College Students’ Perceptions of Personal Learning Environments (PLE) Through the Lens of Digital Tools, Processes and Spaces


**Introduction**

Permit the development of personal and social experiences and spaces which motivate students to guide their own learning and develop self-regulated learning skills. Designed according to personal aims, information management, and individual construction of knowledge. Evolve towards socially transmitted knowledge and networked learning.

Getting to know university students’ perceptions about PLEs, what tools they utilize in order to create and structure their PLEs, and how such tools actually help in their personal growth and development.

**Methodology**

34 students of instructional design from Middle Atlantic University (MA)

75 students from a Liberal Arts University in New England (LA)

Students' Materials

- Frequency counts: (Q2, Q3, and Q4)
- Inductive way: (Q1 and Q5)

**Results**

1. **Who are you and what do you like to learn about?**
   - LA: They show great interest in social issues.
   - MA: They show great interest in education, educational technology, languages, and emergent technologies.

2. **Which hardware do you use to learn?**
   - LA: 96% laptops, 75% smartphones, 33% tablets, 16% desktops.
   - MA: 91% laptops, 91% smartphones, 76% tablets, 35% desktops.

3. **What software do you use to learn?**
   - LA: 68% search engines, 52% social networks, 45% online videos.
   - MA: 85% online videos, 11% search engines, 76% eBooks.

4. **What digital tools would you like to have access to for learning purposes?**
   - LA: 11% resource management, 23% progress monitoring, 41% organization-related.
   - MA: 17% resource management, 32% progress monitoring, 11% organization-related.

5. **What might your ideal PLE look like?**
   - LA: Mainly like a physical, calm space. It can also be a physical, digital space.
   - MA: A digital space where it is possible to debate and interact, where one can learn in motion, user-friendly and customizable.

**Conclusions**

- With opportunities for debate, collaboration, and interaction
- With tools for organization, planning and resource monitoring
- Permitting the effective use of technology for personalized learning
- It must be dynamic and evolve in accordance with my aims and achievements.

**Digital Tools**

**Most used**
- search engines, videos, and social networks

**Most desired**
- organization-related ones, and those focused on progress monitoring

**Future Research**

Development of digital tools which support self-regulated learning and information management, as well as the accumulation of contents OR of an artificial intelligence which provides a personalized learning experience.