

## Miranda's Learning Journal: Learning Process for Major Project

### Journal Entry One: October 28<sup>th</sup> – November 4<sup>th</sup>

When posed with the question about what I wished to explore for my major project, I was overwhelmed with the possibilities. To identify my “rabbit hole” it certainly has to be the use of AI. For the longest time, I thought that the hype about AI was the same thing as the hype about coding – a really big deal, a big push, and then only the nerds got into it. However, through the networking, resources and learning in this course, there was no denying that AI was going to have a big impact on the education world.

The upcoming deadline of October was stressing me out however as I tried to nail down exactly how to specifically explore such a broad topic with such limited research! Lucky for me, a real-world opportunity fell right into my lap. I signed up for a pilot project with two of my staff members to go to Saskatoon with our superintendent to participate in a pilot initiative lead by the Provincial Education Plan Implementation Team (PEPIT, for fun). I knew that this would be the focus of my major project, but I wasn't sure how yet!

\*See November 4<sup>th</sup> Blog Post, for more detailed information on each app! \*

A key takeaway from my professional learning opportunity is just how much of a discrepancy exists between middle years engagement and elementary engagement. For lack of more sophisticated language – it just sucks! It sucks for so many reasons, but one of the most annoying being that many staff, parents and community members hold deficit views of teenagers. I was sitting with many engaged teachers that were looking to make a change for kids, but so many of them throughout the day were quick to say: “my kids could never do that,” “they can't bring a pencil, how can they reflect on their learning,” “our kids can't do higher level thinking tasks, they are in trauma survival.” While I acknowledge the challenge, it's simply not true! If you want the most passionate and social justice motivated group you can possibly put together—teenagers are it, regardless of their circumstances. We just need to look at the environment we create a bit differently. In this PD, one of the resources that really stuck with me was Amy Berry's continuum of engagement. There are many ways to be active in the classroom and disruption can quite quickly be moved to driving. Reading her entire book is on my Christmas Holiday Wishlist!!

FIGURE 1.2 • *Disrupting to Driving: A Continuum of Student Engagement*

ACTIVE ←			PASSIVE →			ACTIVE
	DISRUPTING	AVOIDING	WITHDRAWING	PARTICIPATING	INVESTING	DRIVING
Engaging in the activity	Disrupting the learning environment Refusing to participate Arguing with the teacher	Looking for ways to avoid work <b>Being off-task</b> Being unprepared Looking for reasons to leave the room or move around the room	“Flying under the radar” <b>Physically separating</b> from others <b>Being distracted</b> <b>Putting in low effort</b>	Doing the work Being on task Paying attention Responding to questions	Asking questions about what we are learning Valuing what we are learning Showing interest or curiosity in what we are learning Enjoying learning	Setting goals for my learning Seeking feedback to help me improve Seeking out challenges Monitoring and evaluating my progress
Engaging with peers	Arguing with peers <b>Trying to distract</b> others	<b>Off-task talking</b> with others Playing around with others instead of working	Sitting with a group if directed but not <b>interacting</b>	Working with others when directed to do so	Sharing ideas and thinking with peers Following shared interests	<b>Collaborating with others</b> toward a shared goal Challenging each other to drive improvement
Students are <b>disengaging</b> from the planned learning experience			Students are <b>engaging</b> in the planned learning experience			
What goals might the teacher have for engagement in the learning experience?			I want them to follow my lead and complete <b>certain tasks</b>			I want them to be interested in learning and actively involved in the process I want them to be proactive and <b>collaborative learners</b>

<https://www.kqed.org/mindshift/61926/reimagining-student-engagement-as-acontinuum-of>

## **Journal Entry Two: November 4<sup>th</sup> – November 11<sup>th</sup>**

After receiving feedback on my proposal and a deep dive into the syllabus/project rubric, I was a bit stressed about narrowing my focus. When looking at all the possible topics for consideration, and the suggestion to pick one or more, I felt that I could really do them all:

**Research and Analysis/Ethical Considerations-** Exploring Artificial Intelligence in Education, proposed use and frameworks, popular apps, local policies, global policies, possibilities and risk, privacy laws, trust badges, terms and conditions,

**Digital Citizenship Framework-** Where AI fits into digital citizenship instruction in the classroom, how to use it effectively, responsibly and critically.

