Examine Mentor Expertise in Problem-Based Online Learning

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine how online mentors express their expertise and how a student perceives this expertise in a 1:1 online learning environment. A closed-coding system was used to examine a series of emails between a mentor and student over a 5-week course to examine the mentor’s expression of expertise. Additionally, the researcher conducted a semi-structured interview with another participant to discover how the student perceives their mentor’s expressions of expertise in online learning. Results from this study show that mentors express their expertise using a pattern of support that progresses student learning while connecting content to application. Furthermore, the student’s perception of mentor expertise indicates a positive impact on student learning and subject matter acquisition. This study implicates the need for developing expert strategies for mentors engaged in 1:1 online learning environments.

Keywords: Online Learning, Mentoring, Problem-Based Learning, Online Teaching, Mentor Expertise
Examining Mentor Expertise in Problem-Based Online Learning

“The world of virtual K-12 education has been described by several individuals as the ‘wild, wild west;’ that is, a largely unregulated, fluid and rapidly changing environment influenced by factors beyond the current jurisdiction of many state departments of education” (Natale, 2011, p. 6). This “wild, wild west” environment has led to the creation of instruction that can be “delivered synchronously or asynchronously, and the type of instruction may range from fully online to fully face-to-face” (p. 9). “Unfortunately, while virtual schooling at the K-12 level has grown in popularity, research-based investigations into the teaching and learning process in this medium and at this level are still lacking (DiPietro, Ferdig, Black, & Presto, 2010, p. 10). This lack of research has led to concern over “how to develop educators with the needed skills to enable their students to be successful in serving what will be the most digitally savvy, socially networked generation in history” (Natale, 2011, p. 25).

As technology quickly becomes integrated into the traditional classroom and online classroom, one could imagine teacher training programs that develop skilled teachers who integrate technology into the classroom that are capable of operating in the online learning environment. Unfortunately, “In the Going Virtual! Research Series…only 30 percent of respondents report having received any professional development at the university level. Only 12 percent of brand-new online teachers reported receiving college or university training (Natale, 2011, p. 25).

Regardless of the lack of technology-based teaching skills, online learning background, or research supporting effective online models of learning, school districts and states continue to expand their online learning requirements. The Commonwealth of Virginia, for example,
recently passed a requirement that will make online learning a mandatory graduation requirement for high school students beginning in the 2013-2014 School Year. As these requirements expand and the demand for online learning increases, it is essential to develop an in-depth understanding of best practices for teachers operating in different models of online learning.

Staker & Horn (2012) have developed a framework that identifies three types of online learning, informal online learning, blended online learning, and full-time online learning, which have their own unique variations in structure and formation. My own online teaching experiences have resided in the full-time, formal definition of online learning that is “a structured education program in which content and instruction are delivered over the Internet and the students do not attend a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home” (Staker & Horn, 2012, p. 7). While it would be beneficial to examine teaching in all available online learning models, it would not be practical. Instead, I focused on understanding teacher expertise in the Community of Practice Learning System (COPLS) Model because the role of expert in problem-based learning is so important.

Through my experiences, I have informally observed a number of challenges in the full-time online learning environment for the teacher. In addition to my teaching experiences, as an online learner, I have taken multiple courses as a Master's student, witnessing different models of online learning as well as different teaching styles. This is important because it affords me the opportunity to examine the strength and abilities of a teacher using different teaching styles and methods, and has helped me understand how important the role the teacher plays in 1:1 online learning. Additionally, I have designed multiple online environments, and the lack of current research into how expertise is expressed in online learning has made developing these environments extremely challenging. I have spent the last four years working closely with
mentors and students engaged in the COPLS model, helping to design learning opportunities, work with teachers about educating within the COPLS environment, and helping students and parents understand how the model works. For me, this is not just a study into developing a better learning environment but a study into understanding how this system works and whether or not it can be developed for a larger audience for their benefit.

**Conceptual Framework and Experiential Knowledge**

While exploring the concept of expertise in the classroom is not a new or exciting concept, there exists a unique difference between the traditional classroom and the online learning environment. When teachers engage students in the traditional model, researchers can easily observe and assess their adoption of the role of expert in authentic, problem-based learning activities, where “people must choose to address the problems of their field at the upper limit of the complexity they can handle” (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993, p. 20). This process helps students learn as experts would act, “individuals governed, not by highly technical, linear, traditional expertise, but by messy problems with multiple, equally valid, paths and solutions” (Schon, 1983, 60). Experts contain “…knowledge [that] is not just a head full of facts or patterns, a reservoir of data for the intellect to operate upon. It is information so finely adapted to task requirements that it enables experts to do remarkable things with intellectual equipment” (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993, p. 36). Their knowledge allows them to “engage in experimentation, which enables them to reflect on a situation’s resistance to a proposed solution, engaging with a moving target that forces them to shift their solution as they experiment (Schon, 1990, p. 882). Once a concrete understanding of what expertise looks like in the traditional classroom is formed, it is essential to gain insight into what expertise might look like in the online classroom to form an analytical bridge between the wealth of research supporting the
traditional model and the dearth of information informing the online classroom. Unfortunately, these opportunities do not exist as clearly as they do in the traditional classroom. In order to accurately assess how an online teacher expresses expertise, understanding the existing research that defines expertise in problem-based classrooms is essential, as it provides the framework for analyzing and assessing conversations between the online mentor and the online student. By creating a bridge between the research that examines traditional model expertise in problem-based classrooms, what a problem-based classroom looks like in the online environment, and what expertise should look like in online classrooms, we can create an analytical tool to help us understand how expertise is actually expressed in the online classroom.

**Expertise in a Problem-Based Traditional Classroom**

When engaging students in problem-based learning in the traditional model, a teacher cannot assume the role of "sage on the stage". "PBL is well suited to helping students become active learners because it situates learning in real-world problems and makes students responsible for their learning. It has a dual emphasis on helping learners develop strategies and construct knowledge" (Hmelo-Silver, 2004, p. 236). The essential element and framing piece of problem-based learning is an authentic problem that students, utilizing concepts learned in the class, attempt to solve with the assistance of an expert who can help navigate the difficult problem. As Hmelo-Silver noted, "In PBL, the teacher/facilitator is an expert learner, able to model good strategies for learning and thinking, rather than an expert in the content itself” (p. 245). The role of the expert becomes an essential piece in student learning, helping the student move from a novice in both the content and the application, to an expert of their own, capable of solving problems in a manner similar to that of an expert practitioner within the field.
While teachers may bring in outside experts to fill this role, the standard approach is to rely on the teacher's expertise to help bridge the gap between students' conceptual comprehension and the challenges inherent in solving the problem. Bereiter & Scardamalia (1993) see expert learning as a process that “involves some balance or alternation between relatively controlled, problem-solving processes in learning and more spontaneous, playful, or passively receptive processes” (p. 180). In order for the problem-based environment to be successful, the teacher, acting as expert, must structure an environment that activates prior knowledge where students, engaged collaboratively, can critique, restructure, and form knowledge in order to solve problems (Schmidt, 1983). This expertise and environment is observable in the traditional classroom, but its visibility in the online environment becomes much more difficult to discern. While the environment can be analyzed similarly to the traditional model, analyzing the interactions that the mentor engages in is drastically different due to the unique structure of online learning.

**Online Learning through a Problem-Based Model**

While online learning has risen quickly in popularity throughout the United States, its effects, best practices, and processes are still varied in their implementation. Means et. al (2010) found that part of the cause of the different models is due to the fact that, "Different technology applications are used to support different models of online learning" (p. 1). Due the varied tools available, the design of online learning opportunities vary based on the tools selected. Despite the lack of consistency between learning models, the need for a teacher that provides expert experience and feedback is essential (Natale, 2011). As Means et. al discovered, "Studies in which the online learners worked with digital resources with little or no teacher guidance... was the one learner experience category for which the advantage of online learning failed to attain
statistical significance" (p. 53). This shows that understanding the role of the teacher and their importance in online learning is essential to helping learners succeed in the online learning environment.

Despite the significance of the teacher's presence in online learning, their role is not consistent across all models. However, regardless of the model used, "In online instruction, the teacher must combine instructional and content knowledge with technology and rely on technology as the means of communication" (Glowa, 2009, p. 2). This means that the online instructor must be able to communicate complex ideas and concepts while correcting student misconceptions to help develop a deeper understanding of the material. In a problem-based learning environment, this challenge is exacerbated because the online teacher must also express expertise over the subject matter and help the student form connections between conceptual comprehension and practical application of the concept.

The Community of Practice Learning System (COPLS) model, defined and created by Dr. Priscilla Norton, is a system where "the focus [of learning] is... the solution [of] shared problems and participation in shared activities" (Norton, 2003, p. 4). In this model, students, working with an expert mentor, actively engage in solving problems with the goal of learning conceptual material in a community of practice where the concept would be applied to solve actual problems. Rather than being instructed by a teacher, students engage in representative problems that "are selected because they are representative of the kinds of problems typically encountered by practitioners/experts within the community of practice which serves to define the domain of learning content" (Norton, 2003, p. 6). These problems are designed to be age and material appropriate and aimed to guide the student from novice to expert in the subject material.
EXAMINING MENTOR EXPERTISE IN PROBLEM-BASED ONLINE

The design of the COPLS model still relies on the power of an expert to guide a student from novice to expert. Without the power of the expert, the novice would not be able to gain a concrete understanding of the concepts or topics they are learning. However, in contrast to the traditional sense of teacher, the expert in the COPLS model aids the students by "offering assistance upon request, providing feedback on products submitted by the learner(s), asking prompting, extending, and application questions, and other assorted interactions to support learning" (Norton, 2003, p. 5).

The COPLS model provides a unique look at online learning, one that relies on expert mentors providing expert feedback on problem-based activities to help shift a learner from novice to expert. This approach is unique in the realm of online learning models as the teacher is required to be a subject-matter expert, similar to the manner in which a teacher using problem-based learning in the traditional classroom must also play the role of expert. However, understanding that the online mentor must be an expert and understanding how that expertise is communicated remain two entirely different concepts.

**Expertise in Online Learning**

When students engage in the COPLS model of online learning, they are working directly with a mentor who plays the role of subject-matter expert. As the subject-matter expert, the online mentor helps students become experts by providing the opportunity for the student to "remake parts of their practice through reflective conversations with materials and situations in indeterminate zones of practice" (Schon, 1990, p. 538). Without this subject-matter expert, students would be left without a clear understanding of how to apply conceptual information to solve problems based on authentic scenarios. As Norton (2005) found, "Online mentors must be
prepared for the challenges of promoting content learning and conceptual understanding in largely text-based mediums. To do so, they must be able to use, promote, and even explain the language of thinking, mental management, strategic thinking, higher order knowledge, and transfer of learning” (p. 3). The mentor “has at his disposal and is capable of inventing on the spot many strategies of instructing, questioning, and describing – all aimed at responding to the difficulties and potentials of a particular student who is trying to do something” (Schon, 1990, p. 1233). Understanding what this level of expertise looks like is essential to understanding how it is expressed in the mentor-mentee dyad of online learning.

**Research Questions**

What I examined and investigated in this study is the expression of expertise by the mentor engaged in 1:1 online learning in the COPLS Model of Online Learning. In the COPLS Model of Online Learning, the mentor plays an essential role for the learner, an expert who understands how a problem can be solved using the concepts currently being discussed. If the mentor is supposed to be an expert, my goal was to understand how they are communicating and expressing that expertise to their learner. By understanding how the mentor expresses expertise, designers will be able to apply this understanding to structuring online learning opportunities, not necessarily for the students but for future online teachers, enabling them to improve their practice for the benefit of their students. If their expertise is an essential element of online problem-based learning, they need to understand how that expertise is developed and then expressed to improve their students’ comprehension and learning. Specifically, my research questions are:

How is expertise expressed by the mentor in a 1:1 online learning model?
How is mentor expertise perceived by the learner in a 1:1 online learning model?

As my project evolved, my expectations and my theoretical perceptions of these questions evolved. Due to my own experience as a designer of online learning environments, teacher who has participated in the COPLS Model of online learning, and student who has engaged in the mentor-mentee structure of the COPLS Model, I realized just how important the role of the online mentor was to the formation of student comprehension. Additionally, I have worked under the conceptual understanding that the teacher plays the role of subject-matter expert in the learning environment for so long, it is difficult for me to perceive a teacher in any other way or separate the idea that expertise needs to be expressed and is not automatically derived in communication. As I worked on this program, I began to realize just how important and unique the expression of expertise is to the teaching process in problem-based learning.

Despite this understanding, I never thought about the expert role that the online mentor plays in the COPLS Model until I began my research for this project. Initially, my beliefs were that the online mentor automatically expresses expertise because they are the teacher and the student will recognize that expertise through the structure of the course. As I began to examine the mentor-mentee emails over the course of five weeks, I began to see specific patterns emerge that spoke to the way mentors express their expertise. These patterns helped to develop a deeper understanding of my research questions and also led to an internal battle over examining the output, what the mentor sends to the mentee, and the input, how the mentor decides what to write to the student and in what way. Since my research focused specifically on the output, I remain dedicated and focused to understanding the expression of expertise and answering, to the best of my ability, the research questions as they stand, but that internal struggle presents a unique issue within online mentoring.
Method

Research Setting, Participants, and Relationships

Due to the unique nature of the COPLS Model, the settings and participants for the study were extremely limited. While there are hundreds of middle and high school age students who have taken courses in The Online Academy, an online learning environment that uses the COPLS Model, it unfortunately closed at the end of last school year. The only active system that I have access to would be the first iteration of students taking the Integrating Online Learning in Schools (IOLS) Masters and Certificate program at George Mason University. The first course within the IOLS program, EDIT 760, is a five-week course where students, working with an expert mentor, learn about the habits and requirements of online learning, online learners, and the teachers who work in online environments. The IOLS program was built using a Design Team of five Graduate researchers, which included myself, and two Doctoral sponsors, and combines a number of different online learning models including the COPLS model.

While I developed one of the courses in the IOLS program, I had no connection to the development of the EDIT 760 course. Despite not being directly connected to the development of the course, I was engaged in the instruction of the course, fulfilling the role of expert mentor, for one student engaged in the course. However, I did not investigate the interactions that I had with my mentee in the course. Instead, I observed the online learning interactions between a different mentor and their mentee and interview a second student not related to either my experiences as an online mentor or the observation I examined in depth.

My interviewee recently completed the entire EDIT 760 course within the five-week window. Sallie, a pseudonym, is a Middle School teacher in the traditional classroom in a school
district in the Mid-Atlantic and has eight years of classroom experience. In addition to the IOLS program, she is also working on a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction to supplement the IOLS program. Sallie was extremely open and accommodating to being interviewed, despite her difficult and busy schedule. In order to establish a relationship, I worked to accommodate her wherever and whenever she was able to meet. I believe that this led to the research participant being extremely open and comfortable responding to any questions I had regarding the online learning experience.

My observation of the IOLS course was an in-depth examination of emails between a mentor, who I shall refer to as Elliott, and mentee over the five-week length of the EDIT 760 course. The student in the course has no knowledge of the emails being used and the observation occurred after the course was completed. These emails were the sole communication method used between the mentor and mentee, affording me an open view of the mentoring process.

Despite my proximity to the IOLS program, I have been lucky enough to avoid any ethical issues in my research. While this is technically good for the sake of my research, I am ultimately upset that I did not have any ethical issues that I could work around. I believe that these issues would help me improve my research capabilities and help me develop into a stronger researcher.

