Evaluation Article Critiques

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Shih, Y., & Mills, D. (2007). Setting the new standard with mobile computing in online learning. *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning,*  8 (2), 1-9. Retrieved from ERIC Database.

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| Program evaluated | The researchers studied mobile learning technology. They wanted to see the possibilities for mobile learning in various disciplines. |
| Purpose of the evaluation | They wanted to find out how mobile technologies influence our teaching. Specifically they were looking at evaluating the inclusion of mobile technology into a university course. |
| Formative or summative | Summative |
| Who were the stakeholders? | Students taking the Moodle class and the professor |
| What were the evaluation questions? | They wanted to find out how their students would receive the idea of completing part of their work on a PDA/smart phone. Also, they wanted to see if the students would find the mobile learning helpful and manageable or as a burden. Furthermore, they wanted to see what instructional design techniques are needed in mobile learning classes to allow for the specifications of a specific mobile technology. |
| What methods were used? | The researchers studied a Children’s Literature hybrid course in California State University. They studied 46 students who were allowed to use their smart phones to access mobile learning contents, receive text messages about lessons, join online discussions with students, and produce digital stories. The researchers used Shih’s Mobile Learning Model of social constructivism to see if the mobile learning technology could be successful. |
| What types of data collection were used? | Survey data |
| What results were reported? | Students reported that they were more motivated and appreciated the flexibility and convenience.  The interaction between the professor and the students was enhanced through the use of mobile phones.  Students were encouraged to collaborate more.  The instruction was more appealing to the students.  The quality of the learning was ‘as good’ or ‘better’. |
| What recommendations were recommended? | The researchers believe that future study needs to be completed because this study did not include a control group. Mobile learning has the following strengths: students can study wherever it is convenient, availability for more immediate interaction with teachers and fellow students, and mobile devices are highly portable and affordable. |

**Critique**

I enjoyed reading this article about how mobile phones could be used to enhance learning. In my county, mobile phones are taken from students if the phones are seen by teachers. Mobile phones are seen as a distraction and not as a tool to further learning, so reading an article about the benefits of mobile phones was fascinating. Learning the cycle that can be associated with the mobile phones was intriguing. Shi and Mills believe that sending a multimedia message to phones motivates learners. Once the students receive a message, they are then able to search the Web for information related to the message. Later, they are able to discuss the content with their peers by text, voice, picture, or video message. Students could even produce a digital story or apply what they learn in a simulated environment.

If my current county does not change their policy regarding cell phones, I will not be able to incorporate cell phones into my teaching. I believe that in time cell phones may be used in elementary schools to motivate students and enhance the interaction between students and teachers, but only after success has been demonstrated in higher grades. My county instructional technology teachers, principals, assistant principals, members from our Board of Education, and Superintendent should read this article to see the value in mobile phones to enhance learning. We do not need to fear the mobile phone, but look to it as a tool to improve teaching and learning.

Hussain, I., & Aslam, M. (2002). Role of mobile technology in promotion campus-wide learning environment. *The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology,* 8 (3), 48-56. Retrieved from ERIC Database.

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| Program evaluated | The researchers wanted to evaluate the role of mobile technology in higher education. |
| Purpose of the evaluation | They wanted to see if mobile phones are appropriate for use in teaching and learning in higher education, if they offer flexibility, interactivity, and are useful. |
| Formative or summative | Summative |
| Who were the stakeholders? | There were 10 professors and 83 students who were part of this study. |
| What were the evaluation questions? | Evaluate the role of mobile technology in terms of its:   * appropriateness * flexibility * interactivity * availability and usefulness |
| What methods were used? | Since the researchers were evaluating current practices of mobile technologies, they used questionnaires and interviews. They also used pilot testing to collect data. They analyzed the data through quantitative and qualitative approaches. |
| What types of data collection were used? | The researchers used questionnaires that used a Likert scale and semi-structured interviews to collect data. |
| What results were reported? | All of the students and faculty use simple cell phones for communication and USB for data transfer.  93% of the students and 90% of the professors agreed that mobile technology is appropriate for them to use in teaching and learning.  86% of students and 90% of professors believe that mobile technology offers a greater degree of flexibility.  83% of the students and 80% of the professors believe that mobile technology is more interactive than traditional teaching and offers more opportunities to communicate with other students or the professors through text messaging, live calls, and emails.  Students and professors use mobile phones for data transfer, downloading, and recording lectures. |
| What recommendations were  recommended? | Universities should provide training to professors about the appropriate and effective uses of mobile phones. Universities should work with  different phone manufacturers to encourage the companies to give lower rates to students.  Professors should encourage the use of mobile phones throughout the campus by corresponding with students though e-mail, text messages, or phone calls. |

