Jason Wells

University of Arkansas

ETEC 6253

Abstract

While working at Virtual Arkansas, I knew the Educational Technology program at the University of Arkansas would be beneficial and the required Distance Learning course proved the case. Throughout the semester, a lesson and unit plan on World War I was developed within the Blackboard Learning Management System. For the final project, various lesson assessments, a course outline, orientation, evaluation, and other course related tasks were created. At the conclusion of the project, it assisted in building a more advanced knowledge of how to utilize Blackboard in addition to best methods of constructing a lesson for student learners.

Description

In the spring 2015, I completed ETEC 6253: Distance Learning course at the University of Arkansas. During this course, the focus was on telecommunications and distance education technologies, while focusing on their use in education. For the final project in the course, I designed a course lesson from a unit that includes: a full lesson text, assessments, and rubrics with supporting documents. I selected World War I as my topic, which was the focus lesson from a United States History blended online course with Virtual Arkansas. To start my lesson, I wrote an objective to design the lesson around. The lesson text that was written and created using Soft Chalk. Soft Chalk allows users to create interactive online content. An online video content provider known as Discovery Education, was used as a resource for direct videos to introduce the lessons and provide further details. Various primary source items, including maps, timelines, pictures, and documents were added in from online sites. The online sites included both PBS and ourdocuments.gov. In developing the lesson assessments, all lesson learning objectives were met. Also, many of the learning management system (LMS) tools were used in the assessments. These tools include: discussion board, wiki board, journals, and exam/quiz. Each assessment builds upon the skills and knowledge presented in the lesson. To end the project, we created a course evaluation. Students are asked to evaluate the course and instructor. In completing this evaluation it will reflect a general idea of how the course was organized and conducted. Improvements can then be made before the course starts again.

Standard 2: Development

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2.1 Demonstrate the appropriate use of print materials in order to enhance the learning process.

This artifact meets this standard based upon the use of historical documents. The documents, such as the Zimmerman Telegram, provide a critical link to students succeeding in the understanding of the United States entering World War I. Due to the setting of the course, students are provided these online; however, these are printed by students to better understand the documents. In teaching history, there is nothing greater than holding a copy of an historical document. A second example of how this standard was met, is found in the inclusion of World War I images. In including these images from *The Telegraph*, a direct visual connection is added to the lesson text. There is a new meaning when you are able to see rather than simply reading about the events that occurred.

2.2 Demonstrate ability to integrate instructional materials that utilize two or more forms media.

This artifact meets standard 2.2 by the use of Discovery Education videos and audio segments. Discovery Education videos provide a brief overview with reinforcement items to the provided text. The audio segment featured in the lesson is found in the assessments area. The audio is used as a primary source to which students will critique and provide a reflection. Both of these media items are integrated into the lesson as reinforcements to meet the lesson objective.

2.3 Demonstrate ability to create visual materials that enhance the learning process.

This artifact meets the standard 2.3 best with the creation of the lesson key term wordle. The wordle focuses on presenting the lesson terms in a cloud format with focus on colors,

balance and direction. For the terms that are more critical to the lesson they are presented in a larger size while those of lesser importance are smaller in size. In order to preserve unity and balance all terms are formatted in the same direction. The wordle uses a clear color tone that keeps a unity within the image itself. But how does this enhance student learning? The addition of the wordle at the start of lesson helps to enhance the learning by pointing to key factors discussed in the lesson. At the same time, it will assist in reading comprehension of text by providing key factors or terms. Students have the ability to direct their focus on the main focal points. There is also a visual enhancement for the learners. As noted earlier, the wordle place more emphasis on some words over others, providing a visual to highlight key words that will be discussed in the lesson. As the use of technology grows in the 21st Century and with the implementation of Common Core Standards, technology, reading, and writing have become critical to classrooms. In the corporation of the wordle or any type of word cloud image will enhance student learning.

2.4 Demonstrate ability to use Flash and/or similar types of computer-based software to create interactive media presentations.

This lesson meets the 2.4 standard based upon the use of the Soft Chalk software. The software allows for the creation of interactive activities such as practice question, interactive photo activities, and key term popups. The practice questions are built into the lessons and can involve a range of styles to include, multiple choice, true/false, matching, and etc. As the students answer these questions, feedback based upon their selections can be given. For the interactive photo activities, these might be considered an online photo album. These include any pictures that might try into the lesson context and can include descriptions that follow. If there

are several pictures that would enhance the lesson but not work well on the page, directly, the best way is to create the photo activities. Finally, the key term popup features include any terms that are key to the understanding of the concept being presented. When the term is clicked on by the learner, they are able to see the definition. In some cases creators can use this to present examples as well. Soft Chalk is computer based and publishes directly to the learning management system (LMS) being used. For this lesson, the LMS is Blackboard.