Data Collection

I primarily utilized two data sources for this research project, an interview with one of the participants of EDIT 760, which aimed at understanding the perception of mentor expertise by the learner, and five weeks of email transcripts between a mentor and mentee in EDIT 760,
which I "observed" to gain an understanding of how an expert mentor expresses their expertise in a 1:1 online learning model.

While the observation of these emails was relatively simple, involving reading them to gain an understanding of the conversation leading to coding of the emails, the process of collecting these emails was extremely challenging. Our design team was faced with a dilemma; collect the emails between mentor and student in chronological or subject order. In subject order, we would be able to keep all emails in one, coherent subject line together, enabling us to see the path of a conversation between mentor and student and examining how a mentor expressed their expertise. However, we ultimately chose chronological, because it allowed us to keep the fidelity of the conversations intact. Regardless of the mixed conversations, we felt as a design team that it was important to keep these messages in their original order to gain a deep understanding of how the mentor chose to respond to and engage with their student.

For the interview, I used a semi-structured interview protocol, creating 7 open-ended Interview Questions [Appendix A] that I relied on follow-up questions to gain a further understanding of the student's perception of mentor expertise. The interview questions focused around the student's experience relating to their mentor, how the mentor interacted with them in activities and throughout the course, and whether they felt the mentor was actually an expert, according to their definition of expertise. Questions were followed up with expanding questions, where I asked the interview to expand upon their original responses, focusing on specific elements of their original response, guiding them towards a response focusing on the mentor's influence and expression of expertise.

**Data Analysis**
All email transcripts were coded using a closed coding system that was developed utilizing multiple sources, including Norton (2004), Zachary (2003), Schon (1983, 1990), and Berieter & Scarmaldia (1993). The closed coding system was chosen because I was examining a pre-constructed online learning model that used the concept of expert mentoring in its development and operated under the assumption that mentors were experts, both of mentoring and the subject-matter they were working within. These authors focus much of their research on three elements of the mentoring process, the content of the message, expertise about mentoring, and expertise about the subject-matter. By taking these three elements of mentoring, I was able to construct a coding system that was capable of breaking down each email from the mentor into its unique pieces. The Codes for Representation of Expertise in EDIT 760 [Appendix B] was used to analyze every email sent from Elliott to his mentee in EDIT 760.

Once the coding system was developed, I read through each email between mentor and mentee, totaling more than 280 emails between mentor and student. This initial reading, or observation, was done to gain a complete picture and comprehension of the interactions between mentor and student. Additionally, this observation helped me understand the context of emails sent from the mentor to the student. Once I completed multiple readings of the emails, confident of a complete picture of the interaction between mentor and student, I began coding all emails from mentor to mentee. I did not code emails from the mentee because they were not an expression of expertise from the mentor and they did not offer insight into how the student had perceived that expertise. Each email was broken into multiple chunks depending on the information in each sentence and was coded using the closed coding system. Once the initial coding was complete, I ran a second coding of the emails, ensuring an accurate understanding of
the message being sent from the mentor before asking a member of the design team to check my interpretations.

Once the emails were coded, I sorted the data multiple times, allowing me to view it chronologically, when the mentor sent emails to their mentee, by content of the message sent to the mentee, and by expressions of mentoring expertise sent from the mentor. I did not sort by expressions of subject-matter expertise because of its reliance on a specific element of mentoring expertise, which is discussed in the results section.

The Interview Transcription [Appendix C] was used to provide in-depth insight into the perception of a mentor’s expression of expertise. Rather than coding each sentence for the 3 coding categories, as was the case in the email transcripts, I examined the interview transcript looking for instances of perceived expertise in mentoring or subject matter expertise.

Results

Understanding how mentors express their expertise was immediately evident in the data through three different methods. First, examining the Email Data sorted Chronologically [Appendix D] unveiled the habit of Elliott to chunk his expertise in cycles, focusing on one type of message content and expression of expertise for a number of strains. Second, by examining the Email Data sorted by the Content of the Message [Appendix E], we begin to see a connection between the content and what type of expertise the mentor will express. Finally, by examining the Email Data sorted by the Expression of Mentoring Expertise [Appendix F], we begin to see the direct connection between enabling learning and content knowledge expertise.

Chronological Results
By examining the data chronologically, we see that mentors express their expertise in a discernable pattern. This pattern seems to follow the structure of the course in which they are teaching, beginning with an introduction, to both the course and activities, explaining and clarifying resources and learning material, and critiquing and concluding activities. The mentor begins this process with a simple welcome introduction, “This first course is introductory - it introduces all the issues and hopefully gets you into the online learning groove” (Elliot, Email), setting the stage for the course and the expectations of the mentor. These self-regulation emails are an important part of the learning process and an expression of mentor expertise by helping the student prepare for the course and the content.

Additionally, the mentor expresses their expertise by negotiating the student’s learning process by helping them adjust their learning schedule, such as “This might be the week that you need to send a "Dear Ally" email - saying you need to rob Peter to pay Paul” (Elliott, Email). This negotiation represents the mentor expressing their understanding of time management with the student and is an example of how the mentor thinks of the pace of the course and the need to maintain the pace of the material. However, if the student does not perceive or understand this negotiation, the expression of expertise is wasted. Fortunately, the subject interviewed found that:

“I had actually approached her about just…time….not time management but if she had any suggestions for ways that I could make the most of my time within the course and still be able to get all of the assignments done and we kind of did that” (Sallie, Interview).

This perception of expertise represents the student’s comfort with approaching the mentor for advice and feedback on how to successfully approach the course and the content.

As the student progresses into the main content of the course, the mentor shifts their conversations into enabling the student’s comprehension by providing expanding ideas and
concepts, such as “This is the BIG question in online learning - no teacher preparation and an assumption that if you can teach f2f you can teach online. It simply isn’t true but what teachers need is a complex issue” (Elliott, Email). The mentor is expressing their expertise over the content and the mentoring process by providing the student with an expanded comprehension of the material and alternate perspectives on complex issues and concepts.

Finally, the mentor concludes each module with an expression of expertise that connects with the student by reviewing and critiquing their work. This expression appears to be nothing more than a review of work that lacks any content, for example the comments by the mentor regarding a student’s letter, “I can think of nothing to pick at or revisions to make. It is a good letter and might convince some teachers and parents” (Elliott, Email). This sentiment seems to be perceived by the student as well, as discovered in my face-to-face interview regarding feedback, “I would assume that the ally’s job is if there wasn’t something turned in it would be to tell you that or to say…but sometimes I would think in my head did I do everything I was supposed to do, did I turn everything in” (Sallie, Interview). The student perceived the role of the mentor and their position within the relationship created between the mentor and mentee.

While the chronological nature of the course lends to chronological expressions of expertise by the mentor, it is important to note that this pattern is not set in stone. The mentor frequently responds to learning challenges, life interventions, and other interruptions to the learning process. These responses appear to cover any content and expertise type and instead appear to be a reflection of the mentor’s expertise at assessing the student’s words and responding to them. An example of this off-the-cuff style of mentoring comes from an instance when the student expressed concern over not having any email in their inbox that morning, the mentor responded with “Oh dear . . . I fell walking to my car after class last night….Thanks for
checking email . . . Normally it would be there. And thanks for understanding” (Elliott, Email). This instance displays the mentor’s expertise at adjusting to the student and responding to their needs in addition to their expertise at maintaining the pace of the course.

Content of the Message

By examining the content of the messages sent by the mentor to the student, we begin to see some interesting patterns emerge relating to the mentor’s expression of expertise. There are three content codes used to examine the actual content of the message sent to the student, Relationship, Self-Regulation, and Content Learning. Most of the emails that contained Relationship content focused around the completion of activities or modules, with some of the emails focusing on negotiating the student’s learning or preparing for upcoming activities. The connection between Relationship content and Closure expertise reflect the ease in which the content and expression of expertise connect so naturally. The mentor is able to send a simple message such as “I love it!” (Elliott, Email) or something more complex, for example “Great choice of pictures! and you really did resist the urge to use too many words on your slides. Well done!!!!” (Elliott, Email). Regardless of the complexity of the messages, the mentor is making a simple connection between the student’s work and their relationship as mentor and mentee. Additionally, the mentor is able to express their expertise in strengthening the bond between mentor and mentee by connecting with the student’s experiences, as the mentor did when they said “Judy - This is a perfect reflection - really captures your week :-) You should copy and paste it into your wiki so that it is part of your portfolio. Oh, you already did :-)” (Elliott, Email).

When the mentor chose to address Self-Regulation in their emails, they focused mainly on negotiating the course and module challenges and occasionally addressed preparing for the
activities. While addressing Self-Regulation, the mentor is able to express their expertise in managing time, “Might not work for you but do you see the concept - spread out what feels overwhelming when tackled in one sit down session among smaller chunks of time with a sub-goal in mind?” (Elliott, Email), coordinating with the mentee, “Good - we have a plan” (Elliott, Email), and ensuring they meet their learning objectives, “Be sure to remember that this and all subsequent courses are about learning not making the PERFECT product” (Elliott, Email). The mentor is communicating their understanding of the online learning process as well as their assessment of the student’s understanding of the course and the content. The interviewee found these reminders to be particularly helpful because, “she would just kind of say ‘hey, I was wondering how that was coming along’ and she didn’t say, ‘hey, you didn’t turn that in’, but it…you know..it was kind of a gentle reminder” (Sallie, Interview). This positive reminder, instead of forceful time constraint, was seen as, “nice because even if I was working on it it was nice to know that someone was there making sure” (Sallie, Interview). The mentee perceived this feedback in a manner that encouraged hard work and dedication to the course and they recognized the positive influence and expert provides.

Finally, the mentor’s emails about Content Learning contain the majority of any expression of expertise that enables student learning. Based on the data, it appears that, for the most part, the mentor must use the content as a way to express their expertise in enabling the student’s learning. In their expression of expertise, the data shows that the mentor is capable of referring back to the student’s own experiences to connect the content to their professional practice, as is evidenced when the mentor says:

“Yeah! Remember all that ITS stuff - situated cognition - got to place new knowledge within a context - got to be a reason for it. And then got to link living and learning. So, that applies to online learning as well” (Elliott, Email).
The mentor, by way of their mentoring expertise, expresses their understanding of the content and the student to help enable the student’s learning of the course content.

**Enabling Learning and Content Knowledge Expertise**

The most interesting connection that the data shows is the inherent connection between enabling, the expert’s way of nurturing learning and providing guidance, and the mentor’s expertise about the subject matter of the course. Of the 118 instances of Content Knowledge expertise being expressed by the mentor, 108 of them were communicated as enabling learning. In other words, more often than not, the mentor expresses their expertise of the subject matter in order to help the student gain a deep and concrete understanding of the content. This subject matter expertise is expressed through the mentor’s own experiences, the mentor’s ability to redirect student learning to their own practice, and reflective questions that specifically target the student’s understanding of course content.

First, the mentor specifically targets the student’s profession and uses that to make connections to the course content: “As you design the PowerPoint, think about it as if you had the opportunity to recruit your colleagues to the "pajama brigade" movement at a morning faculty meeting. Sweet, a touch of humor, attention getting, evocative, and not very long” (Elliott, Email). The mentor is using their expertise over the content and over the mentoring process to make helpful connections for the student and bring them into the learning process, rather than being an outside observer. More importantly is the positive impact of this approach perceived by the student. Rather than feeling the expert provided no connection to their profession, the interviewee expected “someone who can kind of provide you with the connections to what might be in the future and what you could use in the future and how…and I
thought it was also someone who can also make the connections to a face-to-face class too” (Sallie, Interview). Their perception of these connections was important to their progress in the course and overall happiness with the entire program.

In addition to connecting to the student’s experiences, the mentor uses their own experience to express the course content in action for the mentee: “What worries me is that we don't always reflect on those points but just accept them. So, I added my thoughts among your thoughts in the attached” (Elliott, Email). The mentor is providing the student with an expanded perspective of the course content in addition to the thoughts of a subject matter expert. The interviewee, who noted that, “It was definitely helpful to see her perspective on it” (Sallie, Interview), perceives this expert opinion and perspective for their own benefit in the learning process.

Finally, the mentor does not allow the mentee to passively complete course content. Instead, the mentor expertly pulls in the mentee by addressing their experience and asking deep, reflective questions:

“I was wondering what YOU "really" think about online learning for elementary students since you know them so well Is it really feasible, would they really choose it, why would they choose it? How do parents convince them to be online learners and what role must the parent play to make it a learning experience? Is an online teacher for elementary students a teacher of the students or a teacher of the parents who then teach children?” (Elliott, Email).

These reflective questions display how the mentor expertly assesses the student’s background and initiates questions that require the mentee to forge connections between their beliefs and the complex concepts they are being confronted with.

Analysis
Based on the results, it appears that the mentor follows distinct patterns when expressing their expertise. The mentor, using the course structure for assistance, provides the mentee with a distinct pattern of support, both to help keep the student on pace and to respond to any difficulties the student may encounter with the content and the course. In addition to establishing a pattern of support, the mentor employs the platform of the message as a vehicle for expressing their expertise over the mentoring process. They coherently and clearly tie together messages of the relationship between student and teacher during moments of feedback and encouragement. Additionally, they use Self-Regulation messages to support the student’s progress and ensure they are meeting learning objectives. Finally, they use the Content of the course as a vehicle to expand on the student’s comprehension of activities. The Content Learning messages are also expertly used by the mentor to provide multiple ways of making connections to practical applications of the course content. The mentor not only expresses their personal experience as a way to expand on concepts, but make connections to the student’s background, asking deep, probing questions to help the mentee gain a concrete understanding of the material. These expressions are an important element of online learning and work to create a stronger connection between the content and its application for the student.

While the mentor may be capable of expressing their expertise, it may go completely unnoticed if the student is not capable of perceiving this expert perspective. Fortunately, after interviewing a mentee from a different relationship than the email data, I found that this expertise is perceived by the mentee. The interviewee, when asked if they believed their mentor was an expert, eloquently stated, “they really knew what was expected of me and how to help me get to that point” (Salli, Interview). This perception not only recognizes that the mentor must understand the course and the mentoring process, but must also be an expert in the subject matter
to aid the student’s learning process. Despite coming from a different mentoring relationship than the email data, the interviewee recognized the three elements of expert mentoring and felt that their mentor provided this expertise to help them complete the course.

**Limitations and Validity Issues**

There are a number of limitations that need to be addressed with this study. First and foremost is the relatively narrow scope of the study, focusing only on the expression of mentor expertise and the perception of that expertise in a 1:1 model of online learning. Due to the limited scope of this study, these results cannot be extended to any other model of online learning due to the different roles that online teachers play based on the model of online learning. However, the examination of this specific model of online learning was extremely in-depth, covering the span of an entire online course and all of the conversations between mentor and mentee, affording a deep and complete picture of the model.

In addition to the limited scope, the number of participants available for the study was extremely limited. Due to the limited number of available participants, I had to choose from students engaged in a course that I had previously taught, which was both beneficial and harmful to the validity of the study because of my proximity to the course. While I was already familiar with many of the activities and experiences of the mentor-mentee relationship, allowing me to understand the conversations taking place because of my own experience, it is possible that this challenges the validity because of previously held assumptions versus what actually took place. To counter this possibility, I had additional researchers working on the same project examine my data to make sure that I was coding in a responsible and coherent manner.
More troubling than the limited data sources was the mentor that I analyzed. This mentor was not only an experienced mentor with multiple years of 1:1 expertise but was also a course designer and researcher into various online learning models. While this has led to an excellent data set that clearly delineates how mentors express their expertise, it may also not be representative of the average mentor due to the subject’s years of practice. Luckily, I was able to interview a student that came from a different mentoring relationship whose perception of mentor expertise represented many of the findings from the email data. These alternate data sources help to ensure the validity of my findings of the expression of mentor expertise and how it is perceived by the mentee.

