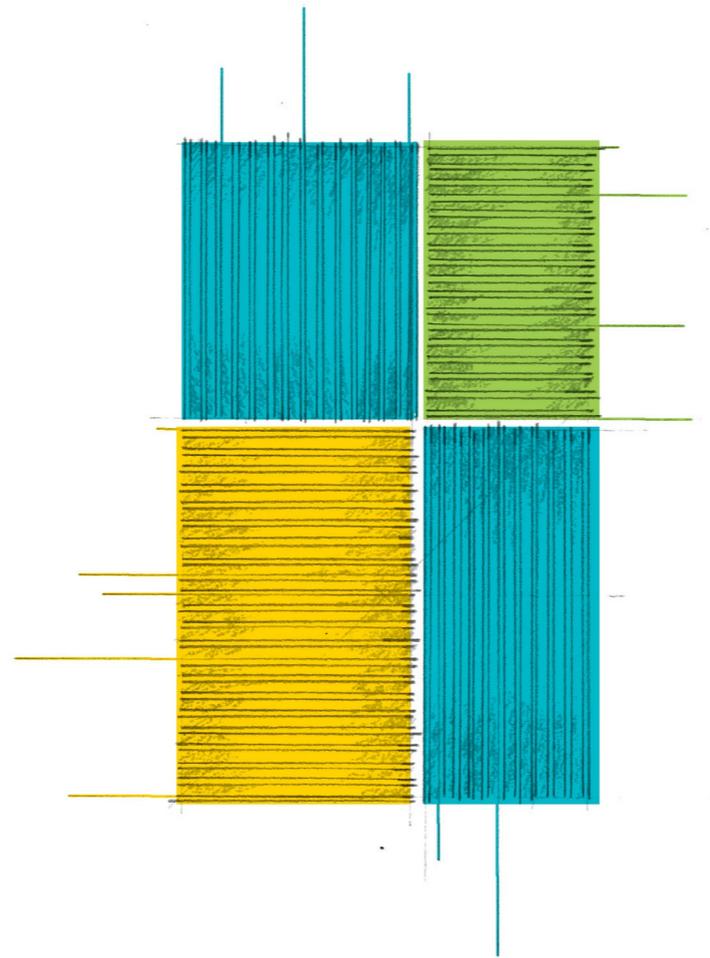
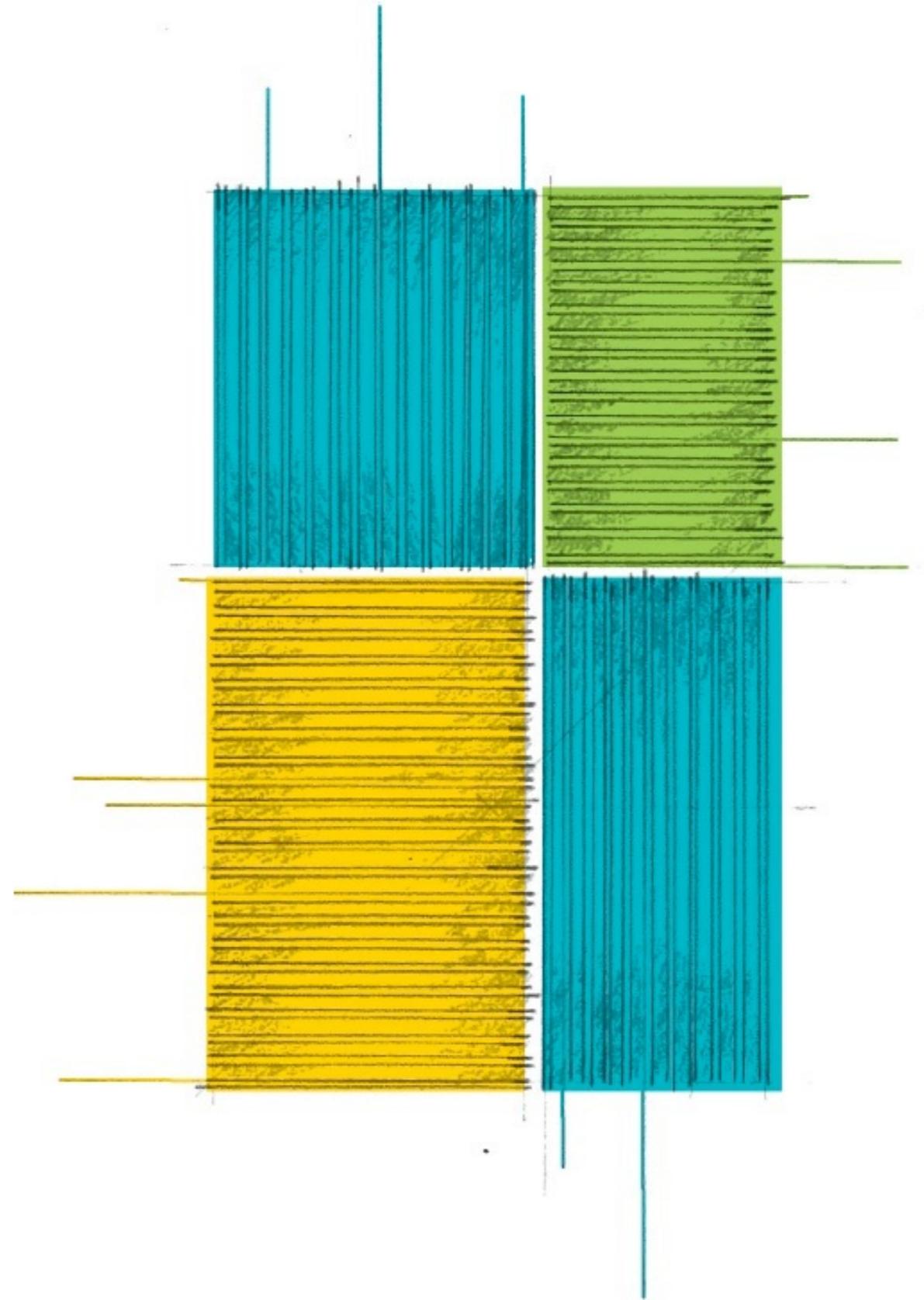