**Engagement and Reflection-** Using Clarify-ed and Verso and reflecting on students use/learning impact

**Future Implications/Educational Recommendations-** Use of AI to support student learning, teacher instructional design, personalized assessment and monitoring current data trends to plan for future policy/practice implementation, evidence to support improved motivation/engagement, systemic leadership requirements, barriers to implementation

I used AI here at the beginning of my project to brainstorm with me. I put the syllabus assignment outline into ChatGPT and pasted 2-3 pages of my notes (an expansion of the categories above) into the app, asking specifically for help to organize my ideas in alignment with the major project. I stated that I was thinking of doing modules to educate my staff with the new PEPIT initiative and that I wanted to support it with research. ChatGPT helped me to organize my ideas into a project overview, main objectives, research focus, modules and program design, engagement activities, instructional strategies and recommendations anticipated outcomes and a conclusion. It was VAST. However, while I knew that I would not use half of the categories, I felt a sense of relief. The best way I can compare it is that ChatGPT took my big ball of thoughts and flattened it out like play dough, so that I could re-form it again. I had to be away quite a bit to support my family this week -- more to come soon!

## **Journal Entry Three: November 11<sup>th</sup> – November 18<sup>th</sup>**

Working with the broad outlines that ChatGPT offered, I started to conduct some basic research in each area, reading blog posts, scholarly articles and most excitingly, learning about government data regulation, privacy policies and how to read terms and conditions. Privacy became another one of the “rabbit holes” I went down, particularly in a personal circumstance, when our daycare offered an online documentation app, Brightwheel. Compared to other educational apps, their privacy security presented some concerns that I now knew about. While I understand that children aren’t the direct users of this app, it is meant to document what babies eat during a day, or what developmental milestones they are reaching – and they still share personal information for third party marketing!



## Standard Privacy Report for brightwheel: Preschool & Child Care Management App

Last updated January 20, 2022

! 51%

Warning

In my investigations however, I was introduced to Common Sense Media's Privacy Program Reports. THESE ARE AWESOME by the way– and super user friendly. I ended up using them as part of my evaluation on Verso and Clarify-ed.

Privacy and ethics concerns became a new focus for me, diving into trust badges such as the Safer Technologies for Schools and Dekra badges. I explored international privacy laws including GDPR, COPPA, FERPA, CIPA, PIPEDA and the local LAFOIP. SOOOO MANY ACRONYMS! I found many interesting privacy investigation reports, including a PIPEDA and an LAFOIP one on an app that is endorsed by the province and that we use everyday, Edsby!

These investigations and reports did give me a bit of a scare as an administrator with how careful we must be with student information as well as our responsibility to evaluate new technologies and apps directed towards children. I did not know how many possible ways privacy can be breached! Common Sense again had great recommendations for teachers: 1) Know the policies that apply for you, 2) Choose classroom tech wisely and 3) Conduct a privacy evaluation. Of course, this prompted me to investigate my own division's processes for vetting apps, confirming that safeguards are also very limited. The only questions asked are related to ratings, age recommendations and banner adds on the application form. This area is certainly one that requires more attention at the systemic level. And yes, you guessed it, I am super fun at parties.

### Journal Entry Four: November 18<sup>th</sup> – November 25<sup>th</sup>

This week, the rubber started to hit the road. Catching up from my leave, parent teacher interviews and a start to the basketball season had me ready to engage hyperfocus – if I could find the darn button. After multiple additional syllabus reviews, I narrowed down /re-wrote my ChatGPT recommended focuses to 1) Problem & Goals, 2) Research: Instructional Design, 3) Research: AI in Ed & Ethics, 4) Proposed Solutions, Engagement Activities & Systemic Implementation. By again populating my newest brainstorm notes under these categories into ChatGPT, I narrowed my focus with on the following project overview:

“This project explores the intersection of ethical use of AI in education, instructional design, and middle-years student engagement, focusing on tools like Verso and Clarify-ed. The goal is to critically explore whether instructional design, coupled with AI use can address the -20% engagement dip among middle-years students in Saskatchewan, as highlighted by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, and propose ethical and practical strategies for implementation in classrooms.” (co-constructed with ChatGPT)