While I feel that the results have been presented in an honest and coherent manner, I would have preferred to implement a second data set to ensure the integrity of my analysis. As it stands, I am concerned that my analysis of one set of interactions, regardless of the impressive size of it, contains validity threats based on my own bias and experience in online learning. Additionally, I would like to have interviewed the mentee that was the subject of my email interactions. After coding over 270 emails, I believe that the perspective provided by the mentee might give me additional insights into to the expression and perception of expertise. In addition to the insights, I believe that this interview may clarify any confusion and inaccurate coding that resulted from a complex series of conversations in which I was an outside observer.

**Discussion and Reflection**

As this research project took place, it was amazing to see how the three coding levels began to intersect into discernable patterns. While I fully expected to see a connection between the course content and the messages being crafted, I was not prepared for the importance of
enabling expertise and subject matter expertise. This truly helped me realize how closely connected expertise in the mentoring process and expertise in the subject matter are. As this project evolved, it became apparent that a mentor in the 1:1 model of online learning might not be successful if they are competent and capable in one but not the other.

The coding system was derived from the works of many experts in the field of design study and authentic internships such as Scardamalia, Bereiter, and Schon. Their work, which focuses mainly on the relationship in the mentor process of design-based fields, such as architecture, the arts, and psychology, became the foundation for the closed-coding system used in this study. Not only did the closed coding system work to examine the expression of expertise but also seemed to reinforce the findings of these researchers and the importance of the mentoring process as well as expertise over the subject matter. This shows that developing expert mentors capable of expressing their expertise over the mentoring process and the subject matter is an important implication for online learning environments. Additionally, the perceived expertise by the student is important in their learning process, which reinforces the need of expert mentors who understand their expertise.

Regarding the connection between enabling expertise and subject matter expertise, this connection appeared to be so strong, that I am beginning to wonder if the category of enabling is too broad to be considered one coding category. I believe that further research needs to be done to explore the concept of the enabling phase of mentoring to determine if there are unique elements during this process that can be pulled out for further categorization. Additionally, it appears in the data that this is all based on the mentor’s expression of expertise, but is it possible that this is fueled by the mentee’s expressions of concern, comprehension, or submitted activities?
While reflecting on the connection between enabling and content knowledge, I began to realize that this research focuses mainly on the output of the mentor. While we can easily and readily track how a mentor expresses their expertise, does this become an acceptable method of learning how to mentor? How do we begin to examine the process of how a mentor chooses to respond to messages? In other words, we can track and understand the output, but what about the input? This is a topic that continues to confuse and befuddle, and remains a topic that is ripe for research and potential examination.

Moving forward with this study, I plan to examine a second set of data, not only to strengthen the validity of my coding but also to determine if the mentoring patterns exhibited in the first set are really a pattern or merely one possible method of mentoring among many possibilities. If the potential audience were large enough, I would extend the study to include multiple interviews as well. The drawback to such a limited pool of interview candidates leads to a limited understanding of the perception of mentor expertise, thus limiting my ability to truly understand the connection between the expression of the expertise by the mentor and how the student actually perceives those expressions.

In addition to the larger pool of candidates, this research would benefit from a re-examination of the interview questions. One of the challenges during the interviews was caused by not properly setting the tone of the interview around expertise. In the future, setting the interview around expertise rather than introducing it at the end would greatly benefit the results of the study.
References


Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. Tell me about working with an ally.
   Ask for examples and elaborations based on answers

2. How did your ally impact your ability to finish the course?
   Ask for examples and elaborations based on answers

3. How did your ally impact your ability to complete activities?
   Ask for examples and elaborations based on answers

4. What are 5 things you learned about online learning while taking this course?
   If their response focuses on themselves as online learners, listen politely and then redirect to 5 things about course content.

5. Do you consider your ally an expert?
   Ask for examples and elaborations based on answers
   If ask for a definition of expert (or what you mean by expert), put it back on them by asking them to define their notion of expert and then talk about their ally using their definition.

6. Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience with your ally?
Appendix B

Codes for Representation of Expertise in EDIT 760

Overall coding by content of message – what is the exchange “about” (Norton, 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use Code</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Personal/Interpersonal Relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR</td>
<td>Managing, Organizing, and Self-Regulating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL</td>
<td>Content learning and Conceptual Understanding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One possible representation of expertise will be that related to expertise about facilitating learning (mentoring) – knowledge and implementation of the process of mentoring in online environments. (Zachary, 2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use Code</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P-C</td>
<td>Establishing points of connection and getting to know one another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-M</td>
<td>Exchanges about learning goals, learning styles, mentoring expectations, role assumptions, learning needs, and role limitations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This might happen at the course level (P-C) and the module level (P-M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N-C</td>
<td>Negotiating is the contracting phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N-M</td>
<td>Determining details: when and how to meet, responsibilities, criteria for success, accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establishing work plan with well-defined goals, criteria for success, accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mechanisms, and dealing with stumbling blocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This might happen at the course level (N-C) and the module level (N-M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Focuses on Course Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nurtures learning and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provides guidance on learning strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provides thoughtful, timely, candid, and constructive feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-C</td>
<td>Processing learning – what worked, what didn’t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-M</td>
<td>Evaluating learning, acknowledging progress, and celebrating achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acknowledging transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This might happen at the course level (C-C) and the module level (C-M)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Representations of expertise about content and solving problems in the content domain
Use Code | Definition
--- | ---
K-I | Provides information to extend knowledge (EK) (global)
K-RE | Asks questions that prompt reflection that extends knowledge
K-P | Prompts consideration of connections to practice (solving problems in content domain) (local)
K-R | Reframing or redirecting topic, task, or problem
Appendix C

Interview Transcription

October 22, 2012

**Me:** The first thing I wanted to ask you about was... you know... tell me about your experiences working with an ally in the IOLS program.

**I:** Well, this was my first time doing an online class of that nature, having taken other online classes. I thought it was very interesting to have a 1 on 1 conversation with someone because sometimes online can make you feel like you are kind of 1 of whatever in what you are taking so I thought it was really good to have that one on one feedback in the talk with that person so I thought it was a really good experience. I enjoyed having one person who I knew I could send my information to, I knew who to turn it in to every time, I knew all those things, so I thought that was really good.

**Me:** And then was there anything in particular about that person that really helped you?

**I:** Umm... she was very approachable... ya know, as approachable though email as someone can be, but she always seemed open to answering any questions that I might have, she was very... uhhh... appropriate in the ways that she would ask questions to me to get further response or anything like that so I thought she did a good job in that.

**Me:** And when you say appropriate, what do you mean...?

**I:** Uhhh... just appropriate as far as ya know not uhh... I don't know if appropriate is the right word but I guess she would just ask questions that... got me to think further in to it than maybe I would have if those questions weren't... weren't asked. So, you know, I felt like she asked questions that really made... made me think about the assignments more than just doing them to ya know?

**Me:** Okay... and how did that make you feel, those conversations, how did they make you feel about the course content?

**I:** I think... I think it made it clearer on a... conversational base of not just... did you read the text and... answer these questions... it was more of an actual conversation of how I thought about the content... how I thought about the readings, so it made it more personable than just 'here's a list of 5 questions, answer them' kinda thing.

**Me:** Awesome... awesome... glad to hear that... and umm... Can you tell me a little bit about how your ally kind of opened up conversation with you... did you find any particular challenges and how your ally kinda approached you in those challenges?
I: Ummm… I guess… ya know… anything that when they… she would always allow me to kind of… come up with those discoveries on my own… but I think that if I wasn’t approaching or ya know, answering a question in a way that maybe they were looking for or something she would kind of give me suggestions or hints of ‘well, ya know, did you think of it this way, did you think about it in this sense’, so I think sometimes she would kind of lead me in a way that maybe, I don’t know, if the course was designed to ask specific questions, but um I think that sometimes she would lead me towards those different questions for um those things, but um, there was never ya know… it was never like I said a forceful of ‘answer this question’ but it was kinda like ‘what did you think about this, did you like this approach, did you ya li… you know, within like the class’.

Me: So if I’m understanding this correctly, she was really good at helping you reframe your perspective or helping you understand things in different ways.

I: Yeah… in a different way yeah, definitely.

Me: Okay, I just want to make sure I understand you correctly. How about your ally’s ability to… I’m sorry, how did your ally really impact your ability to complete the course as a whole?

I: Umm… I mean… really at first whenever I first opened the modules and was looking at…. it can be overwhelming when you… cuz you… ya know… in half hours time you’re looking at 5 weeks of work and it seems like you’re looking at all of this ummm… ya know when you do that first assignment, you look at all this things and umm…. I really liked… this is kind of off but… I really liked the way that they worded the modules where it wasn’t so stiff in what needed to be completed, they worded it in ways with the happy hour and things like that where it just made it a little easier to read than just a textbook thing. But… I think that she really helped me gear ummm… ya know with the things like the portfolio and all those things, and those are things that’ll carry all the way through, she really helped with suggestions on coloring and different things like that that I thought were very helpful.

Me: Do you mind giving me some specific examples of the kind of suggestions she would give towards the coloring of the portfolio or the text or the layout and things like that

I: Yeah… she would… as far as… and that was my first time working with a wiki space and with like Glogster and all those things, ya know, if I turned it in the first time she would say… you know… like I know with the Glogster poster she would say umm…. the ability to put links like within a picture, within a… and I at first didn’t’ know that I could do that or wasn’t aware of how and she would point me towards references that I could look at… there was a PowerPoint that we had to do on the one section and umm… even just things like there was a picture that had a white background to it that she suggested taking the white background out… just like little things like that that she would help me with.

Me: So… she really helped with not only the entire course as a whole but with individual activities as well right?

I: Yeah, yeah definitely.
**Me:** As you put those activities together, did… did you… did your ally… did your ally umm… really help you take the activities and… did your ally… make… help you make connections or form connections between the activities and the overall learning objectives of the course or those individual modules?

I: Yeah… I think that she definitely you know… she would constantly say you know… in the overall picture how does that make you feel about online learning as a whole… and then like… yeah… she would constantly… not even just as the last email or last module… even throughout the whole thing she would make connections to the pictures as a whole and would ask those things.

**Me:** So your mentor made a lot of connections between you as an individual and as a whole, would you say that you had difficulty stepping outside the role of teacher and doing online learning from, maybe the designer’s perspective or an administrator’s perspective or maybe the global view of online learning?

I: Umm… yeah… I think it could be… you know because any experience I’ve had in the online world is as a… as a student, so… in that sense it was kind of easy, but when you’re in that teacher mindset and teacher role umm… I think that sometimes it was maybe hard to think about… think about it in ways that you haven’t before and… umm… thinking about the design about how things are put together. The other online courses that I’ve done I’ve never really given much thought because either it was before I even considered doing online learning and doing ya know doing this program or ya know whatever it might be… umm… so… yeah, it was kind of difficult at first, but I think, like I said, with the questions that she asked and the things that she ya know, made me start to think about… think about those things….

**Me:** It sounds like questioning was a huge part of your learning

I: Yeah

**Me:** It really helped you to get questions from the mentor

I: Yeah, I think so, yeah

**Me:** Ok good… so… outta curiosity… what do you think… if you were to take an entire list of all you learned, and I’m sure it was tons over 5 weeks, but if you take a look at all the things you learned, what are 5 things umm… what are the most important 5 things you could say you learned about online learning while taking the first course.

I: Ummm… specific to the course… I think learning to… take an online course where your only interaction is with your ally, that was different for me, and it took some adjusting to, so I think learning… you know, not to have the interaction with other students in the class which is what my normal experience with online learning had been to do the discussion boards and all those things, so it was different. SO I think I learned how to… how to do that interaction one on one. I would say… uhhh… 5 things… I had never worked with Glogster before so I thought that
was… I learned a lot about that resource and have actually applied it to even my face to face class.

Me: Wow, that’s great

I: So… Yeah… and… and the kids enjoy it because it’s a different view… it’s a different way of presenting material that seems… makes them excited, especially in middle school.

Both Laughing

I: Lets see… one of the other things that I learned about… so… you’re looking for specifically for… an overall what I learned or what I learned about the content?

Me: Well… however… about the content specifically, yeah

I: Okay… umm… well I’m trying to think about something else that was something… umm… just learning… I guess sometimes you… you don’t think about the pros and the cons of things until you’re actually in them or thinking about… so I think that I learned a lot more about some of the… maybe… uhh… things that I’ll face in the future as trying to be an online teacher educator, some of the downfalls that people will put you know, so I thought that it was great to learn, like we had to do the rebuttals and things, and learn how to maybe defend online learning so I thought that was you know, something that I learned that I thought was really good and umm… let me think… about… umm… learning how to present materials in a way that our you know is like with the Glogster, with the different things, like learning how to like the Wiki space just having a way of being able to present material or collect material and have it in a way I thought was good that I learned and I don’t know how many I’ve done so far.

Me: Eh… you’ve got four [Both Laughing]… I’m gonna hold you to the five

I: Okay… hold me to the five… umm… let me think… what else did I like… the content of it that I really… ummm… sorry…

Me: No, its fine, take, take, take your time, believe me

I: He he, umm… also think, just… working… I le… I learned in the future of if I ya know creating an online course or if I have the flexibility to create a course in the way that ummm… I thought it was nice how within the module it was broken up activity one, activity two, activity three, where you could kind of, even though you had multiple things to do in a week… you could… you could… you had a clear breakdown of the things that were expected of you and I think that that was helpful as a student so I would like to do that in the future.

Me: Okay, so you felt that the structure of the course was beneficial…

I: Yeah…. Yeah
Me: Okay…Okay…umm…so as you think about learning the content and the journey that you took and the role that your ally played, would you consider your ally an expert?

I: Yeah…I think that they….they really knew what was expected of me and how to help me get to that point. Umm…I…ya know…because it was the first time that I had done that type of class I’m not really sure exactly what was expected of them…ya know, on their end or what…the only thing that I…there was never…the only downfall that I felt and I’m someone who I like….I like…you got an A on this…you got a B on this…so that was the only thing that I kind of felt that was…even though there was feedback and there was back and forth, and hey there’s a suggestion on this, I guess I never got this feeling of ‘ok, I got that perfect’, or ‘Okay, I did that’ and I can tend to be a perfectionist on certain types of things and that was the only thing that I felt was kind of…was not actually receiving grades…umm…which isn’t necessary but at the same I felt like I kind of would have liked to know along the way how I was progressing and I…and I guess its…understanding that if they’re not telling you its bad or…ya know, then you should ex…understand that its probably what they’re expecting but that was the only thing that I would say….

Me: So would you say that your mentor was not providing enough expert feedback for you?