mLearning Field Activities



mLearning Field Activity workshop

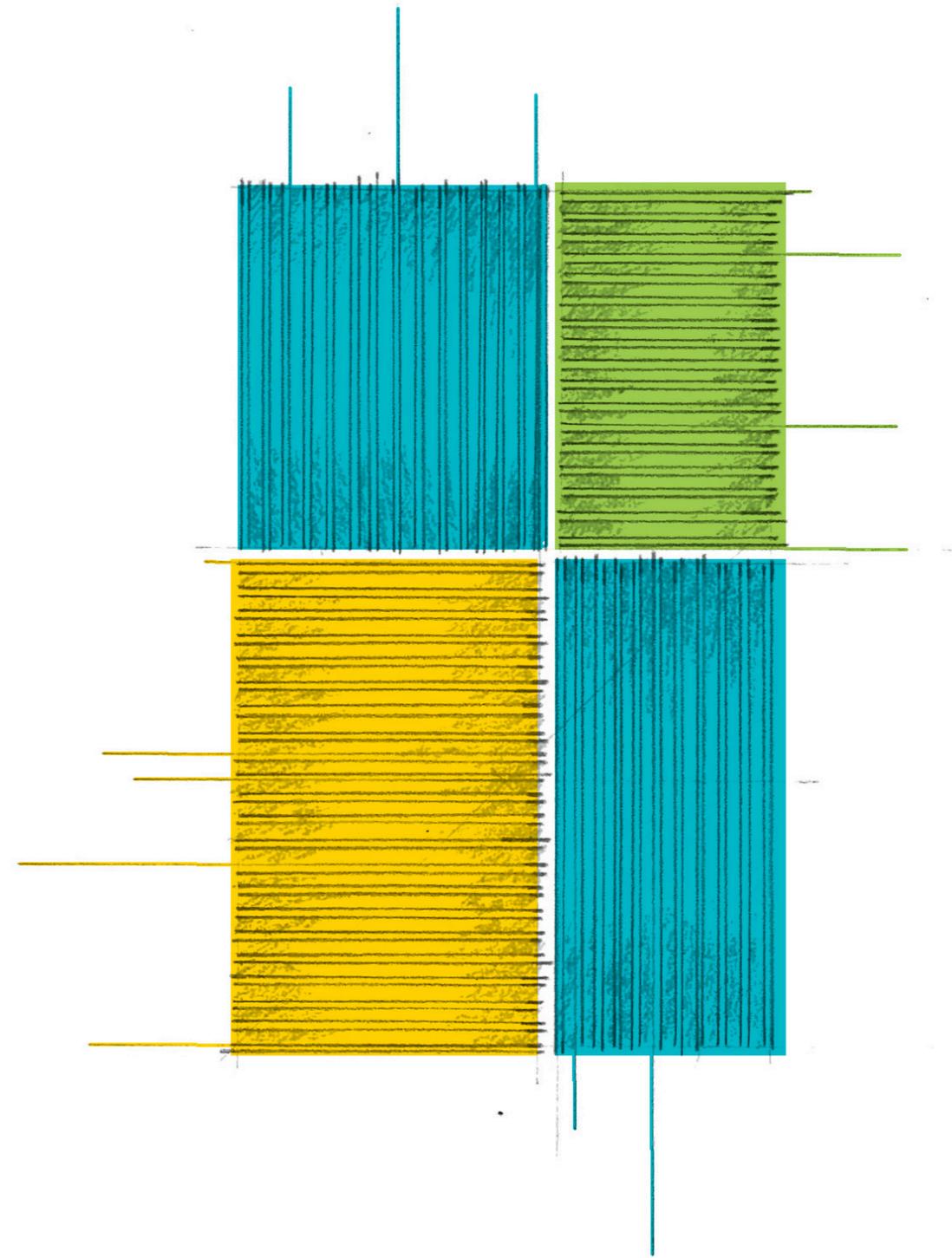
This handbook is designed to provide you with some guidelines, tools, and inspiration for you to begin constructing mobile learning field activities for yourself or your students. I hope you enjoy.



This work was compiled from writing that can be found at <http://michaelseangallagher.org/>.

If you would like to contact me, please **email** or find me at any of the following:

- **Twitter**
- **LinkedIn**
- **Flickr**
- **Pinterest**



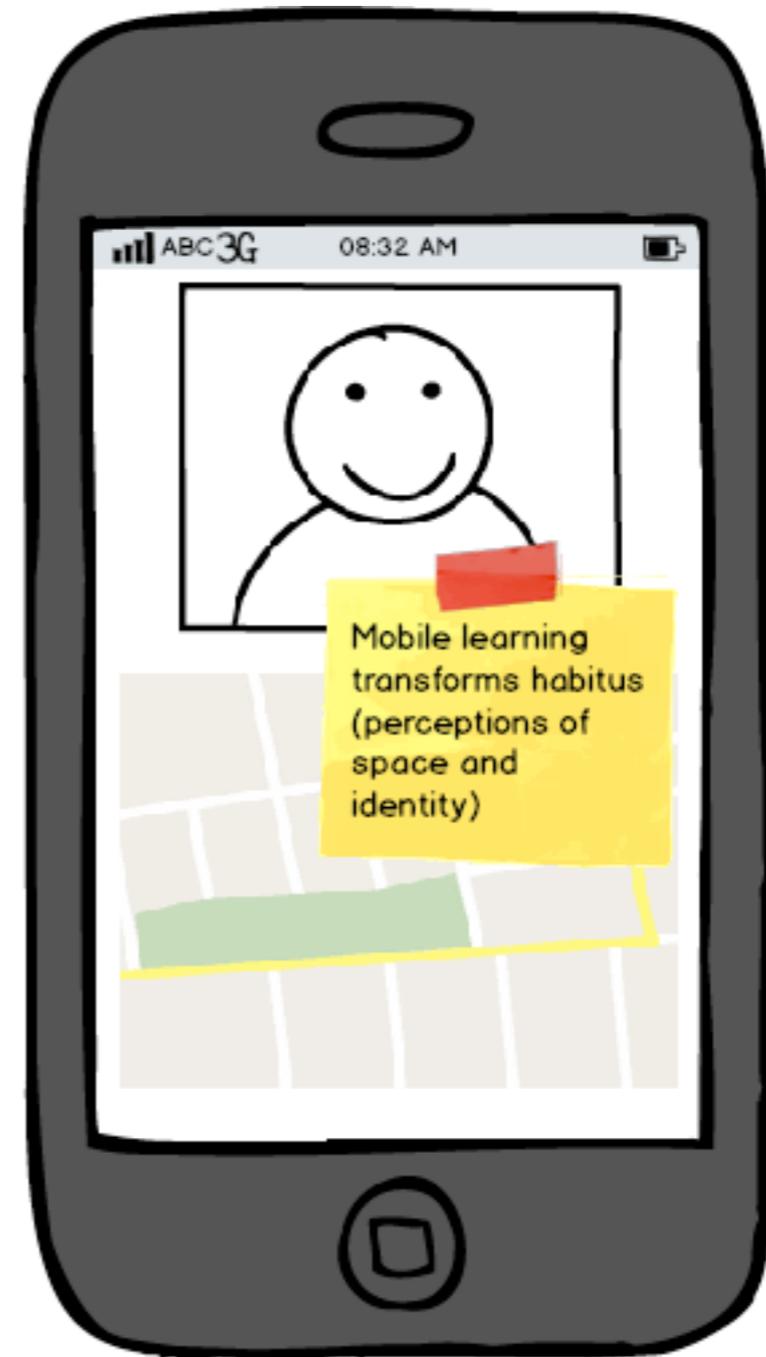


“The students of the future will demand the learning support that is appropriate for their situation or context. Nothing more. Nothing less. And they want it at the moment the need arises. Not sooner. Not later. Mobiles will be a key technology to provide that learning support.”

Dr. Marcus Specht

mLearning Field Activities: Getting Started

This chapter is designed to provide some practical guidance on how to outline and sequence a mobile learning field activity, questions to consider, and tools that may be used.



mLearning Field Activities: Getting Started

This document is designed specifically for teachers or students to engage in mobile learning field activities in either formal or informal learning. Much of this is compiled through my site at <http://michaelseangallagher.org/>.

What is mLearning?

Mobile learning can be defined simply as the use of mobile technology for learning purposes. However, as with any technology, there is more to it than that. Mobile isn't necessarily the technology, but rather the learner and their habitus. The following definitions and quotes help us draw closer to the larger meaning of mobility.

“tools such as computers and mobile phones function as interactive agents in the process of coming to know, creating a human-technology system to communicate, to mediate agreements between learners and to aid recall and reflection” (Sharples, 2005, 7)

“Habitus: a structure of the mind characterized by a set of acquired schemata, sensibilities, dispositions and taste.”

“That which is mobile is not knowledge or information, but is the individual's habitus.” (Kress, Pachler, 2007)

“the ability to bring things into conjunction which might have previously have been relatively difficult to join” (Kress, Pachler, 2007)

“For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them” (Aristotle)

What is mLearning?

We can't ignore the technology, however. It is a mediating influence on the learning. This technology includes (but is not limited to):

- Tablets
- Phones
- GPS devices
- MP3 Players
- Laptops

* * Criteria for inclusion: Does the technology transform the habitus?

What is multimodality and why is it important for mLearning?

It is my belief that mobile learning creates new opportunities for reinventing composition and narrative. Mobile learning allows for new modes for new media and theoretical positions. At the same time, it makes us develop new criteria for methods of selection and mechanisms for demonstrating knowledge. All of this requires extensive reflection.

Mobile learning encourages multimodality, the use and analysis of different modes (including different media) for presenting meaning. It assumes the following, all of which are important to consider before embarking on a field activity using mobile technology.

- First, multimodality assumes that representation and communication always draw on a multiplicity of modes, all of which contribute to meaning
- Second, multimodality assumes that resources are socially shaped over time to become meaning making resources that articulate the meanings demanded by different communities.
- Third, people orchestrate meaning through their selection and configuration of modes

*Taken from [MODE Multimodality Glossary](#)

Questions to Consider

Before beginning to organizing a mobile field activity, consider the following:

1. What media/modes are you including? Why?
2. What is their social significance (to the discipline, classmates, society)?
3. How will they be arranged/orchestrated?
4. Why did you choose this layout? What does it emphasize or foreground?
5. What is your position (theory, opinion, thesis)?
6. How is your position linked to your composition?
7. What tools and technologies will you use to present this?

* Reflection=Evidence of Learning

Presentation of Meaning

What are the optimal containers for mobile multimodal narratives? When we lived in a world of text and the textual transmission of information, books were the most authoritative of records. What are the shape of the records now? What will these containers look like when using multimedia?

Remember that the container should be reflective of what is being contained, both the media and the meaning. Consider the following as examples:

- Montage
- Collage
- Mosaic
- Maps (GPS)
- Remixes
- Mashups
- Blog posts

All of these containers can represent meaning made through mobile technology, yet all strengthen a different argument, a different presentation, a different assembly of meaning. What is the power of a mosaic over a blog post? Of a map over a collage? These are important questions to consider. The form must follow the function of the argument and the narrative being presented.

“...everything today is based on montage”- Esa-Pekka Salonen

If you prefer a presentation, please see: [mLearning : Habitus and Field Activities](#)

The above presentation is on mobile learning and field activities, how we might transform or augment the established practice of field data collection and research in the Sciences and Humanities and recreate and/or improve that process through mobile technology. I find it helpful to try and think broadly about what mobile learning can be and balance that against the pragmatics of the learning context. There are notions of local context and application that we can never, ever lose track

of: how technology affects relationships, how it is itself an artifact of power, culture, etc. However, I think by evoking the ideal, how see mobile technology being used down the road, and juxtaposing that against the pragmatic situation on the ground we can begin to bridge the gaps between the actual and ideal. A useful design metaphor for field activities using mobile technologies are field diaries/ journals. They link existing and accepted disciplinary practices with the disruptive aspects of mobile technology use for education. Using a metaphor from the past to engage a future application.