**Critique**

This article further examined the idea of mobile phones as an aid to enhance learning. Specifically, the study concentrated on university students and professors use of mobile phones. I was interested in reading another study about the effectiveness of mobile phones. I loved the quote “21st century is said to be a century of knowledge and sharing of knowledge” (Hussain & Aslam, 2002, p. 48). This is a powerful quote, and it reminds me of Web 2.0. Web 2.0 has been a transformation from earlier versions of the Web. Web 2.0 allows anyone to be an author, which is a powerful way to share your knowledge.

This article is important because it gives the readers a glimpse into how mobile phones can enhance teaching and learning. Mobile phones create synchronous and asynchronous opportunities for communication. Students can make live calls or send text messages that are answered at a later time. According to Hussain and Asla, feedback is improved when mobile phones are included in a course (p. 54).

This article may be relevant in the near or distant future if and when my county updates their policies about mobile phones. Currently if phones are seen by teachers, teachers are to take the phones away from the students. Phones are not viewed as an important learning tool, but as a distraction. This article could be good food for thought for member s of school boards, principals, assistant principals, and teachers who are change agents in their schools.

Doggett, M.A. (2008). The videoconferencing classroom: What do students think? Journal of Industrial Teacher Education, 44 (4), 29-41. Retrieved from ERIC Database.

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| Program evaluated | Videoconferencing course |
| Purpose of the evaluation | The researchers wanted to find out if students prefer videoconferencing over face-to-face instructional methods. |
| Formative or summative | Summative |
| Who were the stakeholders? | On the first day of instruction, the students were randomly assigned to either the face-to-face classroom or the classroom with videoconferencing. There were eighty-six students originally in both classes, but by the end of the semester six students had dropped the courses. The students were all taking a general education woodworking class at a small university in the Northwest. |
| What were the evaluation questions? | Does videoconferencing technology adequately serve the needs of the students? If given a choice, would students prefer videoconferencing or face-to-face classes? |
| What methods were used? | On the first day of class, students were randomly divided into sections. Due to some technical difficulties, the videoconferencing was not initially successful so the university moved the remote classroom to another location in the same building where the face-to-face classes were held. This fixed the technical problems. |
| What types of data collection were used? | Surveys and test data. There was an initial survey given 3 weeks into the course and then one at the end of the course. The students took the surveys as paper and pencil. |
| What results were reported? | Two-thirds of the students preferred fact-to-face formats and only a small majority would recommend the videoconference class. To see if the format of the class impacted test scores, the department compared the test scores of the previous semester to the test scores of the videoconference class and they found no significant difference. 57% of the students felt that the videoconferencing was a barrier to their interaction with the professor. |
| What recommendations were recommended? | Videoconferencing is an excellent choice for people in remote places. Schools need good network connections, large video displays, and eager professors and students who are willing to work through some challenges at first. |

**Critique**

I thought this article was interesting because the study came about by accident. The university where the study took place had a popular class, and they did not have the ability to keep up with the demand of the course due to strict budgetary cuts. To solve this problem, they decided to create a face-to-face class and a videoconference classroom. The students were randomly assigned to the different classes.