I: That’s the thing because I don’t feel like it was that…I feel like she….she provided me with feedback and she did like I said if there were things that she thought she could suggest to make it better, she did. So there was definite feedback on…it wasn’t just ‘you turned it in great job moving on’, umm…there was definitely feedback on that part, I guess it was just…I…I…I think its just my own…like…I just like seeing that ‘you got an A on this’ or ‘this is completed’ so….and again, I would assume that the ally’s job is if there wasn’t something turned in it would be to tell you that or to say…but sometimes I would think in my head did I do everything I was supposed to do, did I turn everything in? That was…like I said…but I don’t think it was a lack of…feedback from her or a lack of expertise in….in what was going on.

Me: Okay…do you think that it would have been….more beneficial to you as a learner to get those specific types of feedback or do you think that it would be more of a personal motivator versus a course-wide structure?

I: Yeah, I don’t think…I think that its just…I’m used to…receiving grades, I don’t think that its necessary for…you know, I still learned, I still did, I still, you know, accomplished, I don’t think that it…I…I’m a pretty self-motivated person, so I don’t know that if that would be beneficial to people who aren’t as umm…you know…I want to do just because I wanted…I have a personal need to do well but I don’t that that’s always…always the case so I don’t if that specific feedback would be helpful to other people, but I don’t think its necessary, it was just a difference for me that I wasn’t used to.

Me: Okay…awesome…and you did mention that umm…your ally did a really good job as an expert at helping you progress through the course. Can you give me some specifics or some examples of how she helped you develop your ow….you said that ‘she helped me develop my own expertise’, how do you think that she did that?
I: I think that...you know...whether it was improving my ability to use the online umm...whatever you would like to call them, but like the Wiki space and all those things, even things like PowerPoint that I’ve been using or know how to use, umm...just...giving a different outlook of how, ya know, sometimes its...your way works but someone else’s way might improve what your doing and would uhhh...something that I would maybe see as, ehh, proofreading a paper, maybe in your head it sounds good or looks good, maybe, it helps to have that outside perspective and have someone ya know, give you, whereas, and this kind of goes back to, well, maybe it doesn’t need to have an A/B kind of thing because...in another course where you would just get a B...okay...it was a B oh well moving on, here, you actually got to really hear the feedback of what you were doing instead of just ‘here’s a…’, slap a grade on it, that’s what it was, not explaining why, it was that grade...so I think getting that individual, whethehr it was an overall ‘I think the project looked good, you know, whatever, these are the questions that would help you think further into it’ or whether it was a specific page on a specific thing and helping me with that, I think that, umm...it...knowing that you were going to have that one on one conversation kind of allowed you to feel more accountable for knowing the information and for, you know, reading it and having some basis on it so that you could contribute to that conversation, so I think that, you know, its kind of...online sometimes...because you don’t have that face-to-face...you don’t feel as accountable to have those things, but when you’re having that one-on-one conversation and its just between...and there’s not someone else to come in...it kind of made you read a little bit more and really try and understand...and I also think the information was relatable and was not that dry textbook reading that made you not want to read it or not understand it and...and...its online reading, which I thought was good that, you know, you’re using a resource that maybe your kids would have to use in the future, and that’s why I though that made it...made it good too.

Me: Great...and were there any particular moments that maybe you were challenged that your ally helped you work through or any difficulties in the structure of online learning or the material itself?

I: Well...I will say I really...something that helped me outside of maybe just helping with the assignment...umm...I’m currently taking four classes, ummm...so, yeah...heheh...while working full time and doing all this, so umm...I had actually approached her about just...tim...not time management but if she had any suggestions for ways that I could make the most of my time within the course and still be able to get all of the assignments done and we kind of did that...I mean there already was an assignment that made you look through every module and piece out how much time you’re going to take on everything and when you plan to do it and that was good that the course actually was designed in a way that you had to do that too, but she really...umm...you know...she gave me suggestions on...ya know she used post-it notes and does things...she takes a post-it note away when she’s done something and...umm...so I thought that was, ya know, I wa...I felt like I could ask her questions outside of even what maybe the topic of the actual class itself.

Me: So you were able to approach her about any challenges you had, not just course specific?

I: Within...yeah...yeah, so I was able to talk with her about that and I thought that you know she did a good...she was very friendly and open to answering those questions even though
EXAMINING MENTOR EXPERTISE IN PROBLEM-BASED ONLINE

she…wasn’t probably part of her job description or you know, whatever, she didn’t have to answer those questions but she was still willing to work with me on that…and even if you know the dates that I had set out ahead of time, and we all know, ya know, schedules get changed and things happen, umm…if I was…not behind as in not turned in by the due date, but maybe if I said I was gonna do it on Friday and its Sunday, even she would just kind of say ‘hey, I was wondering how that was coming along’ and she didn’t say, ‘hey, you didn’t turn that in’, but it…you know…it was kind of a gentle reminder of ‘hey are you working towards it so you don’t get bombarded on Thursday evening when everything is due’ so I though that she did a good job.

Me: How did those reminders make you feel?

I: I mean I though that they…I knew that she was doing them to make sure that I did it, but I mean it was nice because even if I was working on it it was nice to know that someone was there making sure that I…and kinda guiding me along and not letting me just get to Thursday at midnight and saying ‘oh well, you didn’t turn anything in’, I mean…so it was…it was nice that she did that.

Me: Great…that’s excellent. And umm…are there any specific suggestions about time management that you actually ended up incorporating or was it just kind of helpful to see her perspective?

I: It was definitely helpful to see her perspective on it. I think that in the future it definitely helps to break it apart and to do it you know…one activity at a time and not try and sit down and do all four, five, however many activities in one sitting, because then it gets overwhelming and its nice…ummm…I really li…think its good that they set that first module as a really take a look at everything that you have to do and like I said, it can be a little overwhelming when you start looking at everything you have to do, but I think that it was helpful to really…because…being able to see the entire course design right away…ummm…because I’ve taken classes where you only see one module at a time and the next module pop up once the last one was done, this was I could say ‘well I Know I’m going out of town this week so I know this, this, and this is required’, so I can work ahead for that or…you know…and being able to do that I think it is a good key to doing well in the course.

Me: Awesome…awesome…and…and…is there anything else you’d like to add about the experience of having a learning ally?

I: No…I just…it was definitely a different…I don’t know how many courses are built that way and how…I was definitely different at first and it took a while to get adjusted to just, you know, and I….in the course that I am taking now where you do interact with other students I discussed how with them how at first its weird…it’s weird to not have any other interactions or know how other students are feeling about the course or even know that other students exist in the course…you don’t…you really don’t know…I mean, there could 50 people taking it, there could be five, you don’t really know, but I think overall once you get adjusted to that difference, I thought it was a really cool of…of doing an online course and I enjoyed it…that’s why I thought it was nice.
Me: Are there any specific elements of having that learning ally that you enjoyed?

I: Like I said, having that feedback in knowing how you are doing along the way as far as...you know...was your...was your Glogster poster...was it...was it where it needs to be, I think having, like I said, like one person that you know that you could go to as far as answers and questions of things that you could have and I think them getting...getting you to think beyond what you might just...submitting a poster and that being the end of it...I think that additional conversation that you could have with them was beneficial...umm...and I and I think that...I mean yeah, just having that person [Inaudible Interuption]...

Me: Ummm...I totally lost my train of thought...ummm...yeah...okay...and I guess the last question I have for you is how would you define the concept of an expert?

I: Um...someone that can provide umm....not only the obvious but kind of get you to think beyond textbook, think beyond, and even just an expert...someone...I thought it was nice where the connections were made to not only just...you didn’t feel like you were in a course to take a course to learn the material that was supposed to be...you felt like you were learning things that you could apply in the future and things that, you know, the goal is if I teach an online class, can I take these concepts and, so, someone who can kind of provide you with the connections to what might be in the future and what you could use in the future and how...and I thought it was also someone who can also make the connections to a face-to-face class too. I mean, in reality I would assume that are doing this program are a face-to-face teacher at this point or are right now, so, even being able to use, you know, how can I connect these online things to a face-to-face class too would be beneficial in the future so I think someone who could, you know, help you with that and, knowing both the good and the bad, and how to fix...maybe, how to fix the bad and how we can approach the bad to make it good in the future and those types of things I think would make a good person.
## Email Data Coded by Chronological Order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Message Quote</th>
<th>Content of Message</th>
<th>Mentoring &amp; Facilitating</th>
<th>Content Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email-01</td>
<td>This first course is introductory - it introduces all the issues and hopefully gets you into the online learning groove. Soon after you begin the course, there is an activity to help you get organized and establish a learning schedule. As for me, I generally try to target 10 am to noon as my mentoring hours although one never knows when I might answer an email. So, anything you send by 10 am will get answered that day. If you send something after noon, I don't guarantee an answer until the next morning. I take Sundays off. (usually, sometimes) It begins with a challenge (duh :-)) and moves on to meeting the challenge. Once you have read the opening page, let me know what you think. I will probably ask lots of &quot;what do you think&quot; questions - not just because I am your ally but because I am really curious about what you have to say and what you are thinking about these topics. Online learning is truly an adventure for all of us!! Be SURE to let me know of any questions or problems. Reminds me how important teaching students the conventions of each and every medium available to them. I remember in grade school (100 years ago) a unit on using the telephone. It seems these days we just assume kids will use and don't think about the unique conventions of each. We only focus on the conventions of print. I only sent the one email :-) was waiting to hear from you :-). What did you think about the opening challenge? What is your challenge? Does it have roots in reality, in anything you have done or read or learned, and/or does it seem like a good</td>
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<td>P-C</td>
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way to structure a course?

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Email-03
Return to the opening page for the course and reread it. Seems to me it asks you to take on a role and push an agenda.

Can you figure it out? Why does the course start that way? What can you predict for activities in the course?

Email-03
Think authentic problem and teacher leadership. Then think about the role that the pajama brigade is suggesting might be yours and what leadership goal the opening challenge is suggesting. And, if all else fails, email and we can set up a time to talk.

Email-04
Different being the mentee and not the mentor, huh? How would explain the differences?

Email-05
You have done a great job of scouring the course to identify the activities. But you have simply put in the "givens" - the start and stop of each week :-) There is no value added here, and it reads like "you will get around to activities as time suits you." The problem is that, in a busy week, the time just slips away. That is why so many online learners do not succeed.

Email-06
When you register for a face to face class or a professional development workshop or whatever, there is a specified time to show up. So, you planned, for instance, when you were an ITSer to be in class every Thursday from 4:30 to 9:30 pm. When I check out your learning schedule, I have no idea (and neither do you :-) ) when you will have time to read, to create, to think, to answer emails, to reflect.

Email-06
So, I did a schedule for the first week as if I was a student in EDIT 760. Check out the attached - of course it fits my life so would not work for you at all - and redo a plan that works for you and that you could identify times for "class" on your calendar :-)

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SR N-M
CL E K-RE
CL E K-I
CL E K-RE
SR N-C
SR N-C K-R
SR P-M K-P
Yeah! Remember all that ITS stuff - situated cognition - got to place new knowledge within a context - got to be a reason for it. And then got to bring living and learning. So, that applies to online learning as well.

Taking time to really "get" and think about the opening challenge is really important, and how it all goes together.

Email-07

It is also a great way to see how an online course might be organized and created.

Email-07

I am very familiar with it and, like many in the education field, have HUGE concerns. As you step into online learning, it is really important to hang on to what you have learned about good learning and good design (ITS) and not to get sidetracked by the flash of the technology.

Email-08

After I send this email, I am going to forward a blog that captures many of the problems of the Khan Academy approach. I was disappointed that the 60 Minutes was all positive and did not acknowledge the issues.

Email-08

Here is a pretty good summary of the critiques of the Khan Academy.

Email-09

Just keep in mind - the most important thing is to make CONNECTIONS with what you know!!!!!

Email-10

Looks wonderful and the picture on the home page is WONDERFUL and really cute. So you

Email-11

If across the top, you go to users and give me "writer" rights I might be able to help create stuff but the webinar is a perfect way to take charge of your learning!!!!!

Email-11

I made comments on the FrontPage and the EDIT 760 page. Check them out and let me know what you think

Email-12

I think you did an good and honest job of talking to yourself about strengths and challenges. It would be really cool if you would step back and think about this survey in an email reflection

Email-13
What aspects are you looking forward to? What do you think will be challenging? What strategies will you use to ensure your success? Also, wondering how thinking about your own strengths and challenges influences your thinking about teaching online - what you need to do, etc and about young learners as online learners

Of course, sharing that reflection and talking together about it will end up being the reflection you post about the artifact in your portfolio wiki

Yeah - getting to discuss individually is one of the joys of online learning - learning to delay conversations in a more reflective manner is a learned skill. And, you have learned one of the essential elements of online learning with the wiki - responsibility for learning and problem-solving shifts from the "teacher" to the learner

In online learning, you have to drive and manage and figure out as the lead learner rather than having the "teacher" tell you everything and lead step by step

Of course, it also says something about the design of online learning - the designer has to scaffold so the learner can take charge of their learning

Hurray!!!! This is much better

Now, you have a schedule and a contract of sorts with yourself. Can't think of a better way to tackle the time management/self-regulation problem that plagues so many online learners

You did NOT offend!!!! I did but in the examples as if it was my life . . . Would not presume to organize yours

We are on schedule as this week ends at 11:59 tonight

Oh dear . . . I fell walking to my car after class last night….Thanks for checking email . . . Normally it would be there. And thanks for understanding Congratulations!!!!! You just successfully finished the first module of your first online class in the IOLS program!!!!!!

Well done.
It is time to really get started promoting online learning in your school community and recruit a cadre of colleagues to get the Pajama Brigade on the move!

To be a teacher leader is to first be very knowledgeable about that which you are promoting! Opinion, belief, and enthusiasm are never enough - concrete evidence and powerful information are central. So, in this module (2), what kind of knowledge will you be building? Recognizing that pattern really helps know how what you will be doing next. Can you identify the pattern?

And, does that pattern remind you of anything you might have learned in ITS? I loved your reflection on patience! I had never really thought of that as an online learning attribute, but I think you hit the nail on the head.

It makes me wonder - if you were trying to figure out wikis because you were intrigued by the tool (say someone emailed or told you about them and you were curious) as opposed to being asked to use the tool in a specific way for a class, would you have been as frustrated. That is, I am wondering . . . when someone chooses to learn the tool on their own vs being asked to use the tool as part of an assignment . . . would patience be such an issue.

Hmmm . . . does that say something that we should pay attention to as an online designer and, in fact, a face to face designer as well?

Yeah - for some reason PBWorks just doesn't like me this morning.

Ah, bet they are having server problems. Be interesting to see what they have to say I posted a ridiculous and stupid and trivial comment on the EDIT 760 page.