Metaphors help learners link the past with the present and the future. They offer an accessible artifact for making meaning in these new environments. A field journal in mobile technology is both a tool for reflection and navigation of a new ‘place’.

Memory, Reflection, Methods of Selection: An outline of a mLearning Field Activity

I thought it might be useful for at least a few of the teachers out there to outline how I think a mlearning activity might unfold. Pragmatically. So I thought I might outline one here; please feel free to use it if you think it worthwhile. Please note that this is not exclusive to mobile learning; in fact, it can be completely accomplished by recycling materials available online via a laptop or desktop. However, it adds to the authenticity when the images are created and compiled by the learners' themselves.

Age Ranges

Secondary School through University

Learning Goals

1. To critically reflect on located (local) history and the effects of literature, art, etc. on regional identity
2. To employ and reflect on the modes selected to present such a history
3. To comprehend the presentational capacity of montage, mosaic, and collage as opposed to textual narratives
4. To develop the capacity for employing tools to create these local histories
5. To develop capacity for formalized learning activities outside traditional school structures (ie, in the field)

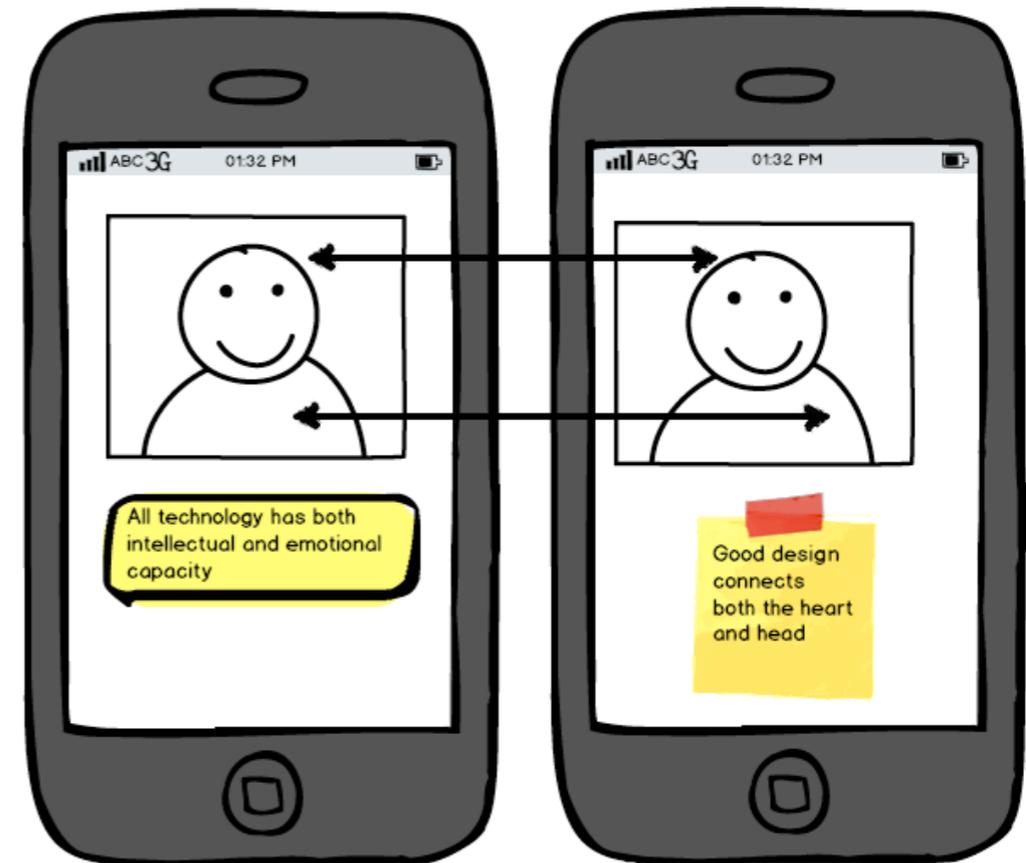
Artifacts (or Assessable Deliverables)

1. Collected media, including images, art, literature
2. Collected modes (image, audio, geographic, text, film)
3. Criteria for selection of this media and these modes (as a reflective activity)
4. Justification for choosing the particular presentation form (montage vs. collage vs. textual essay, etc.) discussing the affordances of each

5. Geographic information (GPS coordinates for the presentation) and justification for the choice of that location (why does this collection matter in this location? What memory are we actually trying to embed and what value does it provide to the community?)

6. Timeline (charting steps and workflow of this project is in itself a reflective activity). This is a critical step as it forces a think about the design of such a project, the implications of the individual steps, and the overall structure. It also forces consideration for tool selection, a technological literacy side effect of this project.

7. Media manipulations tools



Tools

Any number of these can work depending on what the learner actually chooses as the presentation form. Some are more useful for montages vs. mosaics vs. mashups so developing a set of tools that the learner feels comfortable with is important. I have organized these into categories based on their media type. Please note that these applications are very susceptible to change and any list of them will become outdated quickly. I find it helpful to think not in terms of the name of the tools, but rather in what kinds of media it allows me to manipulate.

Before we begin, I should mention that I am working right now exclusively in IOS so many of these choices reflect that. Some have Android or PC desktop versions although I imagine equivalents for all of these could easily be found with a search or two on [CNET](#) or via the [Android App store](#).

One should always remember that tools of this sort both augment and limit creativity. They make certain presentations possible while limiting others. Students should reflect on this as they are choosing their tools.