I was happy with a clear direction, however, that was not the end of my AI exploration, and we are just getting to the good part. The most useful product ChatGPT supported me with was then taking

this project outline and helping me to schedule my coming weeks to spend approximately 50 hours on my major project. As someone with ADHD, queen procrastinator, THIS WAS A GAME CHANGER!! I had a clear goal in mind, and chunked tasks to work through. ChatGPT recommended Research and Contextual Understanding (10 hours), Planning and Structuring the Project (6 hours), Experimentation and Data Collection (10 hours), Educational Recommendations (8 hours), and Final Project Creation (12 hours), Review and Feedback (4 hours). With this road map, I closed the ChatGPT book and got started!

### **Journal Entry Five: November 25<sup>th</sup> – December 2<sup>nd</sup>**

After approximately one month of trialing Clarify-ed and Verso in a 6/7/8 split and a straight grade 9 classroom (make those configurations make sense #ruralsaskproblems), all teachers from our division in the pilot, as well as our superintendent met up virtually to discuss how the roll out was going and to gather feedback for submission to the PEPIT team.

Immediate take-aways included that these apps made big promises – an easily differentiated classroom, individualized feedback, increased motivation, and improved teaching practice. They were shiny, new, colourful and appealing, and best of all, backed by the most current research in education! Sounds amazing, but how is practical roll out in the classroom? Noteworthy was that there was still quite a steep learning curve to overcome. Teachers had to become proficient in prompting the apps to generate clarity packs that aligned with curriculum. This was particularly challenging in a triple grade split and required extensive knowledge of multi-grade curricular overlap so that the teacher did not need to generate three separate clarity packs and check-ins for each lesson. The students also experienced a steep learning curve. They needed to create accounts, join the teacher's class and learn to click the right buttons on the interface. For children with diverse learning needs (intellectual disabilities), they were unable to engage in this check-in on their own, and while prompts could be simplified, it was not enough to address the major gaps that exist in classrooms today. For example, in the 6/7/8 split, we have 3-5 students reading at a grade 2 level while most are somewhere close to grade, and some are reading at a high school level. The program does use "low floor, high ceiling" learning tasks that allow for some differentiation, but not to that extent.

Deeper analysis concluded that once the students became familiar with the routines and procedures behind use, it became a lot easier, and teachers began to see the benefit. A great by-product was the curricular and instructional design conversation among colleagues that came out of its use as well. Teachers appreciated the simple step-by-step tasks laid out for students, as well as the teacher packs that suggested high impact teaching strategies and activities to reinforce the intended outcome of the lesson. Teachers had also shifted their language to support students' abilities to complete the check-ins. I observed student language changing from, "we did a worksheet," to "we explored the relationship between healthy relationships and our wellbeing." HOW COOL IS THAT?!

I shared my learning about the app's excellent safety and privacy law compliance and overall review for its positive potential to improve student learning. However, I did share this with the caveat that a full roll out would require the same care and attention that we accessed to be well received by staff. As we discussed often in our blogs, time is a GIFT. Specific professional development and continued mentorship with colleagues is critical and it must be funded. Teachers should not be expected to learn this tool on their own time. In addition, after some of my research (summary to come), I believe that

many teachers are not competent users of AI. This tool has a lot of guard rails, but it opens the door to a new world that I am not sure teachers and students are adequately prepared to receive.

Well, lucky me, my opinions got me a speaking/presentation slot on our next Prairie Valley School Division's administrator's meeting in January. Cue anxiety – and excitement. This invitation had me tweak my presentation just a bit to meet the needs of my deeply inquisitive colleagues. I always knew I would do modules for staff, however I wasn't sure how I would share my research in a meaningful way, while being mindful of others time. I decided that an annotated bibliography would accompany my presentation, in addition to cited works at the end of each module. This, in theory, should satiate my fellow passionate instructional leaders.