The good news - it worked just fine!!!!
Email-25 Get up and go do something fun! Lots of emails from me in the am :-) R
Learned a lot today? Saw you met iNACOL - a fine organization and central to online learning - not sure I agree with all their policies but a good group. Curious about the webinar :-) R P-M
The joy of a wiki is that you have complete control. You can open it completely to anyone or maintain control and show only whomever you want. SR N-M
Email-26 As it evolves, it will be interesting to see what comments she makes R P-C
Email-27 This is sooooooooo full of ideas, I am going to insert comments in all CAPS so you can see my comments versus yours. CL C-M
Email-27 IT MAKES ME THINK OF INSTRUCTION FOR ALL LEARNERS - HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO MAKE OUR GOALS STUDENTS' GOALS. THEN THEY "WANT" TO FIGURE THINGS OUT. CL E K-I
Email-27 SO, CREATING A WIKI PORTFOLIO WAS OUR GOAL FOR LEARNERS WHEN WE DESIGNED THE CLASS . . . WE TRIED TO MAKE IT YOURS CL E K-R
Email-27 IT POINTS OUT HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO ENGAGE YOUNG LEARNERS IN WAYS THAT "TRICK" THEM INTO BUYING INTO OUR GOALS. CL E K-P
Email-27 IS THERE A DIFFERENCE. IF I AM THE DESIGNER IT IS UP TO ME TO DETERMINE "HOW THE COURSE IS BEING DESIGNED. CL E K-RE
Email-27 WE CAN STILL BOUNCE IDEAS JUST GET A TIME DELAY IN BACK AND FORTH - AND NOW WE ARE BACK TO LEARNING A NEW KIND OF PATIENCE CL E K-P
Email-28 Good sluething . . . sent info out to everyone R
Email-29 I am following the wiki carefully. SR N-C
Email-30 Lots of thoughts in your happy hour summary. I think you caught the important trends. R C-M
Email-30 What worries me is that we don't always reflect on those points but just accept them. So, I added my thoughts among your thoughts in the attached. CL E K-I
Now, it is time to try and capture all the positive points about online learning in a captivating poster that might make someone stop and think about joining up.

So, flexibility is one of the things that I am always attracted to - not for it's own sake - but because it allows learners of all ages and parents for young learners to have choice and input into their educational experience.

So, for instance, we worked in our virtual high school with a group of three girls who were asked to participate with the National Ballet. They needed to leave school at lunch time to commute to DC. They were not exempt from the requirements for all students but did have the choice to complete some of them in the evening and on weekends. That way they could be part of the National Ballet AND high school students :-(

So, my poster might have an image like the attached (although it is a bit too messy and cluttered) with a sentence capturing the possibility attached.

What points will your poster target and what visual images might get you started?

This might be the week that you need to send a "Dear Ally" email - saying you need to rob Peter to pay Paul.

As you work toward a Glogster portfolio, it is important to remember it is an electronic, multimedia poster so you can put in links to music, video, etc etc etc. Given that . . . DEAPR is very important.

What are the five or whatever main points you want to make with your design? At another time, you can target one point - find an image, find a link, whatever - Encode. Set aside those Encoded resources. Move on another time to another point - find stuff set aside - more Encoding. And so forth. Then, a time to ASSEMBLE in Glogster in a "first draft" way - or just for one of the points. Might even share (Publish) for feedback before moving on to another point and Re

Does that make sense - a way to use smaller, available bits of time

Of course, time is granted. It is the one gift I can give
Everyone works differently and distributes their
time differently so not
sure I have tons of advice. But a few thoughts
Might not work for you but do you see the concept
- spread out what feels overwhelming when
tackled in one sit down session among smaller
chunks of time with a sub-goal in mind?
Be sure to remember that this and all subsequent
courses are about learning not making the
PERFECT product.
Embrace the notion that life happens and
sometimes without advance notice. So your
learning schedule for this week might have to be
different from last week
It is actually what authentic problems are all about
- linking living and learning - helping students
develop goals - the better the authentic problem
the better the connection between their goals and
yours
We have to design so they coincide - they may not
look the same on the surface but below they are. I
may convince a group to solve the recycling
problem at my school. As they do it, they just
happen to learn to write a business plan, learn
about renewable, reusable etc resources. Miracle -
my goal and their goal coincide
You hit the nail on the head!!!!!!
Piece by piece and each and every puzzle will
come together!!!! Great motto
to live by!
Great insights! You have figured out that online
learning is not a “thing.” It is a concept for a whole
bunch of things from fully online to a 100 versions
of blended
It's like word processors - they might be Office
Word, Word Perfect, Pages for the iPad - all
different versions of writing and communicating
interestingly enough, may of the considerations
that go into it are the same as integrating any
technology - where is it best used, what
affordances are possible and when and where are
they appropriate
I think I am all caught up with you so fire away
with the next
Looking forward to what you invent. I know - blended - is one of your points on your poster. Wondering what image and words and whatever you will use.

No need to respond to every email - just the ones that spark thoughts OR have a question.

Good advice to self at end of your message - learning is the goal not perfection.

She sounds like a genius. I think your life is going to be changed dramatically.

I am perfectly amenable to having you share your design plan and the images, links, etc you planned to use. From those we can talk without a finished Glog. No need to angst over Glogster and have the tool get in the way of learning!!!!!!!

This is very clever and creative. I find it very evocative and I really appreciate the blending together to get the classroom of the world.

It will come back in Module 4 and perhaps then you can find a way to integrate links, audio, video, etc.

If that I might add is that you have really done a text/image poster and not a multimedia poster. Now, that you have learned a bit about all the great things about online learning it is time to take time for a reality check. Time to look at some of the challenges and potential reasons not everyone has jumped on the bandwagon.

It is a great design plan and it shows that you wanted to move toward a multimedia type poster.

I agree that the very best thing to do now is to step away from Glogster and come back another time fresh and refreshed. I saw the one you did manage to create and your have done REALLY GOOD!

Hurray! Getting on with business and module 3 is EXACTLY what you need to be doing!!!! Looking forward to hearing what you think about the challenges.
EXAMINING MENTOR EXPERTISE IN PROBLEM-BASED ONLINE

Email-45
Haven't heard from you in ages. Don't give up! Don't stop now! Don't let frustration and other things be an excuse.
You can do it! Don't fret about large chunks of working time - break things into pieces - carry a print out of one article at a time - read and underline in between things This module isn't as complex and no new technology to master!
Think what you will have learned about being an online learner when you struggle through successfully!
Thanks for sharing! I will be around all weekend and will watch email for notes from you.

Email-46
Judy - This is a perfect reflection - really captures your week :-) You should copy and paste it into your wiki so that it is part of your portfolio. Oh, you already did :-)
You have certainly captured/experienced the challenges of online learning. Part of it may be the model - the mentor/mentee model. It may be that the more collaborative model will be more to your "collaborating" style. Of course, you "have" to stay with the group. Trade offs all around - more collaboration and shared problem-solving, loss of flexibility. It will be very interesting to see how a different model feels to you.
This module focuses on some of the challenges of online learning and teaching online. Looking forward to the next post. As you read and identify the challenges, think about how you might respond to a parent or colleague or administrator who might point to these concerns. How would you turn the negative into a positive.
Thinking we should talk about stuff and what gets posted is the "best and final" version Equally important, they will ALWAYS throw the obstacles at you - that's what they hear loudest when they aren't ready to change. Counter arguments are essential.
I love it!
I always say "You have to know what the enemy's arguments are so you can advance the war effort." Or, in other words, forewarned leads to prepared. That's what module 3 is about - knowing where the naysayers are and getting prepared to battle them.

Email-49
Good - we have a plan
Ppt is part of Microsoft Office; it is not part of Windows. I suspect you have PowerPoint but cannot be sure.

Email-50
Hurray! Glad you found it - would be terrible if that were to stall your progress
Judy - These are BRILLIANT!!!! I think you captured the questions I most often get asked - the ones everyone hears about and then throws in our faces. Also, what a great job answering these challenges!!!!

Email-51
Did you look through the program menu and then Office?

Email-52
As you get more comfortable with your knowledge, you can find ways to say this in less academic terms. In fact, the pictures you choose for your Zen PowerPoint presentation can lighten things up while you say more "academic" or "professional" things.

Email-53
As you design the PowerPoint, think about it as if you had the opportunity to recruit your colleagues to the "pajama brigade" movement at a morning faculty meeting. Sweet, a touch of humor, attention getting, evocative, and not very long

Email-54
Hurray! I am glad that we have started moving forward again!!!! I look forward to your PowerPoint - remember the Zen principles and don't get over wordy. Save all that for the "speaker's notes"

Email-55
Great choice of pictures! and you really did resist the urge to use too many words on your slides.

Well done!!!!!
I am wondering if your speaker's comments are too informal and lacking in concrete information. People really want more than opinion. So, for instance, on the last slide - your audience would be much more convinced if you used some statistics or some concrete evidence.

So, for that slide, my speaker's notes might read:
1. Online learning at the K-12 level grows every year by year. 2. iNacol's Keeping Pace reports that by late 2011, online and blended learning opportunities exist for at least some students in all 50 states. 3. Full-time, multi-district schools enrolled about 250,000 students in SY 2010-11, an annual increase of 25%. 4. The question is no longer whether or not online learning should occur, but rather how it is implemented. 5. Don't get left behind - join us in the Pajama Brigade.

How about you pick just one other slide and email how you would add something concrete to the speaker notes?

I can guess how frustrating to you not to get comments but it is frustrating for me too. Really am trying to send. Maybe this will work! Let me know

Guess it's like taking your class to the lab only to discover the Internet is out for the day. Or having the light bulb go out on the overhead projector

But with online learning it seems to be a bigger problem with a higher learning curve. Guess one solution is like in face to face - have a back up plan

You are right - it is a bit brief but perhaps the artifacts provide the meat

As you think forwaqrd to the end of course grand synthesis essay, you will need to be a little less global and a bit more reflective and scholarly adding just a bit of concrete content. When you get to that grand synthesis you won't have artifacts with the details to rely on in the same way
It's a bit like the pajama brigade may have comfort and informality in our personal spaces but our public presentation of self has to be "professional" even when it is virtual.

Congratulations on bringing Module 3 to closure (just one little response to send :-)

Now, just on to module 4 - I get the hint for vgood that you have already started!!!!!! In this module, try to step into the shoes of today's K-12 students who are choosing and/or using online learning. What drives them? Why are they choosing and using? How are they choosing and using? As a classroom teacher, you have a really good idea about the basics of your class because you know the community, may have worked with older siblings, have years of experience. None of that is true for your future online students Hmmm . . . how will you get to know them?

DRA class sounds boooorrrrrrrring. Sorry you have to do it; glad I don't I can see where my email comments might have been confusing. It is an art - but worth working to develop - to be able to use humor to break a too academic discussion.

Yes, when we talk to others, we need to be sure that our argument is based on more than opinion or wishful thinking - our talks need to be grounded in concrete and factual information well organized the way to keep people's attention is to keep the concrete and factual chunked with breaks for humor or stories or things like that.

Hurray! Thoughts on articles. Did you learn about online students that caught your attention :-) What do you have to keep in mind that you had not thought about before :-).

I think you will enjoy writing the personas - creative writing is a different voice than convincing colleagues with a professional voice
Do you see how leadership requires adopting a "professional" way of speaking that keeps things light and not overbearing but requires professional argumentation and support?

In online environments, here is what I might do: upon first contact with student, discuss the technology issues. Make sure everyone has what they need. Then exchange contacts for a variety of technology challenges. Share telephone numbers - multiple if have them. This is a great way to contact when not responding to email because procrastinating as well as when email goes down. For K-12 parents' numbers are a good idea as well. Provide backup email addresses to each other.

Get parents' emails.

Can you think of others?

Judy - you received a message today from Ethan Brooks announcing the beginning of the second course. This course is a collaborative course so it needs to take PRIORITY over finishing modules 4 and 5.

I am not panicked about finishing exactly on time. It is better to move forward with the group in 761. Mr. Brooks will keep you busy and it will be a fun experience to work with people you will meet only virtually.

I learned through our virtual high school program that there are as many reasons for taking an online course as there are students taking them. I was constantly amazed at the array of reasons and how personal they were.

Yes - many said getting ahead but that was not the real reason - it was getting ahead so they could . . . .
When it comes to the younger online learners - elementary school - I think you might have to think about the reasons parents put their children in online schools and that is a cluster of motivations I know very little about.

Getting to know your online students is a huge challenge! We will tackle that a bit more when we get to EDIT 764.

I am resisting answering too many of these so you don't get distracted from EDIT 761 - since that is group based it is a must keep up. If I start to overcrowd your email, just scream and I will stop.

When they talk about standards, they are saying that course content must be aligned with and meet the curriculum standards for the state. So, in VA, for example, they want the courses to reflect appropriate SOLS. This is the BIG question in online learning - no teacher preparation and an assumption that if you can teach f2f you can teach online. It simply isn't true but what teachers need is a complex issue. Some say teacher training for online should be part of preservice, basic licensure. I say NOT. Preservice is so crowded and complex it is best to stay focused. That said, I think preparation for online should be at the inservice level - for those that already know about teaching content and teaching kids. Preparation should focus on what is unique to online - facilitating, establishing presence, the tools, and design.

Who and what grade and subjects are appropriate for online is still a very open question. What I do know is that if done well by a skilled ONLINE teacher teacher-student and student-student interactions can be very robust and appropriate. But that is only in the hands of a really skilled teacher.

Definitive guidelines are not available - we still have a lot to learn. Trying it is one of the best ways.
In the programs we created, we have set up an intro module. Then we allow students to decide if they are going on based on what they learn in the intro module. Many times high school kids choose not to.

**Email 65**

Another astute observation! This is what scares me with the new VA law that all high school students must take at least one online course. I have told several superintendents that if they don't prepare students by doing blended things throughout the curriculum, this is going to be their nightmare. There is an important role for teachers and we need to be sure that policy does not pursue the thought that they can save money by eliminating teachers. I vote for models with LOTS of teacher involvement not computer managed instruction!!!!

**Email 65**

Well done! I have made some comments in the attached

**Email 66**

Was a bit surprised that your personas were mostly focused on older learners What about the gifted 2nd grader who needs challenge? What about the home schooled elementary student? What about the student whose parent is the one motivated to do online learning - not the student?

It would have been fun to read and (maybe for you) to try writing about these students just to begin thinking about the kinds of children you may be teaching/designing for

**Email 67**

And now you are beginning to think about the affordances of various models. So, collaborative is good for you - when might it not be good for you? What kinds of learners would find it a problem?

**Email 68**

Each and every model has possibilities for learners and constraints for learners. Important to know what they are for each model

**Email 69**

Making sure there is something in your inbox :-) I like your red comments - it is the back and forth from which insights and sometimes wisdom arises.
I have attached an article that Dawn and I had published this past summer in one of the ISTE research journals. It is where much of my thinking about pre-service vs in-service teacher preparation for online environments comes. Not so much improving the ones you have done but considering what online learner personas might be like to the kinds of students you are likely to be targeting/working with - the elementary view.

It's that connection to practice thing as opposed to just repurposing what you have read. I can think of nothing to pick at or revisions to make. It is a good letter and might convince some teachers and parents. Your "daughter" has written what the parents and teacher might want to hear, but I doubt that is the reasoning that the "daughter" would really say. She would want the opportunity for a bunch of other reasons - all having to do with Net Gen characteristics.

The second reason I am left uncomfortable is that this might be what a traditional teacher and/or parent wants to hear but it does not mention all the genuine affordances of online learning as an innovation - choice, flexibility, interactivity, personalization, engagement, access to information, access to alternative learning tools like games, etc. These are the things that should be driving our decision to use online learning. So, don't do anything to the letter - consider it finished!!!! But, take a little time to ponder as I am doing the real possibilities and reasons for going online and the possibility that we are shoe-horning an innovation into an old shoe.

Oh dear . . . I goofed somehow in my communication. The word "disturbing" was unfortunate since I was not disturbed by your work but by my own lack of knowledge and a huge blank in the literature.
We know a great deal about high school students - they are easy to survey
plus I have my own experiences having been Director of The Online Academy
for 7 years. We know hs students choose online learning to get ahead, to
offload requirements so they can take more electives, because they don’t
like a f2f teacher, because they have other things that interfere with
school attendance like sports, ballet, etc, and
because it is an option for
quick credit recovery, homebound, or expulsion.