Images

[MacOSaiX](#)

[Diptic](#)

[Montage](#)

Audio

[Audioboo](#)

[Garage Band](#) (for composing soundtracks for mobile spaces)

[Soundgrid](#)

Video

[Lumify](#)

[iMovie](#)

[Camtasia](#)

Reflection/Blogging

[Tumblr](#)

[WordPress](#)

[Twitter](#) -don't doubt the power of Twitter for micro-reflections aggregated by the teacher through a common hashtag)

Mapping

[Flickr and Google Earth](#)

[Flickr Uploader](#) (tag these photos, people!)

[HistoryPin](#)

Mashups

[QWiki](#)

[Zeega](#)

Design/Workflow Illustration

I use [Pencil](#) for both the workflow and the wireframe aspects of a presentation. It is free and handy for sketching. Alternatively, any [mindmapping](#) application would probably do the trick as well. [Wallwisher/Padlet](#) is another good tool for organizing tools and process in some sort of coherency.

Activities

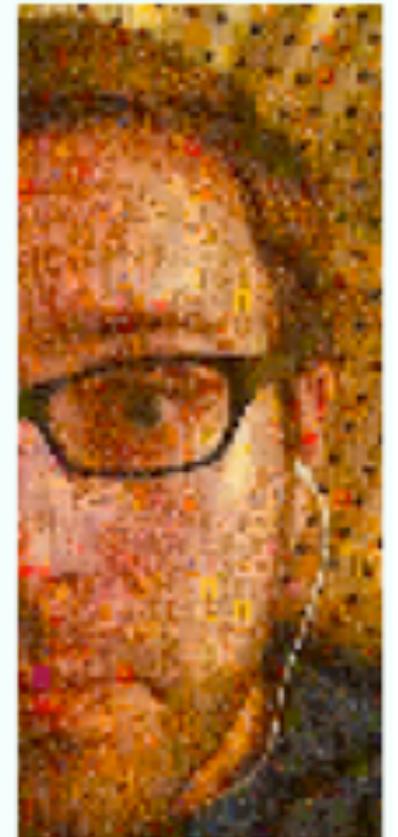
These activities foreground methods of selection quite prominently as they stress assembly and process. It is important for learners to not only justify their choice of materials and their methods of tool selection, but to reflect on the workflow to assemble those materials and what the assembly actually presents as knowledge. The following outline is reflective heavy, but these can be removed as needed.

1. Choose a location and research that location
2. Choose a thematic approach to the presentation of meaning in that location (a disciplinary assembly-literature, art, political science, geology, whatever)
3. Provide justification of choice of location and theme (text, multimodal)
4. Research and choose media for the presentation (Which images? Which passages? Which combinations?)
5. Research and choose combination of modes for the location (film, audio, image, text)
6. Reflection on choice of media and modes
7. Research and choose presentation assembly (montage, mosaic, collage, linear textual narrative)
8. Research and choose specific location within that larger locale to geoposition the creation
9. Reflect on choice of assembly and specific location
10. Research and choose tools for presentation
11. Develop workflow for use of these tools and media for assembly
12. Reflect on these tools and workflow
13. Develop final assembly

14. Embed final assembly geographically (through [HistoryPin](#) or some other service; conversely or additionally, participants can develop their own KLM coordinates and data as final, submitted project)
15. Disseminate final project: reflect on blog, embed in other mapping services, circulate via social media. This activity is essentially a final essay of sorts, something that capstones an investigation of a place. It develops reflective capacity, technological literacy, and media literacy and extends the notion of learning well beyond the confines of the physical classroom. It presents learning in the open, *in situ*. It also emphasizes the role of open interaction and dissemination, that these are useful artifacts of learning for the learner and the extended audience.

mLearning Field Activities: background and examples

This chapter provides background, metaphors for learning in mobile spaces, and potential examples on how these mobile creations might look for learners.



mLearning Field Activities: Examples & Background

Mobile technology creates learning opportunities that challenge the existing metaphors used for learners and learning. It helps to position the role of learning using a valid metaphor. All our understanding, all our workflows, all our constructions of understanding begin with these metaphors. The next section advances a few learning metaphors that might be useful with mobile learning.

mLearning analogy: flaneur is to bricoleur as scientist is to engineer?

I had mentioned in [a few previous posts](#), metaphors for mobile learning as technological interaction and use of (mobile) tools. The following is more about positioning the learner themselves in that interaction with tools and meaning making.

