University of Sunderland

Cook, Freda and Lambton, Anne (2019) 'Appyness': A creative tool for pedagogical engagement. In: University of Sunderland Resarch Conference, June 2019, University of Sunderland. (Unpublished)

'APPYNESS': A CREATIVE TOOL FOR PEDAGOGICAL ENGAGEMENT

Freda Cook, Anne Lambton

University of Sunderland (ENGLAND)
University of Sunderland (ENGLAND)

Abstract

Skinner (1958) stated "From the experimental study of learning come devices which arrange optimal conditions for self-instruction". Currently, in Higher Education institutes (HEIs), a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is commonly considered to be a critical tool to enable access to academic material, to allow students to communicate with their peers and to facilitate learning for students via 'autonomy support' (Spiteri *et al,* 2016).

Autonomy support encourages students to take control of their own learning, to be independent, and to access and utilise resources themselves (Núñez and León 2015). To be effective, a VLE needs to provide relevant information to students in a manner that is easily accessible and, ideally, mirrors structures that they are already familiar with. This can reduce possible student frustration or anxiety and encourage student engagement.

This paper introduces a creative approach for autonomy support utilising the VLE and encouraging student engagement with programme and module resources via a highly visual method. The approach is similar to the 'app' (application) based approach of user interface design for Smartphones and Tablets, which embraces the needs of both digital natives and digital immigrants, as described by (Prensky 2001).

Keywords: Innovation, technology, VLE, autonomy support, accessibility, digital natives, digital immigrants.

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