Now, I am personally plagued because I do not understand why elementary students would choose online learning I am not sure they would - I think they are too social; their curriculum is not credit driven, etc etc etc - the traditional motivators don’t apply to them I don’t think - maybe I am wrong. I wonder if elementary students would ever choose online - I have a feeling most online students are there because of their parents - that the motivation for online learning is parents' not students'. I even wonder if they could write a letter requesting the opportunity to learn online. They might say it will help them read and write but I suspect it would be words we have put in their mouths not a real reflection we have put in their mouths not a real reflection of what they are thinking.

I am sooooooooooo sorry my message came across as concern with your letter. It was an expression of my own frustration with my lack of understanding.

I was wondering what YOU "really" think about online learning for elementary students since you know them so well Is it really feasible, would they really choose it, why would they choose it? How do parents convince them to be online learners and what role must the parent play to make it a learning experience? Is an online teacher for elementary students a teacher of the students or a teacher of the parents who then teach children?
Email Data Sorted by Content of Message

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Message Quote</th>
<th>Content of Message</th>
<th>Mentoring &amp; Facilitating</th>
<th>Content Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reminds me how important teaching students the conventions of each and every</td>
<td>CL</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>K-P</td>
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<tr>
<td>medium available to them. I remember in grade school (100 years ago) a unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>on using the telephone. It seems these days we just assume kids will use</td>
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<td>and don't think about the unique conventions of each. We only focus on the</td>
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<tr>
<td>conventions of print. I only sent the one email :-) was waiting to hear</td>
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<td>from you :-(. What did you think about the opening challenge? What is your</td>
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<tr>
<td>challenge? Does it have roots in reality, in anything you have done or read</td>
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<tr>
<td>or learned, and/or does it seem like a good way to structure a course?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can you figure it out? Why does the course start that way? What can you</td>
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<tr>
<td>predict for activities in the course? Think authentic problem and teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>leadership. Then think about the role that the pajama brigade is suggesting</td>
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<tr>
<td>might be yours and what leadership goal the opening challenge is suggesting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>And, if all else fails, email and we can set up a time to talk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Different being the mentee and not the mentor, huh? How would explain the</td>
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<tr>
<td>differences? Yeah! Remember all that ITS stuff - situated cognition - got</td>
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<tr>
<td>to place new knowledge within a context - got to be a reason for it. And</td>
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<tr>
<td>then got to link living and learning. So, that applies to online learning</td>
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<td>as well. Taking time to really &quot;get&quot; and think about the opening challenge</td>
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<tr>
<td>is really important to understanding what you will be learning, why it</td>
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<tr>
<td>might be important, and how it all goes together. It is also a great way</td>
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<tr>
<td>to see how an online course might be organized and created. I am very</td>
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<tr>
<td>familiar with it and, like many in the education field, have HUGE concerns.</td>
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</table>
As you step into online learning, it is really important to hang on to what you have learned about good learning and good design (ITS) and not to get sidetracked by the flash of the technology.

After I send this email, I am going to forward a blog that captures many of the problems of the Khan Academy approach. I was disappointed that the 60 Minutes was all positive and did not acknowledge the issues.

Here is a pretty good summary of the critiques of the Khan Academy:

I think you did an good and honest job of talking to yourself about strengths and challenges. It would be really cool if you would step back and think about this survey in an email reflection.

What aspects are you looking forward too? What do you think will be challenging? What strategies will you use to ensure your success? Also, wondering how thinking about your own strengths and challenges influences your thinking about teaching online - what you need to do, etc and about teaching young learners as online learners.

Yeah - getting to discuss individually is one of the joys of online learning - learning to delay conversations in a more reflective manner is a learned skill. And, you have learned one of the essential elements of online learning with the wiki - responsibility for learning and problem-solving shifts from the "teacher" to the learner.

In online learning, you have to drive and manage and figure out as the lead learner rather than having the "teacher" tell you everything and lead step by step.

Of course, it also says something about the design of online learning - the designer has to scaffold so the learner can take charge of their learning.

To be a teacher leader is to first be very knowledgeable about that which you are promoting! Opinion, belief, and enthusiasm are never enough - concrete evidence and powerful information are central.

So, in this module (2), what kind of knowledge will you be building?

And, does that pattern remind you of anything you might have learned in ITS?

I loved your reflection on patience! I had never really thought of that as an online learning attribute, but I think you hit the nail on the head.
It makes me wonder - if you were trying to figure out wikis because you were intrigued by the tool (say someone emailed or told you about them and you were curious) as opposed to being asked to use the tool in a specific way for a class, would you have been as frustrated. That is, I am wondering . . .

. when someone chooses to learn the tool on their own vs being asked to use the tool as part of an assignment . . . would patience be such an issue.

Hmmm . . . does that say something that we should pay attention to as an online designer and, in fact, a face to face designer as well? This is sooooooooooooo full of ideas, I am going to insert comments in all CAPS so you can see my comments versus yours.

IT MAKES ME THINK OF INSTRUCTION FOR ALL LEARNERS - HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO MAKE OUR GOALS STUDENTS' GOALS. THEN THEY "WANT" TO FIGURE THINGS OUT.

SO, CREATING A WIKI PORTFOLIO WAS OUR GOAL FOR LEARNERS WHEN WE DESIGNED THE CLASS . . . WE TRIED TO MAKE IT YOURS IT POINTS OUT HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO ENGAGE YOUNG LEARNERS IN WAYS THAT "TRICK" THEM INTO BUYING INTO OUR GOALS. IS THERE A DIFFERENCE. IF I AM THE DESIGNER IT IS UP TO ME TO DETERMINE "HOW THE COURSE IS BEING DESIGNED.

WE CAN STILL BOUNCE IDEAS JUST GET A TIME DELAY IN BACK AND FORTH - AND NOW WE ARE BACK TO LEARNING A NEW KIND OF PATIENCE

What worries me is that we don't always reflect on those points but just accept them. So, I added my thoughts among your thoughts in the attached.

So, flexibility is one of the things that I am always attracted to - not for it's own sake - but because it allows learners of all ages and parents for young learners to have choice and input into their educational experience.
So, for instance, we worked in our virtual high school with a group of three girls who were asked to participate with the National Ballet. They needed to leave school at lunch time to commute to DC. They were not exempt from the requirements for all students but did have the choice to complete some of them in the evening and on weekends. That way they could be part of the National Ballet AND high school students. So, my poster might have an image like the attached (although it is a bit too messy and cluttered) with a sentence capturing the possibility.

What points will your poster target and what visual images might get you started?

As you work toward a Glogster portfolio, it is important to remember it is an electronic, multimedia poster so you can put in links to music, video, etc etc etc. Given that . . .

DEAPR is very important.

What are the five or whatever main points you want to make with your design? At another time, you can target one point - find an image, find a link, whatever - Encode. Set aside those Encoded resources. Move on another time to another point - find stuff set aside - more Encoding. And so forth. Then, a time to ASSEMBLE in Glogster in a "first draft" way - or just for one of the points. Might even share (Publish) for feedback before moving on to another point and Re

It is actually what authentic problems are all about - linking living and learning - helping students develop goals - the better the authentic problem the better the connection between their goals and yours.

We have to design so they coincide - they may not look the same on the surface but below they are. I may convince a group to solve the recycling problem at my school. As they do it, they just happen to learn to write a business plan, learn about renewable, reusable etc resources. Miracle - my goal and their goal coincide.

It's like word processors - they might be Office Word, Word Perfect, Pages for the iPad - all different versions of writing and communicating interestingly enough, may of the considerations that go into it are the same as integrating any technology - where is it best used, what affordances are possible and when and where are they appropriate.

ll that I might add is that you have really done a text/image poster and not a multimedia poster.
As you read and identify the challenges, think about how you might respond to a parent or colleague or administrator who might point to these concerns. How would you turn the negative into a positive.

Equally important, they will ALWAYS throw the obstacles at you - that's what they hear loudest when they aren't ready to change. Counter arguments are essential. I always say "You have to know what the enemy's arguments are so you can advance the war effort." Or, in other words, forewarned leads to prepared

That's what module 3 is about - knowing where the naysayers are and getting prepared to battle them

As you get more comfortable with your knowledge, you can find ways to say this in less academic terms. In fact, the pictures you choose for your Zen PowerPoint presentation can lighten things up while you say more "academic" or "professional" things.

As you design the PowerPoint, think about it as if you had the opportunity to recruit your colleagues to the "pajama brigade" movement at a morning faculty meeting. Sweet, a touch of humor, attention getting, evocative, and not very long

I am wondering if your speaker's comments are too informal and lacking in concrete information. People really want more than opinion. So, for instance, on the last slide - your audience would be much more convinced if you used some statistics or some concrete evidence.

So, for that slide, my speaker's notes might read: 1. Online learning at the K-12 level grows every year by year. 2. iNacol's Keeping Pace reports that by late 2011, online and blended learning opportunities exist for at least some students in all 50 states 3. Full-time, multi-district schools enrolled about 250,000 students in SY 2010-11, an annual increase of 25%. 4. The question is no longer whether or not online learning should occur, but rather how it is implemented. 5. Don't get left behind - join us in the Pajama Brigade.

How about you pick just one other slide and email how you would add something concrete to the speaker notes? technology problems play an interesting part in online learning.
Guess it's like taking your class to the lab only to discover the Internet is out for the day. Or having the light bulb go out on the overhead projector. But with online learning it seems to be a bigger problem with a higher learning curve. Guess one solution is like in face to face - have a back up plan. It's a bit like the pajama brigade may have comfort and informality in our personal spaces but our public presentation of self has to be "professional" even when it is virtual. What drives them? Why are they choosing and using? How are they choosing and using? As a classroom teacher, you have a really good idea about the basics of your class because you know the community, may have worked with older siblings, have years of experience. None of that is true for your future online students Hmmmm . . . how will you get to know them? I can see where my email comments might have been confusing. It is an art - but worth working to develop - to be able to use humor to break a too academic discussion. Yes, when we talk to others, we need to be sure that our argument is based on more than opinion or wishful thinking - our talks need to be grounded in concrete and factual information well organized the way to keep people's attention is to keep the concrete and factual chunked with breaks for humor or stories or things like that. Hurray! Thoughts on articles. Did you learn about online students that caught your attention :-) What do you have to keep in mind that you had not thought about before :-). Do you see how leadership requires adopting a "professional" way of speaking that keeps things light and not overbearing but requires professional argumentation and support?
In online environments, here is what I might do: upon first contact with student, discuss the technology issues. make sure everyone has what they need. then exchange contacts for a variety of technology challenges. Share telephone numbers - multiple if have them. This is a great way to contact when not responding to email because procrastinating as well as when email goes down For K-12 parents' numbers are a good idea as well.
- Provide backup email addresses to each other. Get parents' emails.
  Can you think of others?
I learned through our virtual high school program that there are as many reasons for taking an online course as there are students taking them. I was constantly amazed at the array of reasons and how personal they were.
  Yes - many said getting ahead but that was not the real reason - it was getting ahead so they could . . . . .
When it comes to the younger online learners - elementary school - I think you might have to think about the reasons parents put their children in online schools and that is a cluster of motivations I know very little about.
  When they talk about standards, they are saying that course content must be aligned with and meet the curriculum standards for the state. So, in VA, for example, they want the courses to reflect appropriate SOLS.
This is the BIG question in online learning - no teacher preparation and an assumption that if you can teach f2f you can teach online. It simply isn't true but what teachers need is a complex issue.
Some say teacher training for online should be part of preservice, basic licensure. I say NOT. Preservice is so crowded and complex it is best to stay focused. That said, I think preparation for online should be at the inservice level - for those that already know about teaching content and teaching kids. Preparation should focus on what is unique to online - facilitating, establishing presence, the tools, and design.
Who and what grade and subjects are appropriate for online is still a very open question. What I do know is that if done well by a skilled ONLINE teacher teachet-student and student-student interactions can be very robust and appropriate. But that is only in the hands of a really skilled teacher. CL E K-I

definitive guidelines are not available - we stilol have a lot to learn. Trying it is one of the best ways. CL E K-I

In the programs we created, we have set up an intro module. Then we allow students to decide if they are going on based on what they lern in the intro module. Many times high school kids choose not to. CL E K-P

This is what scares me with the new VA law that all high school students must take at least one online course. I have told several superintendents that if they don't prepare students by doing blended things throughout the curriculum, this is going to be their nightmare. CL E K-P

There is an important role for teachers and we need to be sure that policy does not pursue the thought that they can save money by eliminating teachers. I vote for models with LOTS of teacher involvement not computer managed instruction!!! CL E K-I

Was a bit surprised tthat your personas were mostly focused on older learners. CL E K-R

What about the gifted 2nd grader who needs challenge? CL E K-RE

What about the home schooled elementary student? What about the student whose parent is the one motivated to do online lerning - not the student? CL E K-R

It would have been fun to read and (maybe for you) to try writing about these students just to begin thinking about the kinds of children you may be teaching/designing for. CL E K-R

And now you are beginning to think about the affordances of various models. CL C-M K-R

So, collaborotive is good for you - when might it not be good for you? What kinds of learners would find it a problem? CL E K-RE

Each and every model has possibilities for learners and constraints for learners. Important to know what they are for each model. CL E K-I

I like your red comments - it is the back and forth from which insights and sometimes wisdom arises. CL E K-I

I have attached an article that Dawn and I had published this past summer in one of the ISTE research journals. It is where much of my thinking about presevice vs inservice teacher preparation for online environments comes. CL E K-I
Not so much improving the ones you have done but considering what online learner personas might be like to the kinds of students you are likely to be targeting/working with - the elementary view.

It's that connection to practice thing as opposed to just repurposing what you have read.

Your "daughter" has written what the parents and teacher might want to hear, but I doubt that is the reasoning that the "daughter" would really say. She would want the opportunity for a bunch of other reasons - all having to do with Net Gen characteristics.

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I wonder if elementary students would ever choose online - I have a feeling most online students are there because of their parents - that the motivation for online learning is parents' not students'. I even wonder if they could write a letter requesting the opportunity to learn online. They might say it will help them read and write but I suspect it would be words we have put in their mouths not a real reflection of what they are thinking.