### **Journal Entry Six: December 2<sup>nd</sup> – December 10<sup>th</sup>**

My modules are wrapping up in a way that I am really excited about! I used Canva to create slides in the following four categories:

#### **Rationale**

- Review of provincial assessment data
- Exploration of benchmark tools and assessing student motivation
- Introduction of motivation continuum
- Proposed Actions

#### **Instructional Design**

- Introduce concept & provide examples
- Explore high impact teaching strategies
- Compare Ministry of Education Supporting Student Assessment in Saskatchewan Model
- Trivia!
- Revisit motivation continuum

#### **AI and Ethical Considerations**

- Explore benefits and risks of AI use
- Propose digital citizenship and media literacy frameworks to support responsible use

#### **Pilot Project and Field Test**

- Examination and Critique of Verso and Clarify-ed
- Teacher, Administrator and Superintendent Trial Reviews
- Suggestions for Systemic Implementation

### **Closing Thoughts: December 11<sup>th</sup>**

I strongly feel that the project option I selected, and my learning process have changed who I am as an administrator. From ground level practice to systemic considerations, and broad research to synthesis, I have grown wholistically from this experience. I can't help but laugh and look back on our

course, thinking about one of our early classes where we discussed the Dunning-Kruger effect and my assumption that I would become an expert in this area.

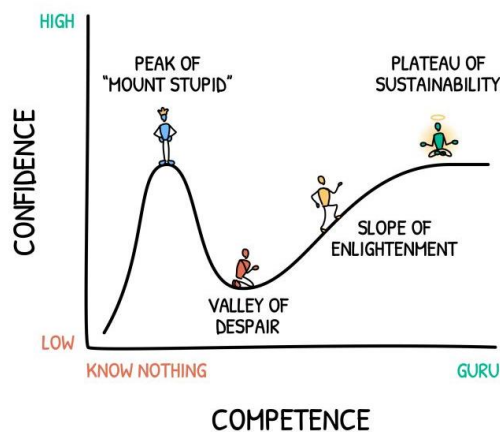
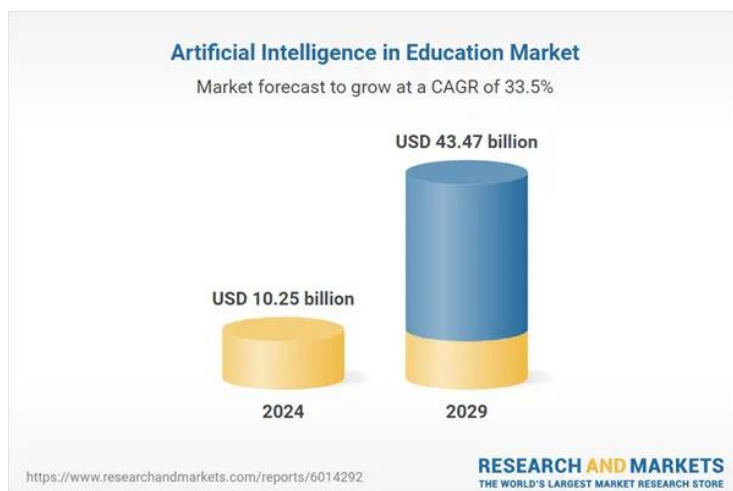


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The truth is, there are no experts in this area, and new research is already OLD! An example of this is an absolutely fantastic UNESCO publication from 2021 that has wonderful categories about bias, ethics, policy, privacy and all of the aforementioned themes in my project. I thought I'd found the holy grail, only to find out immediately that it was outdated.

A wild example from the resource right off the hop was that they predicted AI in education would be worth \$6 billion dollars in 2024, but a quick internet search reveals that the value is closer to \$10 billion. To say that the development of this particular technological advancement was rapid is an understatement, and we are all just buckling up with whatever we can find and getting ready for a wild ride!



Yahoo Finance: <http://bit.ly/3ZynqQG>

My completed project contains an annotated bibliography with research on implementing AI safely and responsibly in educational contexts, with an emphasis on supporting student motivation. I used two new apps alongside a pilot project group, critiqued them and provided feedback to my division, colleagues and classmates. I wrapped up my new learning by creating four modules to share my learning about Generative AI in Education with fellow leaders and teachers. The best part is that I will actually get to present this learning to real humans that might take new understandings back to the staff and students in their care.

If you've made it this far, thank you for being a part of my learning journey!