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Image courtesy of www.replicatedtypo.com

**BLOG OVERVIEW**

I work on eCourse development and moderate virtual learning events in my day job so much of the learning in this course is more of a confirmation of what I already experience every day. I find the program has helped my vocabulary about Web 2.0 tools to become more precise and exact.

**MY LEARNING THROUGH THIS BLOG**

As I reflect back on the blog assignment, I took a close look at the posts I created. All blog posts were from module 1 and 3 readings. As I was writing them, I was so embroiled with Module 2 conference discussions I think I had a hard time separating out “content” for a blog post.

The majority of the posts were in the category that I call *musings* while the *Society, Conflict and Learning* and *From Wisconsin to the World: Thank You Charles Wedemeyer!* posts were in the *book report* category. Using the practical inquiry model described in Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (2000), the *musings* posts were opportunities to explore more about the topic while the *book report* variety did provide resolution on the topic. I found the book reports gave me the freedom to delve more deeply into the work of the authors who were referenced in the course readings that I would not have done otherwise.

I feel that I got off to a slow start but once I determined a schedule, I was able to generally meet the timelines of posting on Wednesdays and Sundays.

Now that I have reached the end of the Blog activity, I will miss it! I have three other blog posts I was contemplating but did not pursue because I ran out of time ☹

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES MODULES 1 – 3**

In this section, I briefly explore my understanding of how select learning objectives for modules 1-3 where achieved in course assignments (conferences are the only assignments not included) or in the Google doc I created to summarize my understanding of how web 2.0 tools can be used in DE (<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1aWVKBXbiG2V6RXzAlOCPj8ij9XWI5Dmhd7M6ALvGPXY>):

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|  **Module** | **Objective** | **Related Artifact** |
| 1 | Describe the history of media and technology in distance education | *Will the OU Generation Date Moore & Kearsley’s 5 Generations?* Blog |
| 1 | Demonstrate knowledge of the range of terminology and values applied to technology in distance education | The blog assignment |
| 2 | Evaluate selected asynchronous and synchronous applications | Essay 1, *Digital Footprints* post, and *One more Barrier to Mobile Learning* post |
| 3 | Specify the main characteristics of Web 2.0 technologies | How Web 2.0 Tools can be used in DE Google Doc |
| 3 | Estimate the educational possibilities of Web 2.0 application | How Web 2.0 Tools can be used in DE Google Doc |
| 3 | Experience hands-on Web 2.0 technologies | The blog assignment and the wiki exercise |

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| Entry Title/Number |  Digital Footprints (#6) |
| Date | 4-July-2013 |
| Module/Week | Module 3, OMDE603 |
| Category (Tag) | DE Practice (identity theft) |
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Image courtesy of http://www.123rf.com/

Proud mothers get footprints of their babies’ immortalized using plaster. When we walk along the beach our footprints can be washed away with the incoming tide.

What of the digital footprints students leave behind in the form of blogs? In reality these digital footprints are more of the plaster type of footprint casts while their authors might see them as more of footprints in the sand, created once and never used again.

What is to prevent a future employer or worse, an identify thief, to find out about you through the blogs you leave behind? There is no security or password protection on these sites. Your name and personal details, if you share them, are all parts of a puzzle that identify thieves may use against you (Goodridge, 2009). Yet, we put them on our blogs for the entire world to see.

Pang (2009) gave examples of student blogs in his article. They were all still available even though some of the posts were from 2006. Perusing these blogs showed typical college students. However, photos of one lifting a glass of alcohol, which was shown on one these blog sites, might not give a future employer the most favorable impression of a candidate seeking a job.

Pang (2009) discusses how blogs allow students to become capable of taking charge of their own learning and to develop into independent lifelong learners. Personally, I did not find evidence in his article to support these claims. Especially the last claim, a claim that is certainly not provable given the short length of the study which was a single college semester.

Will these digital footprints yield the results that Pang so optimistically describes? Or will they be like footprints in the sand – forgotten by the people who created them in their quest of moving forward and never to be used again? Or will they be footprints in plaster, where others can harvest information maybe even for malicious purposes? Only time will tell.