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As for me, I generally try to target 10 am to noon as my mentoring hours although one never knows when I might answer an email So, anything you send by 10 am will get answered that day. If you send something after noon, I don't guarantee an answer until the next morning. I take Sundays off (usually, sometimes)

Be SURE to let me know of any questions or problems
Looks wonderful and the picture on the home page is WONDERFUL and really cute. So you I made comments on the FrontPage and the EDIT 760 page. Check them out and let me know what you think
Hurray!!!! This is much better You did NOT offend!!!! I did but in the examples as if it was my life . . . Would not presume to organize yours
Oh dear . . . I fell walking to my car after class last night....Thanks for checking email . . . Normally it would be there. And thanks for understanding

Congratulations!!!!!! You just successfully finished the first module of
your first online class in the IOLS program!!!!!! Well done. Yeah - for some reason PBWorks just doesn't like me this morning
Ah, bet they are having server problems. Be interesting to see what they have to say
I posted a ridiculous and stupid and trivial comment on the EDIT 760 page.
The good news - it worked just fine!!!!
Get up and go do something fun! Lots of emails from me in the am :-)

R  N-C  C-M  R  N-C  C-M  C-M  R  C-M  R  C-M  R  C-M  R  C-M  R
Learned a lot today? Saw you met iNACOL - a fine organization and central to online learning - not sure I agree with all their policies but a good group. Curious about the webinar :-)  
As it evolves, it will be interesting to see what comments she makes  
Good sluething . . . sent info out to everyone  
Lots of thoughts in your happy hour summary. I think you caught the important trends.  
Now, it is time to try and capture all the positive points about online learning in a captivating poster that might make someone stop and think about joining up.  
You hit the nail on the head!!!!!!  
Piece by piece and each and every puzzle will come together!!!! Great motto to live by!  
Great insights! You have figured out that online learning is not a "thing." It is a concept for a whole bunch of things from fully online to a 100 versions of blended  
She sounds like a genius . I think your life is going to be changed dramatically  
This is very clever and creative. I find it very evocative and I really appreciate the blending together to get the classroom of the world.  
It will come back in Module 4 and perhaps then you can find a way to integrate links, audio, video, etc  
It is a great design plan and it shows that you wanted to move toward a multimedia type poster.  
I agree that the very best thing to do now is to step away from Glogster and come back another time fresh and refreshed. I saw the one you did manage to create and your have done REALLY GOOD!  
Thanks for sharing! I will be around all weekend and will watch email for notes from you  
Judy - This is a perfect reflection - really captures your week :-) You should copy and paste it into your wiki so that it is part of your portfolio. Oh, you already did :-)

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R C-M
You have certainly captured/experienced the challenges of online learning. Part of it may be the model - the mentor/mentee model. It may be that the more collaborative model will be more to your "collaborating" style. Of course, you "have" to stay with the group. Trade offs all around - more collaboration and shared problem-solving, loss of flexibility. It will be very interesting to see how a different model feels to you.

I love it!

Ppt is part of Microsoft Office; it is not part of Windows. I suspect you have PowerPoint but cannot be sure.

Hurray! Glad you found it - would be terrible if that were to stall your progress

Judy - These are BRILLIANT!!!! I think you captured the questions I most often get asked - the ones everyone hears about and then throws in our faces. Also, what a great job answering these challenges!!!!

Great choice of pictures! and you really did resist the urge to use too many words on your slides. Well done!!!!

I can guess how frustrating to you not to get comments but it is frustrating for me too. Really am trying to send. Maybe this will work! Let me know

You are right - it is a bit brief but perhaps the artifacts provide the meat

Congratulations on bringing Module 3 to closure (just one little response to send :-(

DRA class sounds boooorrrrrrrrrrring. Sorry you have to do it; glad I don't

I am not panicked about finishing exactly on time. It is better to move forward with the group in 761. Mr. Brooks will keep you busy and it will be a fun experience to work with people you will meet only virtually

Getting to know your online students is a huge challenge! We will tackle that a bit more when we get to EDIT 764

Another astute observation!

Well done! I have made some comments in the attached

Making sure there is something in your inbox :-)

I can think of nothing to pick at or revisions to make. It is a good letter and might convince some teachers and parents.
These are the things that should be driving our decision to use online learning. So, don't do anything to the letter - consider it finished!!!!

The word "disturbing" was unfortunate since I was not disturbed by your work but by my own lack of knowledge and a huge blank in the literature

I am soooooooooooooo sorry my message came across as concern with your letter. It was an expression of my own frustration with my lack of understanding.

Boy - do I understand the need to think before writing

This first course is introductory - it introduces all the issues and hopefully gets you into the online learning groove.

Soon after you begin the course, there is an activity to help you get organized and establish a learning schedule

It begins with a challenge (duh :-)) and moves on to meeting the challenge

Once you have read the opening page, let me know what you think

I will probably ask lots of "what do you think" questions - not just because I am your ally but because I am really curious about what you have to say and what you are thinking about these topics. Online learning is truly an adventure for all of us!!

Return to the opening page for the course and reread it. Seems to me it asks you to take on a role and push an agenda.

You have done a great job of scouring the course to identify the activities. But you have simply put in the "givens" - the start and stop of each week :-)) There is no value added here, and it reads like "you will get around to activities as time suits you." The problem is that, in a busy week, the time just slips away. That is why so many online learners do not succeed

When you register for a face to face class or a professional development workshop or whatever, there is a specified time to show up. So, you planned, for instance, when you were an ITSer to be in class every Thursday from 4:30 to 9:30 pm. When I check out your learning schedule, I have no idea (and neither do you :-)) when you will have time to read, to create, to think, to answer emails, to reflect.

So, I did a schedule for the first week as if I was a student in EDIT 760. Check out the attached - of course it fits my life so would not work for you at all - and redo a plan that works for you and that you could identify times for "class" on your calendar :-)

Just keep in mind - the most important thing is to make CONNECTIONS with what you know!!!!!
If across the top, you go to users and give me "writer" rights I might be able to help create stuff but the webinar is a perfect way to take charge of your learning!!!!!
Of course, sharing that reflection and talking together about it will end up being the reflection you post with the artifact in your portfolio wiki
Now, you have a schedule and a contract of sorts with yourself. Can't think of a better way to tackle the time management/self-regulation problem that plagues so many online learners
We are on schedule as this week ends at 11:59 tonight
It is time to really get started promoting online learning in your school community and recruit a cadre of colleagues to get the Pajama Brigade on the move!
Recognizing that pattern really helps know how what you will be doing next.
Can you identify the pattern?
The joy of a wiki is that you have complete control. You can open it completely to anyone or maintain control and show only whomever you want.
I am following the wiki carefully.
This might be the week that you need to send a "Dear Ally" email - saying you need to rob Peter to pay Paul.
Does that make sense - a way to use smaller, available bits of time
Of course, time is granted. It is the one gift I can give Everyone works differently and distributes their time differently so not sure I have tons of advice. But a few thoughts Might not work for you but do you see the concept - spread out what feels overwhelming when tackled in one sit down session among smaller chunks of time with a sub-goal in mind?
Be sure to remember that this and all subsequent courses are about learning not making the PERFECT product.
Embrace the notion that life happens and sometimes without advance notice. So your learning schedule for this week might have to be different from last week
I think I am all caught up with you so fire away with the next
Looking forward to what you invent. I know - blended - is one of your points on your poster. Wondering what image and words and whatever you will use.
No need to respond to every email - just the ones that spark thoughts OR have a question
Good advice to self at end of your message - learning is the goal not perfection
I am perfectly amenable to having you share your design plan and the images, links, etc you planned to use. From those we can talk without a finished Glog. No need to angst over Glogster and have the tool get in the way of learning!!!!!!
Now, that you have learned a bit about all the great things about online learning it is time to take time for a reality check. Time to look at some of the challenges and potential reasons not everyone has jumped on the bandwagon
Hurray! Getting on with business and module 3 is EXACTLY what you need to be doing!!!! Looking forward to hearing what you think about the challenges
Haven't heard from you in ages. Don't give up! Don't stop now! Don't let frustration and other things be an excuse
You can do it! Don't fret about large chunks of working time - break things into pieces - carry a print out of one article at a time - read and underline in between things This module isn't as complex and no new technology to master!
Think what you will have learned about being an online learner when you struggle through successfully!
This module focuses on some of the challenges of online learning and teaching online. Looking forward to the next post
Thinking we should talk about stuff and what gets posted is the "best and final" version
Good - we have a plan
Hurray! I am glad that we have started moving forward again!!!!
I look forward to your PowerPoint - remember the Zen principles and don't get wordy. Save all that for the "speaker's notes"

As you think forward to the end of course grand synthesis essay, you will need to be a little less global and a bit more reflective and scholarly adding just a bit of concrete content. When you get to that grand synthesis you won't have artifacts with the details to rely on in the same way

Now, just on to module 4 - I get the hint for vgood that you have already started!!!!!!! In this module, try to step into the shoes of today's K-12 students who are choosing and/or using online learning.

I think you will enjoy writing the personas - creative writing is a different voice than convincing colleagues with a professional voice

Judy - you received a message today from Ethan Brooks announcing the beginning of the second course. This course is a collaborative course so it needs to take PRIORITY over finishing modules 4 and 5.

I am resisting answering too many of these so you don't get distracted from EDIT 761 - since that is group based it is a must keep up If I start to overcrowd your email, just scream and I will stop

Oh dear . . . I goofed somehow in my communication
## Appendix F

### Email Data Sorted by Expression of Mentoring Expertise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Message Quote</th>
<th>Content of Message</th>
<th>Mentorin &amp; Facilitating Content Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Looks wonderful and the picture on the home page is WONDERFUL and really cute. So you R C-M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I made comments on the FrontPage and the EDIT 760 page. Check them out and let me know what you think R C-M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I think you did an good and honest job of talking to yourself about strengths and challenges. It would be really cool if you would step back and think about this survey in an email reflection Hurray!!!! This is much better Congratulations!!!!! You just successfully finished the first module of your first online class in the IOLS program!!!!! Well done. I loved your reflection on patience! I had never really thought of that as an online learning attribute, but I think you hit the nail on the head. I posted a ridiculous and stupid and trivial comment on the EDIT 760 page. The good news - it worked just fine!!!! This is sooooooo full of ideas, I am going to insert comments in all CAPS so you can see my comments versus yours. Lots of thoughts in your happy hour summary. I think you caught the important trends. You hit the nail on the head!!!! Piece by piece and each and every puzzle will come together!!!! Great motto to live by!</td>
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Great insights! You have figured out that online learning is not a "thing." It is a concept for a whole bunch of things from fully online to a 100 versions of blended. This is very clever and creative. I find it very evocative and I really appreciate the blending together to get the classroom of the world. It is a great design plan and it shows that you wanted to move toward a multimedia type poster.

I agree that the very best thing to do now is to step away from Glogster and come back another time fresh and refreshed. I saw the one you did manage to create and your have done REALLY GOOD!

Judy - This is a perfect reflection - really captures your week :-) You should copy and paste it into your wiki so that it is part of your portfolio. Oh, you already did :-)

You have certainly captured/experienced the challenges of online learning. Part of it may be the model - the mentor/mentee model. It may be that the more collaborative model will be more to your "collaborating" style. Of course, you "have" to stay with the group. Trade offs all around - more collaboration and shared problem-solving, loss of flexibility. It will be very interesting to see how a different model feels to you.

Judy - These are BRILLIANT!!!! I think you captured the questions I most often get asked - the ones everyone hears about and then throws in our faces. Also, what a great job answering these challenges!!!!

Great choice of pictures! and you really did resist the urge to use too many words on your slides. Well done!!!! You are right - it is a bit brief but perhaps the artifacts provide the meat. Congratulations on bringing Module 3 to closure (just one little response to send :-) Another astute observation!
Well done! I have made some comments in the attached. And now you are beginning to think about the affordances of various models.
I can think of nothing to pick at or revisions to make. It is a good letter and might convince some teachers and parents.

These are the things that should be driving our decision to use online learning. So, don't do anything to the letter - consider it finished!!!!

Reminds me how important teaching students the conventions of each and every medium available to them. I remember in grade school (100 years ago) a unit on using the telephone. It seems these days we just assume kids will use and don't think about the unique conventions of each. We only focus on the conventions of print.

I only sent the one email :-) was waiting to hear from you :-) What did you think about the opening challenge? What is your challenge? Does it have roots in reality, in anything you have done or read or learned, and/or does it seem like a good way to structure a course?

Can you figure it out? Why does the course start that way? What can you predict for activities in the course?

Think authentic problem and teacher leadership. Then think about the role that the pajama brigade is suggesting might be yours and what leadership goal the opening challenge is suggesting. And, if all else fails, email and we can set up a time to talk

Different being the mentee and not the mentor, huh? How would explain the differences?

It is also a great way to see how an online course might be organized and created. I am very familiar with it and, like many in the education field, have HUGE concerns.
As you step into online learning, it is really important to hang on to what you have learned about good learning and good design (ITS) and not to get sidetracked by the flash of the technology

After I send this email, I am going to forward a blog that captures many of the problems of the Khan Academy approach. I was disappointed that the 60 Minutes was all positive and did not acknowledge the issues

Here is a pretty good summary of the critiques of the Khan Academy

What aspects are you looking forward too? What do you think will be challenging? What strategies will you use to ensure your success? Also, wondering how thinking about your own strengths and challenges influences your thinking about teaching online - what you need to do, etc and about young learners as online learners

Yeah - getting to discuss individually is one of the joys of online learning - learning to delay conversations in a more reflective manner is a learned skill. And, you have learned one of the essential elements of online learning with the wiki - responsibility for learning and problem-solving shifts from the "teacher" to the learner

In online learning, you have to drive and manage and figure out as the lead learner rather than having the "teacher" tell you everything and lead step by step

Of course, it also says something about the design of online learning - the designer has to scaffold so the learner can take charge of their learning

And, does that pattern remind you of anything you might have learned in ITS?
EXAMINING MENTOR EXPERTISE IN PROBLEM-BASED ONLINE

It makes me wonder - if you were trying to figure out wikis because you were intrigued by the tool (say someone emailed or told you about them and you were curious) as opposed to being asked to use the tool in a specific way for a class, would you have been as frustrated. That is, I am wondering . . . when someone chooses to learn the tool on their own vs being asked to use the tool as part of an assignment . . . would patience be such an issue.

Hmmm . . . does that say something that we should pay attention to as an online designer and, in fact, a face to face designer as well?

IT MAKES ME THINK OF INSTRUCTION FOR ALL LEARNERS - HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO MAKE OUR GOALS STUDENTS' GOALS. THEN THEY "WANT" TO FIGURE THINGS OUT.

SO, CREATING A WIKI PORTFOLIO WAS OUR GOAL FOR LEARNERS WHEN WE DESIGNED THE CLASS . . . WE TRIED TO MAKE IT YOURS

IT POINTS OUT HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO ENGAGE YOUNG LEARNERS IN WAYS THAT "TRICK" THEM INTO BUYING INTO OUR GOALS.

IS THERE A DIFFERENCE. IF I AM THE DESIGNER IT IS UP TO ME TO DETERMINE "HOW THE COURSE IS BEING DESIGNED.

WE CAN STILL BOUNCE IDEAS JUST GET A TIME DELAY IN BACK AND FORTH - AND NOW WE ARE BACK TO LEARNING A NEW KIND OF PATIENCE

What worries me is that we don't always reflect on those points but just accept them. So, I added my thoughts among your thoughts in the attached.

So, flexibility is one of the things that I am always attracted to - not for it's own sake - but because it allows learners of all ages and parents for young learners to have choice and input into their educational experience.
So, for instance, we worked in our virtual high school with a group of three girls who were asked to participate with the National Ballet. They needed to leave school at lunch time to commute to DC. They were not exempt from the requirements for all students but did have the choice to complete some of them in the evening and on weekends. That way they could be part of the National Ballet AND high school students :-) So, my poster might have an image like the attached (although it is a bit too messy and cluttered) with a sentence capturing the possibility. What points will your poster target and what visual images might get you started.

As you work toward a Glogster portfolio, it is important to remember it is an electronic, multimedia poster so you can put in links to music, video, etc etc etc. Given that . . . DEAPR is very important.

What are the five or whatever main points you want to make with your design? At another time, you can target one point - find an image, find a link, whatever - Encode. Set aside those Encoded resources. Move on another time to another point - find stuff set aside - more Encoding. And so forth. Then, a time to ASSEMBLE in Glogster in a "first draft" way - or just for one of the points. Might even share (Publish) for feedback before moving on to another point and Re.

It is actually what authentic problems are all about - linking living and learning - helping students develop goals - the better the authentic problem the better the connection between their goals and yours.