This information is important because it evaluated videoconference classes to see if it was an effective teaching strategy. The findings showed that two-thirds of the students preferred fact-to-face formats, but there was no significant difference in test scores between the two formats. The majority of students felt that the videoconferencing was a barrier to their interaction with the professor.

This information supports the importance of face-to-face interactions between teachers and students. Although the videoconferencing class proved effective in regards to test scores, the students in the videoconferencing class missed the face-to-face interactions between them and their teachers. This study is relevant to my current and future professional practice because I provide face-to-face interaction with my students on a daily basis and reinforces the need for my services. Districts considering alternative methods to delivering instruction would benefit from reading this article.

Graves, S., Abbit, J., Klett, M., & Wang, C. (2009). A mentoring model for interactive online learning in support of a technology innovation challenge grant. 26 (1), 5-16. Retrieved from ERIC database.

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| Program evaluated | The Lewis & Clark Rediscovery Project model |
| Purpose of the evaluation | The researchers wanted to determine the impact of the program on:   * teacher technology and technology teaching efficacy * perceived barriers to technology infusion * peer mentoring and leadership * classroom practice/pedagogy |
| Formative or summative | Formative |
| Who were the stakeholders? | The stakeholders were K-12 teachers selected from 17 school districts in eight states along the Lewis and Clark Trail. Administrators selected the participant teachers to work on the Lewis and Clark Rediscovery Project. University professors, educational consultants, and teachers in more advanced positions within districts served as mentors. |
| What were the evaluation questions? | “What are the effects of a long-term, sustained mentoring program on technology teaching efficacy, perceived barriers to technology infusion, peer mentoring and leadership, and classroom practice/pedagogy?” (Graves, Abbit, Klett, & Wang, 2009, p. 5) |
| What methods were used? | The Lewis and Clark Rediscovery Project included summer workshops for teachers. There was also site visit by mentors. The project had online courses that were available to the participants. Additional technology was provided through the grant. During the project, surveys were given, interviews were conducted, visits to school sites were conducted to see the technology in place, and case studies were examined. |
| What types of data collection were used? | Surveys were given at the beginning of the program to find a baseline level of technology usage. Surveys were given at the end of the program. Other data was collected throughout the program from interviews, site visit reports, and case studies finding. |
| What results were reported? | By the end of the program, teachers were infusing technology in their classrooms. The level of inhibition the teachers decreased. Many teachers report that observing a fellow teacher effectively model technology infusion, and having that expertise available and nearby in the local district, gave them the confidence to employ the strategies learned in Lewis and Clark Rediscovery workshops. Students were more engaged in the lessons and had more positive attitudes. |
| What recommendations were recommended? | The key to the success of the teachers appears to be the mentor or colleague who was there for them to help them by offering advice and help. |

**Critique**

This study found that teachers who observed mentor teachers use technology in classroom gave teachers the extra nudge they needed to use technology themselves in their classrooms. I have found this on a personal level. When my co-workers and I receive technology training in a setting that is not a classroom, the training does not have a lasting impact on many of the participants. This year, we received training on our new MOBIs in individual classrooms and our computer teacher is now solely training and helps for our teachers instead of an elective teacher. Even our most hesitant teachers are using the new technology because of the support and individualized instruction they are receiving.

This article is extremely important to districts considering technology innovations. Mentor teachers are the key to successful technological integration. Many districts may believe that a computer specialist should be teaching the children during a “specials” rotation. The challenge with this approach is that it allows the classroom teachers to not be involved in integrating technology in the regular classroom. Since Georgia has a professional standard of teachers connecting classroom activities with real world applications of technology, we need teachers to be a part of the technology application. Technology application should not be left to the computer specialist for a one-hour block of time each week. With support of mentor teachers, barriers to technology infusion are reduced. This information is relevant to my future professional practice as it shows me that I need to be a mentor to teachers who are nervous to infuse technology in their classrooms. By offering ongoing assistance and support, I can help teachers meet our Georgia professional standards. Principals, teachers, and Instructional Technology teachers would benefit from learning how a mentoring model can lead to successful infusion of technology in schools.