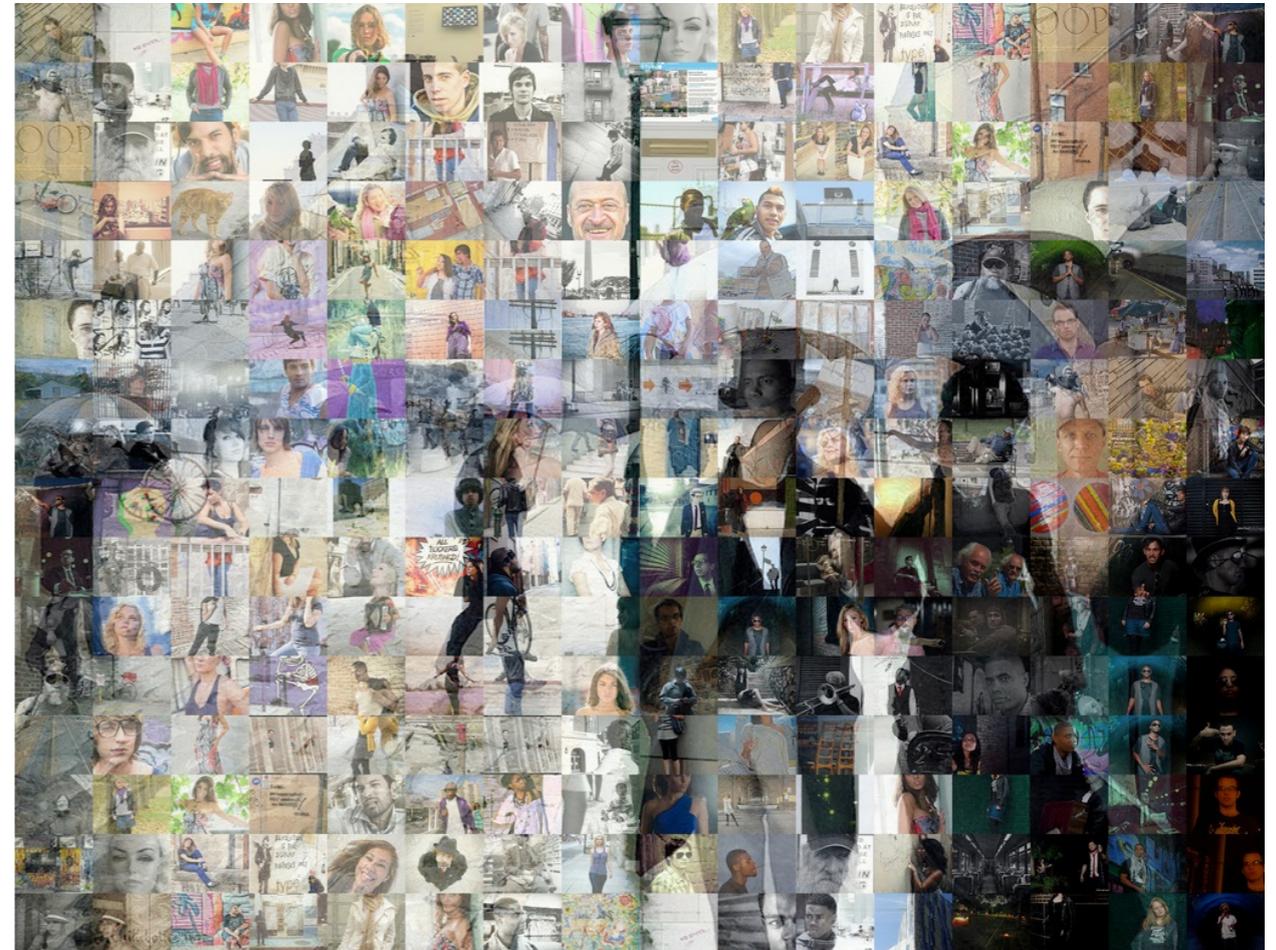
Flaneur is to Bricoleur as Engineer is to...

The term is bricoleur and it refers to a tinkerer, someone who uses a large variety of tools, materials, or constructs to 'make' something. It is a term with an anthropological root introduced by the sociologist [Levi-Strauss](#) in 1962:

“A term describing a type of thinking and symbolization; the opposite of “engineer”. The engineer creates specialized tools for specialized purposes. The bricoleur is a “jack-of-all-trades”, who uses few, non-specialized tools for a wide variety of purposes. There is a loose connection between, on the one hand, the bricoleur and “primitive” societies, and, on the other, the engineer and modern societies (see evolutionism). For Lévi-Strauss, the two concepts are the point of departure for a complex theoretical discussion of “the science of the concrete” in premodern, “primitive” cultures. (<http://www.anthrobase.com/Dic/eng/def/bricoleur.htm>)”

From a sociological perspective, it presents a distinction between primitive and modern cultures. However, for the purposes of writing it represents, as I see it, a learning stance or mindset to be adopted when confronted with new environments. I think it complements quite nicely the notion of the flaneur as learner, that meandering, wandering type sifting through the artifacts of a potential learning landscape. The bricoleur extends that wandering of the flaneur with tinkering, assembling and disassembling materials for general, not specified effect. The wanderer finds something interesting, tinkers with them, and occasionally something is learned through production. There are a thousand, already articulated educational

and linguistic uses of this bricoleur or bricolage (Deleuze, Guattari, Turkle, etc.), but I didn't want to go down the discourses route in this post as I would never come up again.



A remixed mosaic of Gustave Caillebotte's "Paris Street; Rainy Day," from 1877.

This approach doesn't negate or diminish in the slightest the notion of the scientist and engineer, or the 'science of the concrete', the notion of observation > hypothesizing > experimentation > deduction. It just provides a counterpoint for this approach, one that is valuable in times of flux or change. I might suggest that technology and the new media landscape being what it is, we are experiencing such a moment of flux. The variables aren't concrete enough, not defined enough, their assemblies, frames, and genres are not clearly articulated enough to systematically approach them in this deductive sense.

Application to mLearning: Systematic Flaneuring and Endless Tinkering: Defining the Variables

So the application I see here for mLearning is the positioning of the learner in the new media landscape made possible not only through the shifts of discourse and disciplinary activity, but also made possible through the technology itself. I rehash a passage [from Kress](#) I had [discussed before](#):

“The development of devices for ‘mobile learning’ relies on the existence of a habitus of mobility, provisionality, fluidity, etc. That which is ‘mobile’ is not knowledge or information, but is the individual’s habitus: whether I am out in the countryside, in my bed, or in a classroom is, relatively speaking, beside the point. What is not beside the point is the ability to bring things into conjunction which might previously have been relatively difficult to join. An instance of this might be data-logging. I take a device with me somewhere. On the device forms of information can be recorded (or it may be (pre-) specialised to the recording / coding of information).”

The flaneur and bricoleur sits perfectly within this scenario as mobile technology brings “things into conjunction which might have been relatively difficult to join.” We can peruse and assemble diverse modes of media, diverse situated perspectives, diverse and often incongruous themes, juxtapose time

(past) against itself (current), all simultaneously and non-linearly. We need wanderers and tinkerers at this stage of the knowledge cycle as the environment itself, the boundaries of activity, have yet to be clearly identified or defined. It is difficult to hypothesize or engineer when the variables of interaction and construction aren’t clearly identified. Akin to hypothesizing (not seriously) that the moon was made of cheese. So bring in the flaneurs and the bricoleurs and let them tinker their way through to structure. mLearning is at that stage of development where this type of activity is necessary.