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Pang, L. (2009). Application of blogs to support reflective learning journals. Retrieved May 21, 2009, from http://deoracle.org/online-pedagogy/teaching-strategies/application-of-blogs.html

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| Entry Title/Number | Society, Conflict and Learning (#5) |
| Date | 1-July-2013 |
| Module/Week | Module 3, OMDE603 |
| Category (Tag) | DE Practice (social cognitive) |
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Reading Anderson’s (2009) article about Social Networking got me interested in digging deeper into his sources.

**DIALECTICAL–MATERIALIST THEORY OF COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT**



Lev Vygotsky Courtesy of The Vygotsky Project (http://webpages.charter.net/schmolze1/vygotsky/)

I’ve seen Vygotsky before and have been curious about his theory. So I started to search in the UMUC library for Vygotsky’s *Mind in Society*. While UMUC library has this only as a physical book, I was able to find a number of interesting facts from the abstract. The first is that he was a Russian psychologist and the second is the name of his theory: dialectical–materialist theory of cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978).

So I went back to searching again. Liu and Matthews (2005) confirmed other facts I found in the abstract: that Vygotsky sees an individual’s cognitive development as being formed by the social arena in which they live and that individuals collaboratively shape their world.

Then I switched gears and searched for dictionary definitions in an attempt to confirm what “dialectical–materialist theory of cognitive development” means. Dialectical-materialist is “the Marxist theory (adopted as the official philosophy of the Soviet communists) that political and historical events result from the conflict of social forces and are interpretable as a series of contradictions and their solutions. The conflict is seen as caused by material needs” (<https://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/dialectical-materialism>). A theory is “a supposition or a system of ideas intended to explain something” (<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/theory?q=theory>). Cognition is “the mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses” (<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/cognition?q=cognition>).

Vygotsky’s explanation could be said to be about mental process of acquiring knowledge through resolving the conflict of material needs in one’s social context.

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Liu, C., & Matthews, R. (2005). Vygotsky's philosophy: Constructivism and its criticisms examined. *International Education Journal, 6*(3), 386-399. Retrieved from http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/EJ854992.pdf

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| Entry Title/Number | The Torah, Shovels and OER (#4) |
| Date | 26-June-2013 |
| Module/Week | Module 3, OMDE603 |
| Category (Tag) | DE Practice (OER) |
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Does every single student come out of a class in possession of the knowledge and skills the teacher tried to share? In other words, is the teacher a successful sharer? If so, then the teacher is a successful educator. If attempts at sharing fail, then the teacher is a poor educator. Education is sharing. Education is about being open (Wiley, 2010, p. 16)

![C:\Users\deitschj\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\7UY7DYZ7\MP900386975[1].jpg]()

When my husband and I met and fell in love, we embarked on a journey of discovery – discovery of each other and our lives prior to meeting each other.  He told me a story about his great-grandfather helping tutor him for his Bar Mitzvah.  A Bar Mitvah is a ceremony that shows to their community that a Hebrew child has studied God's Laws and is ready to be responsible for their own actions. In the community's eyes and in God's eyes that the child is an ignorant child no longer but an adult. One of the sayings he shared with me from his great-grandfather is that “The Torah is not a shovel.”

A Rabbi would not treat his religious practices of training young people about the Torah for a wage. This could degrade his religious practice, a practice that a Rabbi is called to, a practice he would do for free, and a practice that is a pleasure as it could make someone else’s life better. It would reduce the word of God to a chore, a job, like being a ditch digger. The Torah is handled with awe, joy and reverence. A shovel is a tool that is used to dig dirt and handled with care only given to the wielder, not the tool.

I was reminded of the phrase that “The Torah is not a shovel” when reading David Wiley’s *Openness as Catalyst for an Educational Reformation.* David reminds us why we considered being educators in the first place. We had something we were called to, a practice we would willingly do for free, and a practice that is a pleasure as it could make someone else’s life better. “If **our primary interest is facilitating student learning, then education is our field**” (Wiley, 2010, p. 18).

One of the definitions of the word Rabbi is teacher (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/rabbi>). Maybe the lesson that will be taught in the future is that “An educational practice is not a shovel.”

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| Entry Title/Number | One more Barrier to Mobile Learning (#3) |
| Date | 23-June-2013 |
| Module/Week | Modules 2 & 3, OMDE603 |
| Category | Technology |
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**MY SCARIEST HELP DESK MEMORY**

One of my scariest help desk memories was when I was told we were no longer providing laptops to our clients. Instead, our clients would use their own computers to access our new data entry applications that were web-based rather than the previous applications that had to be installed on a computer’s hard drive.

