I started the week behind the eight ball in terms of what I had to get done…Remembrance Day videos to merge in iMovie, a huge list of apps to download to the school iPads, an inbox full of unread emails, afterschool meetings, plus the regular chaos that is our home life with school, dance, martial arts (oh - and the new edition of Halo came out this week so of course we HAD to add in a trip to the mall…) …okay, so you don't need a rundown of my entire 'to-do' list but you get the picture – busy week. And I was perfectly fine with my blissfully chaotic life, but then I was introduced this CEET thing and wow - you could get lost in there!

In a word: overwhelming.
Wait, let me try again: intriguing.
One more time: fascinating.

I admit I've only touched the surface but I was able to read a couple of posts, post a comment, link to a document in progress (very cool!), follow some discussions, watch the videos by Alec Couros and Dave Cormier and get myself on twitter and find my way through a few interesting threads. I now feel immersed in tech. I have jumped in with both feet and though I'm not yet sinking, I'm not quite swimming either. I was reading a blog today (me, reading a blog!) by Ian Jukes – the keynote speaker at the CUEBC conference I recently attended in Vancouver. On his blog http://www.fluency21.com/blogpost.cfm?blogID=3060 he talks about change. He says, "In fact, it's not just that it's hard to appreciate what's going on. Rather, it's about trying to comprehend the scale and the scope of the changes we are experiencing. That's because in the world of today it's not just about changing today and then going back to normal tomorrow. In reality, it's about change today and then more change tomorrow. It's about change forever. It's about constant and never-ending change." This post really resonated with me. In my OLTD experience thus far I've been waiting for that moment when I say to myself, "well that was fun, now back to work." But I'm slowly realizing there is no going back, only going forward at a breakneck speed and trying to fumble my way along without dropping the ball.

Even though my experience is still somewhat limited I can say this: I am so excited about the potential of all this technology and the sharing of resources for the future of education. When watching Alec Couros' video about the boy who posted his bow string video online and got such supportive feedback on how he could improve it – it made me pause and look at my own children and how they learn as opposed to how I learned when I was their age. For them everything is instant. If they don't know how to do something they simply google it, watch a video on youtube, start a chat forum or text their friends for help. Talk about a community of learners that evidence higher level problem solving skills. These kids are exploring, building understandings and challenging each other in ways I certainly never had the opportunity to. I am truly excited to witness, share and nurture this way of learning in my children and in my students.

I spent my afternoon yesterday at a meeting for a pilot project of the Virtual Classroom/Student Dashboard in our district. This new 'dashboard' will allow students to submit assignments online, post to class blogs, have their own school district e-mail with which to communicate with me or each other, participate in wiki activities, manage their own profiles and track assignment dates and other important events in a virtual planner. I can post newsletters, create, read and mark assignments online and easily

communicate with parents and students – with everything being kept on school district servers! (I asked). What with everything else new that I am taking on this week (month, term) I've decided it's time to wave the white flag. I told my students about it today and said that they had the weekend to learn how to use it and that they have to teach me all about it next week. I figure they probably already know more about it than I do. Hmmm, maybe there's a youtube video I can watch…..

(On a side note I cheered on my principal this morning because when I walked into her office before school to ask her a question she was on youtube watching a video on how to do something – which led us into a whole long discussion about what we are doing in our OLTD program and how exciting it is to see how technology is being used to enhance education). We are all learning! ☺

Responses:

Marieke,

I like your thoughts of stopping and reflecting, taking a look around. I have a quieter weekend ahead and plan to do just that. Spend some time exploring twitter and my new dashboard and play. I'm actually really looking forward to it.

I, too, read the second part of Ian Jukes' blog and though I knew that the education system was falling way behind (prior to teaching I worked with the local municipal government and saw first hand the skills students need for the workplace), I really liked his example of taking a retired worker back to their former workplace and then to their former school....it's actually pretty scary that they wouldn't find many differences in the educational world.

In an answer to your question, I think OER will replace teachers because students will find the education they need where and when they need it and not confine themselves to the constructs of schools. If we want to be competitive in the market (I know that's not a way teachers are used to thinking but I see it coming) we need to incorporate technology and these types of resources into our classrooms before we lose our students to the ease and convenience of these alternatives.

food for thought...

Kris

Ben,

I agree it is exciting....and just a bit terrifying. But I think with all of the support systems and resources we've just been introduced to (and our group experiencing it first hand - together) it's a little less terrifying.

My issue, I think, is trying to wrap my head around the vast amount of info coming at me, but it's too big. I have to take it bit by bit and work my way through it, finding things that enhance my practice and leaving things that don't.

Kris

Other posts:

Hi Michael,

I've been using iPods and iPads in my classroom for almost a year now and am finding the possibilities to be endless! Whatever you need, whatever you want to show, whatever you want to do....there's an app for that!

In our measurement unit last year I had students use an iPod and a dry erase sheet and make a video explaining how they would find the perimeter, volume and area of three different shapes/objects. The buy in from students was huge, their projects were fantastic and I was overpowered by the learning that went on and how easily I could see where there were gaps or misunderstandings. It was a great experience!

If you are ever looking at apps to use in the classroom, our lead tech guy, Michael Howarth, has put together a list of his favourite educational apps, all sorted by subject. He's allowed me to link to his site on my own website, so I'm hoping he won't mind if I link it here, too. Enjoy!

http://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=315944

Kris

From tracy

Kris,

I just love your iPod/Dry erase board video project! Something so simple can be so effective! I briefly worked at an alternate high school and convinced the principal we needed iPads... he bought my idea and the iPads! However, I was not in the teaching position long enough to come up with a way to incorporate them into our classroom on a regular basis. This activity you have shared can be used in so many ways! I will be sure to keep the link you have shared to the list of educational apps as I had been using the iPad apps with the students and had been wanting more!

I think we just witnessed "sharing", Michael. No matter how big, small or in what manner we share as educators we "will be better scholars by sharing more, by creating open spaces and I believe we will become better teachers for this". - Alec Couros

From Michael

Awesome.... thank you Kris... I'm just starting to get an understanding of the Ipad. I'm surprised they don't have an app for that... Make sure you thank Michael... I will be sharing this with others.

Michael

To Andrew

Don't be terrified of twitter...for every brilliant mind tweeting technical information there are ten people on the other end of the spectrum tweeting the mundane events of their lives...you will definitely fit in the upper, more brilliant side - especially with your tech background. :)

To tracy

Fantastic! This clip not only shows the students creativity, collaboration and sharing of resources, but it is, plain and simple, them ASKING their teachers to teach them....in the way in which they learn. It doesn't get much clearer than that!

In my own teaching experiences I have witnessed hesitation, anxiety and downright refusal to use technology in the classroom. But making excuses (or doing things the same way it's always been done) won't make the situation go away. Technology is here to stay and I see it as such a valuable resource with

so many possibilities for our learning and teaching, I think we are silly to not embrace it and put it to work for us.

Change is always a slow process....