What assemblies are possible in this scenario? What will constructed texts look like when produced in mobile environments? Framing the conversation around the materiality of what is being tinkered with and assembled and the social practices that create meaning around these assemblies is important and so I turn to the ever-handy [Glossary of Multimodal Terms](#) website for a definition of materiality:

“In multimodal theorizing, materiality refers to the fact that modes are taken to be the product of the work of social agents shaping material, physical ‘stuff’ into meaningful stuff, that is, into cultural / semiotic resources. This materiality has important semiotic potentials in itself: sound has different affordances to ‘graphic’ inscription; gesture offers different potentials to colour; and so on.”

It is this materiality that encapsulates the wandering and the tinkering and accounts for it en masse, as a social product of negotiated meaning. In other words, we (collectively) tinker and toy and assemble meaning from these scraps of materiality and through these tools (mobile) and then negotiate our meanings with one another. Then and only then is meaning/knowledge produced. Like any brainstorming or creative process (tinkering most certainly is), much of it won’t stick to the wall. A lot of it will seem absurd or trite or infantile or just plain wrong. But we don’t always know what meaning these assemblies will take before they are constructed (we aren’t the engineers in this scenario); only in their realized form, does meaning present itself. Mobile learning provides this opportunity for an extended wander, an extended tinker, an assembly of the farthest reaches of materiality itself. An opportunity to collide worlds of meaning that have yet to be collided.

It is not the only path to meaning, but the flaneur/bricoleur learning mindset is an especially fruitful one for environments or times of flux. Ie, the world as we know it. Also, for mobile learning as the environment it creates is the definition of flux and ephemerality.

Perhaps an example of the flaneur/bricoleur approach to learning through mobile technology would be a good idea.

New York City and mLearning Field Trips: A Day with my wife: Example 1

[A Day in New York City: how mobile technology allowed me to narrate \(ie, relate the significance beyond the activities\)](#) from [Michael Gallagher](#) on [Vimeo](#).

I believe mobile technology has changed the way that we not only interact with our worlds, but how we might be inclined to express that interaction. It is an augmentative technology that allows me to express my appreciation of people, places, and

experience in fairly complex ways. With or without this technology, all narratives are nothing without context so let me set the stage.

Context is King: Our Route

1. Purpose: to get a visa at the Korean Consulate in New York City.
2. My wife and I took the Long Island Railroad (LIRR) from Manhasset to Penn Station, New York City.
3. We walked to where I thought the Korean Consulate was located at 45th and 1st Avenue (I was wrong).
4. We walked to where the Korean Consulate actually was at



57th and Park Avenue

5. We took the 6 Train subway from 59th and Lexington to Bleeker Street on the Lower East Side.

6. We walked to [Russ & Daughters](#) on Houston Street.

8. We walked to Washington Square Park and watched the world go by.

9. We took the A Train Subway from 4th Street back to Penn Station

10. We took the LIRR home to Long Island.

Content: The Media

- [listen to 'Washington Square Park, New York City: April, 2013' on Audioboo](#)
- [listen to 'Grand Central Station, New York Station: April 2013' on Audioboo](#)

Context: The Emotion and Significance (the meaning) of the experience went beyond the activities themselves

The day was beautiful. It was sunny. New York City didn't bother me as it normally might. The dirt didn't affect me. The energy seemed infectious. The parks were full of people in a lazy late Friday afternoon kind of way. The doors of the bars were open and inviting. The food at Russ & Daughters was primordially good. The plane flew into the video I was recording on the way home. The whole day was a litany of infectious serendipity. And the mobile technology allowed me to record, compose, and disseminate that. It improved my capacity for relating a story of a good day, a perfect day.

To see this mLearning Field Activity as constructed, please see my [post here](#).

Liquid learning: audio collected and assembled by the water: Example 2

I had recorded a few more [Audioboo](#) recordings over the weekend and was giving those a listen and something struck me. The audio signature was different from those collected elsewhere. I don't simply mean the obvious aural characteristics of the water lapping on the shore or anything like that. I was struck by the sound of socialization, how people were influenced by or interacted with the water itself. It



changed the tones of the recordings.

Now how much of this is my interpretation (I assume quite a bit) and not anything particularly objective or even observable, I am not sure. But I don't think I would be going out on a limb by suggestion that water influences the way we interact with it and each other. It provides a governing structure in which we make meaning. In some cases merely being beside the water makes people turn playful; in others, it fills them with dread or foreboding. It does both for me. I marvel at and am awed by its ferocious simplicity. In the same breath, I am frightened by its relentless vastness. So long story short, I stick to rivers whenever possible. More accessible; less stressful. I think Joseph Conrad gets it, but the point he raises about restlessness is valid. We are drawn to water as it reproduces the rhythms of our own wandering souls.

“The sea has never been friendly to man. At most it has been the accomplice of human restlessness.” -Joseph Conrad

Water has fascinated us for eons and will always. It is the stuff of life and the object of appreciation. It is the most perfectly sublime organic invention. I suspect it is the archetype we base much of our understanding of the world around. It has incredible psychological effect and power. It reveals, completes, tears asunder, other hyperbolic statements.

“For whatever we lose (like a you or a me), It's always our self we find in the sea.”
-e.e. cummings

It most certainly effects social interaction. And, as such, it seems a particularly apt metaphor for elearning and mlearning (see, I managed to jam it in there). Learning through fluid space and connections. Ephemeral constructs, transient connections, no intersection of time, space, and socialization is ever the same. We bend according to its fluid structure, much like it bends when we try to contain it.

Possible mLearning Field Activity: Identify, Record, and Present the Audio Signature of a Place, Reflect on how that signature affects interaction in that space. To listen to any of these recordings, click the links below:

- **[Hyde Park, London: February 2013](#)**
- **[Shadwell Basin near the Thames River, London: January 2013](#)**
- **[Gyeongju, Korea: April, 2012](#)**

Designing spaces for memory and (e)learning: Westminster Abbey: Example 3

The connections drawn here will be fragile, occasionally nonsensical, and presumably completely unworkable. But the search for metaphor and its application to designed spaces continues. And eventually someone is able to put it all together. The other day my wife and I wandered around [Westminster Abbey](#) and marveled at its scope of history and national memory. It is a place of national consciousness and its thousands of nooks and crannies, abbeys and crypts provide a narrative of a story of a people. It is narrow and cramped in spaces, dramatically expansive in others. At times it is 'messy' and measured simultaneously. Things here and there, strewn about, with equal parts awe and mystery. More than all of this, it is a collection, a curated (in the most organic sense of the word) cabinet of curiosities on a grand scale. And Jeremy Irons does the audio tour. Your move, every other museum in the world.