We have to design so they coincide - they may not look the same on the surface but below they are. I may convince a group to solve the recycling problem at my school. As they do it, they just happen to learn to write a business plan, learn about renewable, reusable etc resources. Miracle - my goal and their goal coincide.
It's like word processors - they might be Office Word, Word Perfect, Pages for the iPad - all different versions of writing and communicating

interestingly enough, may of the considerations that go into it are the same as integrating any technology - where is it best used, what affordances are possible and when and where are they appropriate

Il that I might add is that you have really done a text/image poster and not a multimedia poster.

As you read and identify the challenges, think about how you might respond to a parent or colleague or administrator who might point to these concerns. How would you turn the negative into a positive.

Equally important, they will ALWAYS throw the obstacles at you - that's what they hear loudest when they aren't ready to change. Counter arguments are essential.

I always say "You have to know what the enemy's arguments are so you can advance the war effort." Or, in other words, forewarned leads to prepared. That's what module 3 is about - knowing where the naysayers are and getting prepared to battle them

Ppt is part of Microsoft Office; it is not part of Windows. I suspect you have PowerPoint but cannot be sure.

As you get more comfortable with your knowledge, you can find ways to say this in less academic terms. In fact, the pictures you choose for your Zen PowerPoint presentation can lighten things up while you say more "academic" or "professional" things.

As you design the PowerPoint, think about it as if you had the opportunity to recruit your colleagues to the "pajama brigade" movement at a morning faculty meeting. Sweet, a touch of humor, attention getting, evocative, and not very long
I am wondering if your speaker's comments are too informal and lacking in concrete information. People really want more than opinion. So, for instance, on the last slide - your audience would be much more convinced if you used some statistics or some concrete evidence.

So, for that slide, my speaker's notes might read: 1. Online learning at the K-12 level grows every year by year. 2. iNacol's Keeping Pace reports that by late 2011, online and blended learning opportunities exist for at least some students in all 50 states 3. Full-time, multi-district schools enrolled about 250,000 students in SY 2010-11, an annual increase of 25%. 4. The question is no longer whether or not online learning should occur, but rather how it is implemented. 5. Don't get left behind - join us in the Pajama Brigade.

How about you pick just one other slide and email how you would add something concrete to the speaker notes? Technology problems play an interesting part in online learning. Guess it's like taking your class to the lab only to discover the Internet is out for the day. Or having the light bulb go out on the overhead projector

But with online learning it seems to be a bigger problem with a higher learning curve. Guess one solution is like in face to face - have a back up plan. It's a bit like the pajama brigade may have comfort and informality in our personal spaces but our public presentation of self has to be "professional" even when it is virtual.
hat drives them? Why are they choosing and using? How are they choosing and using? As a classroom teacher, you have a really good idea about the basics of your class because you know the community, may have worked with older siblings, have years of experience. None of that is true for your future online students Hmmmm . . . how will you get to know them?

I can see where my email comments might have been confusing. It is an art - but worth working to develop - to be able to use humor to break a too academic discussion.

Yes, when we talk to others, we need to be sure that our argument is based on more than opinion or wishful thinking - our talks need to be grounded in concrete and factual information well organized the way to keep people's attention is to keep the concrete and factual chunked with breaks for humor or stories or things like that.

Hurray! Thoughts on articles. Did you learn about online students that caught your attention :-) What do you have to keep in mind that you had not thought about before :-).

Do you see how leadership requires adopting a "professional" way of speaking that keeps things light and not overbearing but requires professional argumentation and support?
In online environments, here is what I might do: upon first contact with student, discuss the technology issues. make sure everyone has what they need. then exchange contacts for a variety of technology challenges. Share telephone numbers - multiple if have them. This is a great way to contact when not responding to email because procrastinating as well as when email goes down For K-12 parents' numbers are a good idea as well.

- Provide backup email addresses to each other. Get parents' emails.
- Can you think of others?

I learned through our virtual high school program that there are as many reasons for taking an online course as there are students taking them. I was constantly amazed at the array of reasons and how personal they were.

Yes - many said getting ahead but that was not the real reason - it was getting ahead so they could . . . . .

When it comes to the younger onlin learners - elementary school - I think you might have to think about the reasons parents put their children in online schools and that is a cluster of motivations I know very little about.

When they talk about standards, they are saying that course content must be aligned with and meet the curriculum standards for the state. So, in VA, for example, they want the courses to reflect appropriate SOLS

This is the BIG question in online learning - no teacher preparation and an assumption that if you can teach f2f you can teach online. It simply isn't true but what teachers need is a complex issue.
Some say teacher training for online should be part of preservice, basic licensure. I say NOT. Preservice is so crowded and complex it is best to stay focused. That said, I think preparation for online should be at the inservice level - for those that already know about teaching content and teaching kids. Preparation should focus on what is unique to online - facilitating, establishing presence, the tools, and design.

Who and what grade and subjects are appropriate for online is still a very open question. What I do know is that if done well by a skilled ONLINE teacher teacher-student and student-student interactions can be very robust and appropriate. But that is only in the hands of a really skilled teacher definitive guidelines are not available - we still have a lot to learn. Trying it is one of the best ways.

In the programs we created, we have set up an intro module. Then we allow students to decide if they are going on based on what they learn in the intro module. Many times high school kids choose not to.

This is what scares me with the new VA law that all high school students must take at least one online course. I have told several superintendents that if they don't prepare students by doing blended things throughout the curriculum, this is going to be their nightmare.

There is an important role for teachers and we need to be sure that policy does not pursue the thought that they can save money by eliminating teachers. I vote for models with LOTS of teacher involvement not computer managed instruction!!!!

Was a bit surprised that your personas were mostly focused on older learners

What about the gifted 2nd grader who needs challenge? What about the home schooled elementary student? What about the student whose parent is the one motivated to do online learning - not the student?
It would have been fun to read and (maybe for you) to try writing about these students just to begin thinking about the kinds of children you may be teaching/designing for. So, collaboratively is good for you - when might it not be good for you? What kinds of learners would find it a problem?

Each and every model has possibilities for learners and constraints for learners. Important to know what they are for each model.

I like your red comments - it is the back and forth from which insights and sometimes wisdom arises.

I have attached an article that Dawn and I had published this past summer in one of the ISTE research journals. It is where much of my thinking about pre-service vs in-service teacher preparation for online environments comes.

Not so much improving the ones you have done but considering what online learner personas might be like to the kinds of students you are likely to be targeting/working with - the elementary view.

It's that connection to practice thing as opposed to just repurposing what you have read.

Your "daughter" has written what the parents and teacher might want to hear, but I doubt that is the reasoning that the "daughter" would really say. She would want the opportunity for a bunch of other reasons - all having to do with Net Gen characteristics.

The second reason I am left uncomfortable is that this might be what a traditional teacher and/or parent wants to hear but it does not mention all the genuine affordances of online learning as an innovation - choice, flexibility, interactivity, personalization, engagement, access to information, access to alternative learning tools like games, etc.
But, take a little time to ponder as I am doing the real possibilities and reasons for going online and the possibility that we are shoe-horning an innovation into an old shoe.

We know a great deal about high school students - they are easy to survey plus I have my own experiences having been Director of The Online Academy for 7 years. We know hs students choose online learning to get ahead, to offload requirements so they can take more electives, because they don't like a f2f teacher, because they have other things that interfere with school attendance like sports, ballet, etc, and because it is an option for quick credit recovery, homebound, or expulsion.

Now, I am personally plagued because I do not understand why elementary students would choose online learning I am not sure they would - I think they are too social; their curriculum is not credit driven, etc etc etc - the traditional motivators don't apply to them I don't think - maybe I am wrong.

I wonder if elementary students would ever choose online - I have a feeling most online students are there because of their parents - that the motivation for online learning is parents' not students'. I even wonder if they could write a letter requesting the opportunity to learn online. They might say it will help them read and write but I suspect it would be words we have put in their mouths not a real reflection of what they are thinking.

I was wondering what YOU "really" think about online learning for elementary students since you know them so well Is it really feasible, would they really choose it, why would they choose it? How do parents convince them to be online learners and what role must the parent play to make it a learning experience? Is an online teacher for elementary students a teacher of the students or a teacher of the parents who then teach children?
As for me, I generally try to target 10 am to noon as my mentoring hours although one never knows when I might answer an email. So, anything you send by 10 am will get answered that day. If you send something after noon, I don't guarantee an answer until the next morning. I take Sundays off (usually, sometimes).

You have done a great job of scouring the course to identify the activities. But you have simply put in the "givens" - the start and stop of each week. There is no value added here, and it reads like "you will get around to activities as time suits you." The problem is that, in a busy week, the time just slips away. That is why so many online learners do not succeed.

When you register for a face to face class or a professional development workshop or whatever, there is a specified time to show up. So, you planned, for instance, when you were an ITSer to be in class every Thursday from 4:30 to 9:30 pm. When I check out your learning schedule, I have no idea (and neither do you) when you will have time to read, to create, to think, to answer emails, to reflect. Just keep in mind - the most important thing is to make CONNECTIONS with what you know!!!!

Now, you have a schedule and a contract of sorts with yourself. Can't think of a better way to tackle the time management/self-regulation problem that plagues so many online learners.

You did NOT offend!!!! I did but in the examples as if it was my life . . . Would not presume to organize yours.

We are on schedule as this week ends at 11:59 tonight.

Oh dear . . . I fell walking to my car after class last night….Thanks for checking email . . . Normally it would be there. And thanks for understanding. I am following the wiki carefully.
Of course, time is granted. It is the one gift I can give

Everyone works differently and distributes their time differently so not sure I have tons of advice. But a few thoughts

Be sure to remember that this and all subsequent courses are about learning not making the PERFECT product.

Embrace the notion that life happens and sometimes without advance notice. So your learning schedule for this week might have to be different from last week

I think I am all caught up with you so fire away with the next

No need to respond to every email - just the ones that spark thoughts OR have a question

Good advice to self at end of your message - learning is the goal not perfection

Haven't heard from you in ages. Don't give up! Don't stop now! Don't let frustration and other things be an excuse

You can do it! Don't fret about large chunks of working time - break things into pieces - carry a print out of one article at a time - read and underline in between things

This module isn't as complex and no new technology to master!

Think what you will have learned about being an online learner when you struggle through successfully!

Thinking we should talk about stuff and what gets posted is the "best and final" version

Good - we have a plan

Hurray! I am glad that we have started moving forward again!!!!

I can guess how frustrating to you not to get comments but it is frustrating for me too. Really am trying to send. Maybe this will work! Let me know
Judy - you received a message today from Ethan Brooks announcing the beginning of the second course. This course is a collaborative course so it needs to take PRIORITY over finishing modules 4 and 5.

I am not panicked about finishing exactly on time. It is better to move forward with the group in 761. Mr. Brooks will keep you busy and it will be a fun experience to work with people you will meet only virtually.

I am resisting answering too many of these so you don't get distracted from EDIT 761 - since that is group based it is a must keep up. If I start to overcrowd your email, just scream and I will stop.

Return to the opening page for the course and reread it. Seems to me it asks you to take on a role and push an agenda.

If across the top, you go to users and give me "writer" rights I might be able to help create stuff but the webinar is a perfect way to take charge of your learning!!!!!

Recognizing that pattern really helps know how what you will be doing next. Can you identify the pattern?

The joy of a wiki is that you have complete control. You can open it completely to anyone or maintain control and show only whomever you want.

This might be the week that you need to send a "Dear Ally" email - saying you need to rob Peter to pay Paul. Does that make sense - a way to use smaller, available bits of time.

Might not work for you but do you see the concept - spread out what feels overwhelming when tackled in one sit down session among smaller chunks of time with a sub-goal in mind?

Looking forward to what you invent. I know - blended - is one of your points on your poster. Wondering what image and words and whatever you will use.
I am perfectly amenable to having you share your design plan and the images, links, etc you planned to use. From those we can talk without a finished Glog. No need to angst over Glogster and have the tool get in the way of learning!!!!!!

Hurray! Getting on with business and module 3 is EXACTLY what you need to be doing!!!! Looking forward to hearing what you think about the challenges.

Oh dear . . . I goofed somehow in my communication. This first course is introductory - it introduces all the issues and hopefully gets you into the online learning groove. It begins with a challenge (duh :-)) and moves on to meeting the challenge. Once you have read the opening page, let me know what you think.

I will probably ask lots of "what do you think" questions - not just because I am your ally but because I am really curious about what you have to say and what you are thinking about these topics. Online learning is truly an adventure for all of us!!

Taking time to really "get" and think about the opening challenge is really important to understanding what you will be learning, why it might be important, and how it all goes together. As it evolves, it will be interesting to see what comments she makes.

As you think forward to the end of course grand synthesis essay, you will need to be a little less global and a bit more reflective and scholarly adding just a bit of concrete content. When you get to that grand synthesis you won't have artifacts with the details to rely on in the same way.

Getting to know your online students is a huge challenge! We will tackle that a bit more when we get to EDIT 764.
Soon after you begin the course, there is an activity to help you get organized and establish a learning schedule.

So, I did a schedule for the first week as if I was a student in EDIT 760. Check out the attached - of course it fits my life so would not work for you at all - and redo a plan that works for you and that you could identify times for "class" on your calendar.

Yeah! Remember all that ITS stuff - situated cognition - got to place new knowledge within a context - got to be a reason for it. And then got to link living and learning. So, that applies to online learning as well.

Of course, sharing that reflection and talking together about it will end up being the reflection you post with the artifact in your portfolio wiki.

It is time to really get started promoting online learning in your school community and recruit a cadre of colleagues to get the Pajama Brigade on the move!

To be a teacher leader is to first be very knowledgeable about that which you are promoting! Opinion, belief, and enthusiasm are never enough - concrete evidence and powerful information are central. So, in this module (2), what kind of knowledge will you be building?

Learned a lot today? Saw you met iNACOL - a fine organization and central to online learning - not sure I agree with all their policies but a good group. Curious about the webinar :-)
Now, that you have learned a bit about all the great things about online learning it is time to take time for a reality check. Time to look at some of the challenges and potential reasons not everyone has jumped on the bandwagon. This module focuses on some of the challenges of online learning and teaching online. Looking forward to the next post.

I look forward to your PowerPoint - remember the Zen principles and don't get over wordy. Save all that for the "speaker's notes".

Now, just on to module 4 - I get the hint for vgood that you have already started!!!!!! In this module, try to step into the shoes of today's K-12 students who are choosing and/or using online learning.

I think you will enjoy writing the personas - creative writing is a different voice than convincing colleagues with a professional voice.

Be SURE to let me know of any questions or problems. Yeah - for some reason PBWorks just doesn't like me this morning.

Ah, bet they are having server problems. Be interesting to see what they have to say.

Get up and go do something fun! Lots of emails from me in the am :-)

Good sluething . . . sent info out to everyone.

She sounds like a genius . I think your life is going to be changed dramatically.

Thanks for sharing! I will be around all weekend and will watch email for notes from you.

Hurray! Glad you found it - would be terrible if that were to stall your progress.

DRA class sounds booooooorrrrrrrrrring. Sorry you have to do it; glad I don't.

Making sure there is something in your inbox :-)

The word "disturbing" was unfortunate since I was not disturbed by your work but by my own lack of knowledge and a huge blank in the literature.
I am sooooooooooooooo sorry my message came across as concern with your letter. It was an expression of my own frustration with my lack of understanding.

Boy - do I understand the need to think before writing