The Power of PLE: Teachers' Own Notions to Optimize Learning

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Modern technologies are transforming education, teaching, and learning, thereby affecting all stakeholders. In 21st century the role of a teacher is changing rapidly than ever before, new capabilities, abilities, and proficiencies are varying and that needs lot of stride. Thus, it is very important for ongoing research on PLEs to consider the importance of teacher as part of PLE implementation and to recognize the diversity of roles teacher perform, supposed to act upon in this context. The optimal usage of applications, the development of matching learning activities, integrating technologies in instruction are all roles and activities that directly contribute to the successful implementation on PLEs. As used here, PLE refers not to a specific service or application but rather to an idea of how individuals approach the task of learning.The amalgamation of functions in the learning environment is very important to ensure that the external conditions of learning are provided to students. Therefore the learning environment must be suitable according to the students learning styles, inclinations and needs in learning.

This paper has been accomplished by an in-depth review of the literature on teachers attempt to create learning environments for students that are supposed to be optimal for learning, and also to study the framework of PLEs and its practical success. In light of the aims of modern education and the characteristics of PLEs the teacher/educator has to change, rather entail a radical shift. Change is difficult but it is probable that the rapid development and implementation of new technologies and social change make change in our educational provision inevitable. The entire emphasis is on teachers' perception of the learning environment through the lenses of their own conceptions. Here, learning is seen as grasping new ideas, gaining more insight, and developing a conception of something. As a researcher and a teacher what need to be better understood is what individual teachers bring to this process, and how those individual conceptions assist them in applying what they have learned to practice. Equally, important is to comprehend teachers' varying level of adoption/response to optimize learning. Eventually, the change/shift in the pedagogy brings forth a general analysis of teachers as high, moderate and low adopters based on their conceptions. Again a through data analysis can help researchers to categorize the rationale behind the same. In a nutshell, today's technology mediated communication requires teachers to give their pedagogies a technology-touch, enabling new competencies and perform new roles as it is expected to give the flavor of this quest to their students in their learning discourse.

Personalized Learning Environment (PLE) represents a paradigm shift. By choice and demand, technology is restructuring education, teaching and learning, and affects them in

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ways that impact on everyone. Mc Loughlin and Drexler observed that free and easy availability of emerging learning technologies and social software have resulted complex and multifaceted challenges for teachers including the provision of personalized learning experiences to students that cultivate their independent learning skills besides scaffolding the learner reflection and development of generic competencies. Here the role of teacher/ educator requires pedagogical revolution includes not only importance of admitting learners prevailing skills and the implementation of appropriate training approaches and awareness of learners experiences, as well as assimilating them with social media in ways that empower active participation, social interface, universal networking, and community associates.

However, PLE is more focused on individual learning, despite the fundamental role of various resources, tools, facilities and the instructor. Here, it is the teacher/educator who initiates, plays an active role in improving the effectiveness of learning. At the same time the teacher may not be the only expert during students learning process, but he/she can still play key role in offering support in literacy skills and subject matter expertise, help them navigate the breadth of content and apply the technologies and tools properly . So many research scholars have focused on the role of teacher in PLE strategy and its execution, but only some of them have focused on the compatibility of teachers' perceptions of the environment with the design of the PLEs. Teachers' conceptions strongly influence the implementation, and consequently the impact of the PLE on student learning.

 Having conceptions is inherent in human beings, because they attach meanings to their surrounding world. There exists a large body of research on teachers' conceptions of teaching and learning. Kember reviewed 13 of these studies, and developed a model that synthesizes all the findings. According to Kember's synthetic model there are five conceptions of teaching: (1) imparting knowledge means teaching as presenting information to students, who only have to passively receive this information, the focus is on the lecturer and his/her knowledge (2) transmitting structured knowledge means that the focus is still on the transmission of the knowledge, but there is more attention on the student , making it more informative (3) student –teacher interaction means the recognition that student understanding and discovery are essential, manifesting itself in a degree of interaction , (4) facilitating understanding means teachers who have the student- centred conception of teaching see teaching as a process of helping students to learn and develop deep understanding. (5) conceptual change and intellectual development focuses on students' prior knowledge and tries to change pre-existing conceptions , in a sympathetic and supportive environment. The purpose for an in-depth review of Kember's model is to stress on the fact that the orientation of teachers' conceptions determines the compatibility of teachers' perceptions of the environment with the design of the PLE.

Inclusively, Personal Learning Environments (PLEs) represent an exemplar change, a flexible excess based on learning is endless and unending process available. PLE is a location where people and societies, and tools and resources, interact in a very bendable way. It promises to learner an important result of learning and quest for independent learning that incorporates largest collection of tools under the control of an individual. PLE promises new teaching methodologies for successful learning to occur; where teacher ought to rethink her approaches, realign her methodologies, and move beyond restrictive, teacher- controlled environments to learner- driven collaborative spaces.