2.5 Demonstrate ability to engage students using a variety of instructional materials.

This lesson meets the 2.5 standard because of the variety of items that are included. The first item to mention is the inclusion of videos within the reading text, key term popups, and photo albums. By this incorporation, students are not simply reading a given text, they are interacting with the reading. This also ensures all learners have the ability to learn using their learning style. The key term quizlet activity can be incorporated into this section as well. In using this activity it allows students to practice or review the lesson's key terms using various activities. In adding the quizlet it enhancing student learning by allowing students the opportunity to test their knowledge of the key terms. The practices found in the quizlet provide various types of review, all of which assist students in better understanding the terms and their meaning. Second, the extra resource items to which students should view include interactive maps, printed documents, timelines, and photo galleries. These resources are online; however, they provide an excellent reinforcement to the World War I content lesson. This reinforcement allows students to see the content in various formats other than text. For example, photo galleries add visual representation to the text itself. While maps and timelines allow the opportunity for students to visualize the order of events. Finally, in examining the assessments students complete

are focused on using various tools available within the Blackboard LMS. These assessments include a quiz, discussion board, wiki board, and journal. The tools incorporate both individual and class learning. This lesson was developed around various types of instructional methods, tools, and assessments.

Standard 3: Utilization

3.1 Demonstrate ability to utilize and implement various media.

This lesson meets the standard 3.1 by the utilization and implementation of the Discovery Education videos, photo galleries, and audio primary source. These media items are incorporated into the lesson as way to reinforcement and support the World War I content. The media provides a visual support to student learners.

3.3 Demonstrate ability to develop and implement effective policies related to the utilization, application, and integration of media-based learning in a specific institutional or organizational context.

This lesson meets the 3.3 standard because it was designed to include specific Virtual Arkansas policies and practices as an education institution. The first policy is working to develop a class rapport with students. For the lesson, students have the opportunity to great each other by video presentation. This opportunity gives students a chance to learn more about one another. As a result of this activity students will better understand their classmates which assists in helping to control cyber bullying. Secondly, academic dishonestly has high stakes at Virtual Arkansas. In the lesson for discussion board assignments, students must make their initial post before being allowed to view posts by classmates. This ensures students post their own ideas. Journals

function in a similar manor with students being only allowed to see their entries. Research

projects will be checked for plagiarism with sources provided and among other students' work.

Academic dishonestly was also addressed within the course syllabus for students to review.

Third, in relation to cyber bullying and online netiquette, expectations have been outlined by

Virtual Arkansas in the student handbook, website, and course syllabus. These expectations

focus on how to communicate within email or live classroom meetings. This includes: avoiding

all caps, keeping conversations on topic, and be courteous. At the same time, students will be

expected to adhere to these expectations in all areas of the course. Finally, make-up work is a

district wide policy and found within the Virtual Arkansas student handbook. Students are

permitted to make up work for excused absences and will work with the campus facilitator and

course instructor to determine the time frame based upon each "home" school district's make-up

policy. The course syllabus highlights the make-up policy under student attendance.

Standard 5: Evaluation

5.1 Demonstrate ability to use both formative and summative strategies to evaluate the quality

of instruction.

This lesson artifact meets the 5.1 standard by the use of both formative and summative

assessment methods used within the lesson. For example, formative assessments used within the

lesson would be primarily focused around the reading quiz. The quiz is directly connected to the

lesson text and documents. Student's results will reflect the quality of the instruction found in the

text. For the summative evaluation on instruction would be found in the course survey and

unit/lesson reflection journal. Both of these opportunities allow the learner to submit feedback to

the instructor. The end of course survey asks directly about the course and instructor quality. Reflective journals are more student originated.

5.2 Demonstrate ability to identify and implement appropriate learning measurements or assessment instruments.

In developing the World War I lesson, it was important to create assessments that were appropriate to the content and objectives. For this reason, this artifact meets the 5.2 standard. The assessment covering the debate of the Zimmerman Telegram, ties directly back to the causes of World War I. During World War I, we know attitudes of the United States joining the war effort, changed over time. This is found throughout the war effort and is reflected in the music review assignment for the song "Over There." In the same time, many improvements were made and as a result students are asked to complete research on World War I. Students will present their findings using the wiki board tool within the LMS. The final objective met is the reflection of peace efforts. In this case, students will use the journal tool to reflect upon the Treaty of Versailles with its lasting effects. Each assessment will be measured by appropriate rubrics that represents each task assigned. All major assessments are directly tied into the overall lesson objectives.

Reflection:

In reflecting upon this course, I was amazed. I am currently teaching for Virtual Arkansas, which greatly assisted me in this course. In designing this lesson, I wanted to create one that I could use in the future. A few skills that were taken away was how to create objective orientated assessments and direct evaluations that focus directly on feedback of the course. I am

currently utilizing this more within my own classes. I discovered it was critical for students to provide direct feedback in order to better the class as a whole. From the lesson itself, I have challenged myself to expand my knowledge and incorporation of various media items. Yes, Discovery Education is still in use; however, I have begun creating independent topic videos as a substitute. In looking to the future, I plan to take my knowledge of creating videos, lessons, assessments, and even Blackboard into developing course content curriculum for both United States and World History courses. My goal will be to ensure that the lessons are focus on promoting student learning by creating the visuals and assessments that meet the objectives. In addition to bringing this knowledge to my own course development, I have and will continue to share ideas with colleagues who are also developing their respective courses. I will end by saying, this course was by far the most beneficial to myself in my current position.