It was a scary for me because now we would support every internet browser running on every piece of computer hardware configured in every way known to man. The reason you see the word **standardization** so much in computer literature is because IT folks like to know what they’re dealing with. What are the hardware specifications? Will the software work on our hardware platform(s)? How does the software work? What are the known problems with the hardware, software, and their integration?

**FLASHBACK**

I flashed back to that memory when I read in McGreal and Elliott (2008) that the **educational possibilities are unlimited** and that **learning can be universally accessible** due the possibilities afforded by mobile technology. While there was a lot of excitement expressed, there was not very much concrete evidence of the exact uses of this technology for educational purposes in McGreal and Elliott (2008).

Bates and Sangra (2011) discuss two uses – 1) RSS feeds to mobile phones 2) Student data collection via real-time polling, interviews, photos and video for project work, post to class web site. However, mobile devices are not a crucial element for learners to enjoy most of these uses. Many of the same thing could be done on their computer. It is more ***convenient*** to do these activities on an iPad, iPhone or a Droid that the learner carries with them. But if learners don’t own an iPad, iPhone or Droid, but do own a PC or laptop, they would not be ***excluded*** from every opportunity.

**SCREEN SIZES**

While mobile learning sounds incredible, great, the next big thing in education the actual implementation appears to still be in its infancy (Bates & Sangra, 2011). For me, the crucial question is how are we going to accommodate the various screen sizes that the plethora of mobile devices boasts? There is no standardization as every company is scrambling to find the ideal size that is cost effective while being not too large and not too small!

Waingankar (2011) talks of developing web pages for mobile devices and feels that the “worst … challenge posed [is] by the fact that there is **no standard screen size or resolution** that you can take for granted.” There’s that standardization thing again. It is hard to design when there is no standard!

 

 Let’s look at two mobile devices. The screen size of my Samsung Galaxy Exhibit is in the neighborhood of 3” x 2” or 7cm x 5cm. Apple iPads generally have a screen size in the neighborhood of 9” x 7” or 23cm x 18cm. So, the bad thing is that the screen on my Droid is not as big as an iPad screen. Something that is readable on an iPad will most likely be unreadable on my Droid. Sure, I can expand the screen and use my finger to swish back and forth. But it doesn’t make for a great user experience or a great learning experience. In those situations, I abandon my Droid and open my laptop which has an approximate screen size of 12” x 7.5” or 30.5cm x 19cm.

**ONE MORE BARRIER**

I’ve taken the liberty of putting in bold barriers listed by Bates and Sangra (2011) :

The real potential of mobile learning is just over the horizon, waiting for the next stage of technology integration that will include low **cost**, wide-band **connections**, new interfaces (perhaps including voice recognition), **software applications** that are better suited for study purposes, and above all **new designs for teaching** that enable the unique advantages of mobile learning to be better exploited (p. 39).

I humbly submit the lack of standardized screen sizes as another barrier to adoption of mobile devices for use as an educational tool. Schools will most likely have to adopt the suggestion that Waingankar (2011) posts on his blog to limit the devices that can be supported.

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| Entry Title/Number | From Wisconsin to the World: Thank You Charles Wedemeyer! (#2) |
| Date | 19-June-2013 |
| Module/Week | Module 1, OMDE603 |
| Category | DE Practice |
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*Courtesy of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Archives*

Charles Wedemeyer was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1911 (Burton, 2010). In the 1930s Wedemeyer was a public school teacher and then principal of the Steuben Junior High School (Burton, 2010). During World War II, Wedemeyer created instructional techniques to benefit sailors who were operating in adverse learning conditions (Burton, 2010). “From this instrumental experience, Wedemeyer developed a theoretical framework for learning, using innovative communication technologies [that were] adapted for non-traditional learners” (Burton, 2010, p. 28).

The United States Army Institute pioneered computerized marking of assignments, 24-hour phone in counseling [Exhibit A], and use of tutorial groups[Exhibit B] (Moore & Kearsley, 2012). These were ideas which Wedemeyer adopted while in his position as the director of correspondence instruction at the University of Wisconsin (Moore & Kearsley, 2012).