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In a nutshell PLE contains facilities of noting, thinking, reading, writing, listening, speaking. Many critic found that in learner- centered methods, teacher create an stimulating phenomenon in order to motivate learners take possession of the learning progression, and produce best solution they can devise. Basically, learning styles are personal qualities that influence the way students interact with their learning environment, peers, and teachers. The difference of learners include their learning styles, learning orientations, learning rates, cognitive styles, multiple intelligence, talents and many more. Research based on learning skills reveal that the way students perceive and interpret a learning environment is influenced by their conceptions about learning, tasks, and environments, together called 'instructional metacognitive knowledge'. What is really needed is the reciprocal relationship between teachers and students, so that there is exchange of ideas about learning and perceptions of learning environments. Only, in this way, can more congruence be created between interpretations of learning environments by teachers and students, which will lead to the development of more effective learning environments, and eventually, more effective learning. Accordingly, PLE is also a method that helps students to take control of their own learning practice.

There is a significant amount of information about the characteristics of PLEs. At the same time a design of a learning environment that is well suited to reach the modern aims of education does not give the guarantee of practical success. Implementation is crucial in determining the factual characteristics of a learning environment, which influence student learning. Because, teachers often implement already designed learning environments into practice, it is worth examining the conceptions teachers have about learning and teaching. These conceptions strongly influence the implementation, and consequently the impact of the PLE on student learning. Conceptions can be seen as lenses through which people perceive and interpret the world. Teachers perceive the learning environment through the lenses of their own conceptions, and will act and react accordingly. Nevertheless, why we need PLEs, following are the reasons;
- ✓ PLE encourage students to develop their own learning strategy.
- ✓ Students get motivated and create learning environments, where they can govern their own learning at their speed.
- ✓ PLE made-to-order learning environment that suit 21st century classroom.
- ✓ Today's generation primarily learns by being interactive and that requires personalized ICT solutions.
- ✓ PLE suits the demand from both learner and educators.

Thus, keeping above definitions and requirement of PLE, the role of teacher/ educator becomes very decisive. PLE invite educator to consider a role change and extend their craft to prepare students for the challenges of life. This allows students to develop lifelong learning skills which are overriding to self-direction and self-regulation. Educationalists design blueprints of PLEs, ranging from classroom-based courses and electronic learning environments, to complete educational approaches, like problem-based learning and competence-based education. However, the vital factor which leads to the practical success of any PLE design rests on the teacher/ educator. Thus, firstly, the task of the teacher is to develop a course (with the help of software) or became a designer of the program, with help of this students can access, browses, view and learning designs used for automatic creation of personalized learning activities within personal learning environments(PLEs). This will encourage the students how to learn and what to learn, approaches of learning and how they can access their syllabus and other related open online references. Computer software design

skills have also been valued extraordinary in digital network literacy singularity. Here the role of a teacher is also to become a demonstrator where a teacher can demonstrate with use of the tools like models and imitations, or film, telling a story, while a theorizer, as noted by Downes (2010) 'leads students develop world views, find the underlying cause or meaning of things, create order out of what appears to be chaos, (and) help them remember things by giving a single structure'.

Several studies based on the role of teacher, rather the competency of the teacher in PLE suggest the other possible roles of a teacher in PLEs is to be an instructor, aim setter, defender, assessor, participator, technologist, structure manager, transformer who mixes the ordinary, boring and monotonous things into some inventive and astonishing principal pieces, examines rhythms in divergent materials, and brings them together to bring them out. In any case teacher required competencies depend not only on the role being accomplished but also on the nature and complexities of the responsibilities they are supposed to succeed. Mulen argues in her study "not everyone can be a mentor, not every mentor can take on too many prodigies, and of all the roles described here, that of the mentor is most likely to be honorary or voluntary". Downes further comments that "create the seed of doubt, the sense of wonder, the feeling of urgency, and the cry of outrage". Siemens & Tittenberger 'observes the activities of students and can draw attention to innovative approaches'. Trilling found teacher a curator and advocates that "he should balance the freedom of individual learners with the thoughtful interpretation of the subject being explored, and create spaces in which knowledge can be created, explored, and connected.

Last, but not the least, the reality of learning and educational practice is not only a technical question, "although changing technologies are key drivers in educational change" . Technology has a powerful presence in the modern-day educational environment, with ever-expanding possibilities for innovative strategies. It can yield best results if it is used as a tool and a technical support to connect and communicated. The prerequisite is to look at the new opportunities for learning afforded by emerging technologies complemented by a teacher/educator imposing a radical shift. Transformation is difficult but it is feasible that the rapid development and implementation of new technologies and social change make change in our educational provision inevitable.

"Our understanding of learning has expanded at a rate that has far outpaced our conceptions of teaching. A growing appreciation for the porous boundaries between the classroom and life experience…has created not only promising changes but also disruptive moments in teaching." EDUCAUSE Review, 2012. This quote from *Disrupting Ourselves: The Problem of Learning in Higher Education* , gives a good a reason as any for teachers/educators to develop a Personal learning Environment [PLE]; a space where we can keep up with the experimental modes of learning, instruction, changing pedagogy and instructional methods. The learner is moving to the center of the learning and teaching model, and relies upon a variety of sources for learning. PLEs will help teachers/educators not only stay *relevant* in his/her field, but will provide an opportunity to learn how to use tools that will enhance instructional methods and adapt to the changing paradigm. To conclude, the idea of the PLE purports a challenge for educational practice if the approach towards its intent and use by teachers/educators is not maintained.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.