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Innovations in Initial Teacher Education through Integration for Self-Determination: Two Examples and a Model

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Initial teacher education (ITE) programs are still experimenting with how best to make use of the connectivity provided by digital technology. This paper uses two examples to develop a model of how connectivity can be used to enrich ITE by harnessing the intrinsic motivation of teachers. The model draws upon theories of networked learning (Jones, 2015) and self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

A networked learning perspective places a focus upon the connections that facilitate learning, and how to improve them. Pre-service teachers can connect with and learn from the world outside of the university and/or their school, especially from the greater community of experienced teachers, teacher educators, and subject experts (Kelly, Clará, Kehrwald, & Danaher, 2016).

This paper describes two interventions that aim to have a positive impact upon ITE: TeachConnect and the Digital Portfolio project. TeachConnect is an online platform that supports Queensland teachers (currently over 600 from 8 universities) from their pre-service education into their career, through online mentoring and through development of a shared community knowledge base. Much of its potential arises from connecting pre-service and early-career teachers with experienced and well-established teachers. TeachConnect is

currently being integrated into a number of university programs during practical experience, to integrate online support and gathering of evidence (Kelly, Clará, & Kickbusch, 2015). The Digital Portfolio project experiments with the effectiveness of an online portfolio as a means to support pre service teachers as they collect evidence of achievement at the Graduate level of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. Portfolios allowed for the integration of evidence gathering by enabling pre-service teachers to co-create knowledge along with their supervising teachers and university co-ordinators using the *Apple iTunes U* platform, which could then be used to provide evidence for achieving graduate standards.

Both projects have been designed with a focus upon harnessing intrinsic motivation. In self-determination theory intrinsic motivation is described as having three main aspects (Ryan & Deci, 2000): (i) a need for *autonomy* to be able to carry out the task in a way that is in harmony with the beliefs of the learner; (ii) a need for *competence* to have the ability needed to carry out the task; and (iii) a need for *relatedness* to feel that the task promotes, at some level, human connections. We articulate a model for these and future networked learning interventions in ITE to guide design towards intrinsic motivation for learning.

References

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