The Articulated Instructional Media (AIM) project developed by Wedemeyer was the first test of the course team model to develop educational courses [Exhibit C] (Moore & Kearsley, 2012). Other innovations included counseling [Exhibit A], guidance [Exhibit D], and learning centers [Exhibit B] (Burton, 2010). This project attracted the interest of educational reformers in members of British Prime Minister Harold Wilson’s government (Burton, 2010). The planning committee visited Wisconsin in 1967 for further study of this project. Soon after, Wedemeyer was invited to London for further discussions (Moore & Kearsely, 2012). 1n 1969, Wedemeyer spent several months in the house of Walter Perry to assist in developing OU UK (Moore & Kearsely, 2012). “Almost the entire educational geography of an open educational system was identified in the AIM experiment” (Wedemeyer, 1982, p. 24).

So what relevance does Wedemeyer’s work have today in 2013 to a graduate student at UMUC? A graduate student, such as myself, has access a support systems 24 hours a day [Exhibit A]. I get to benefit from educational resources that are the effort of many different educators and specialists [Exhibit C]. I have a graduate advisor who helps guide me through the program [Exhibit D]. Now, I don’t have access to regional student centers but there are “250,000 students … supported by centres in the UK, Ireland and Europe” (<http://www.open.ac.uk/about/main/>) [Exhibit B].

Think for a minute about all the people who benefited from Wedemeyer’s influence as a public school teacher, as a principal, as a Naval instructor, at the University of Wisconsin, at all the OUs today! This blog just shares a few highlights of this amazing man’s contributions to education and education at a distance. Let me join ***all*** of them is saying Thank You, Charles Wedemeyer!

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| Entry Title/Number | Will the OU Generation Date Moore & Kearsley’s 5 Generations? (#1) |
| Date | 16-June-2013 |
| Module/Week | Module 1, OMDE603 |
| Category | DE Theory |
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A little known movie fact is that the original *Wizard of Oz* had a jitterbug scene in it. The powers that be cut the scene because they didn’t want to date the movie. Years later, movie goers should be grateful that they get to experience the timeless wonder of Judy Garland’s performance of *Over the Rainbow* without any reminders of dances long out of date.



Moore & Kearsley’s (2012) definition of the five generations of distance education (DE) include Open Universities (OUs) as its own generation. This appears out of place as the other four generations are solidly about the technologies that provided the mechanisms of education as well as the pedagogical theories that surround them. A case could be made that Open Universities were enabled by the technologies of broadcast radio and television as home study was enabled by the technologies of cheaply created and easily distributed correspondence.

Let’s discuss two generations using technology, mechanism, pedagogy followed with examples. The first generation of Correspondence used printed instructions sent via the postal system to provide distance education following mainly objectivist theory (Jonassen, Davidson, Collins, Campbell, & Bannan Haag, 1995; Moore & Kearsley, 2012). Examples from the correspondence generation include correspondence study, home study and independent study courses (Moore & Kearsley, 2012). The second generation of Broadcast Radio and Television used audio and audiovisual programming sent via radio waves and/or TV frequencies to provide distance education following mainly constructivist theory (Jonassen, Davidson, Collins, Campbell, & Bannan Haag, 1995; Moore & Kearsley, 2012). Examples from the Broadcast Radio and Television generation include Schools of the Air, Corporation of Public Broadcasting, Instructional Television Fixed Services, Cable Television Telecourses, and Open Universities.

There is possibility that Moore & Kearsley’s (2012) definition of the five generations of distance education may become as outdated as the jitterbug by setting OUs apart in their own generation. While today OUs are flourishing mega-universities who knows what tomorrow may bring? In an era of downsizing, mergers, economic instability, doing everything, including providing education, for less money will continue to be a priority for governments around the world. Many OUs are funded by their governments. If funding is cut, it could spell difficult times ahead OUs – perhaps some OUs will have to close their doors.

By no means am I trying to trivialize the impact the OUs have made on DE. I feel that setting the apart as a separate generation as Moore and Kearsley have done may not be the most appropriate and long term decision when describing the history of DE.

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| Entry Title/Number | Blog Introduction (#0) |
| Date | 7-June-2013 |
| Module/Week | n/a, OMDE603 |
| Category | Logistics |
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This is the start of my MDE TT Blog for UMUC.

Please check back for future posts.  Starting 16-June-2013, posts for OMDE 603 will be entered Sunday and Wednesday nights.