It is an almost perfect metaphoric space for memory and the how mind 'collects' and curates. The endless plaques and crypts, tombs thrust on one another all battle for one's attention. Depending on the light or the cold or the shuffling of feet, different alignments take place, different perspectives. Jeremy Irons himself pointed one out, how in the [Poets' Corner](#), the statue of Shakespeare looks down on the two greatest Shakespearian actors of their respective times, [David Garrick](#) and [Laurence Olivier](#). The progenitor and the progenies, all within sight of Geoffrey Chaucer, the father of them all. One stands in one spot and these all align naturally. In another and the perspective shifts and other connections are drawn. These are broad examples of people. But our minds do this with ideas, concepts, and content regularly. Juxtaposing Shakespeare to T.S. Eliot or W.H. Auden, slamming modernity with Elizabethan glory. Glancing towards the tomb of Elizabeth all while standing on Darwin's plaque. There is no connection there apparent; the mind will manufacture one to remember them both. This is memory itself. We link one object to another, regardless of their similarities or mutual characteristics.

"There is no memory without remembering" ([source](#))

So the process of national memory as born out in Westminster Abbey is assisted in the spatial irregularities of the place itself. Tight corners here, broad spaces there. Some piled on one another, some with the grandeur and glory they thought their due. A king in earshot of a toll collector (Chaucer again), royalty with scientists, posts with diplomats. Ideas circling and meshing, all under the watch of that elaborate canopy. So the place itself evokes the past, encourages connections of this sort,

enthusies new juxtapositions and learning. We learn who we are and then remind ourselves who we are through novel connections, all made possible by this seemingly haphazard structure. Unlike many museums (Westminster Abbey is a fully functional church, so please forgive this museum tag), nothing is sequestered there. Everything is spilling out into everything else. This is a living, breathing space. And it offers some interesting considerations for designing elearning spaces.

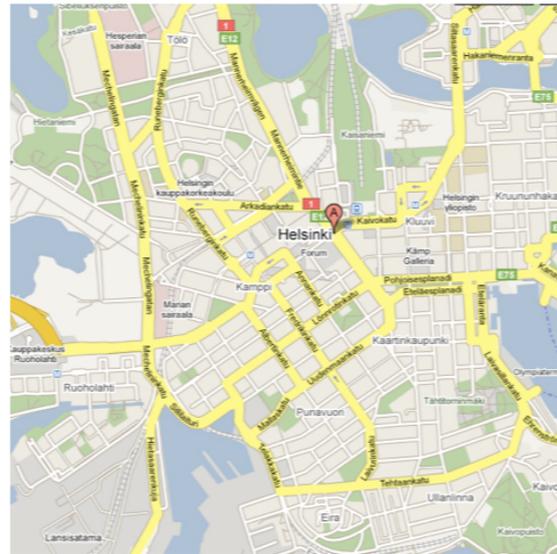
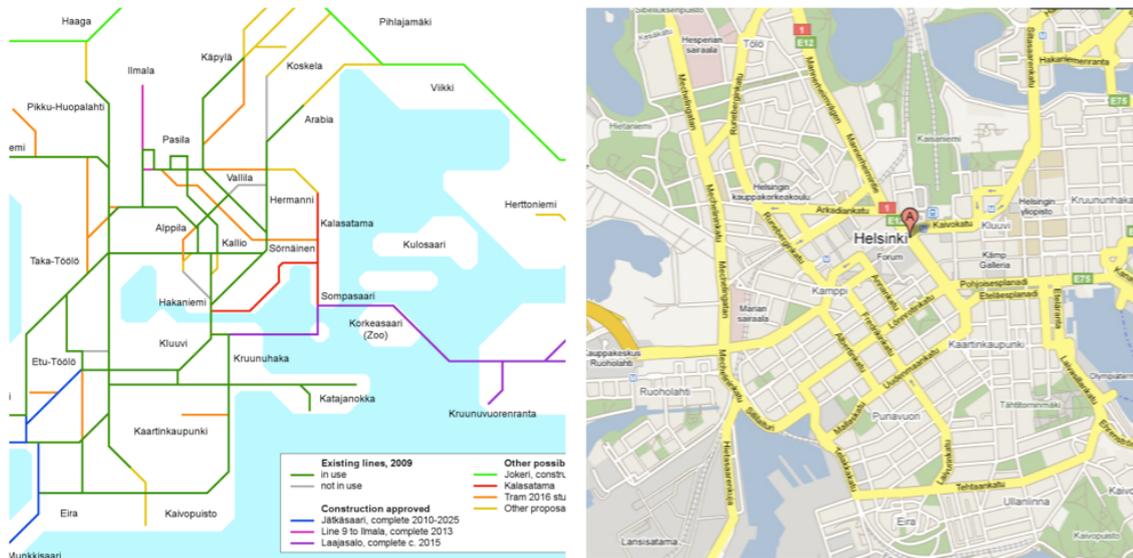
Sequestering scaffolds and sequestering stunts



The biggest takeaway from this clumsy attempt at making Westminster a learning space is this: objects are discrete and objects are assembled into meaning. So each statue has meaning in and of itself. They can be read and digested and researched further with little to no connection to the larger environment at work in Westminster. Yet, they stand in the open and beg to be assembled into larger chunks of

meaning and memory. This assembly is the language of visual design and Westminster has it in spades.

Designing for elearning generally sequesters for the sake of clarity and immediate learning objective. We do this especially with introductory learning where concepts of importance need to be foregrounded and not muddled. We scaffold our way to more complexity. However, elearning design also tends to do this with complex



learning or discussion. This is often the limitation of the LMS or learning technology being employed. It doesn't organically expand with the changing needs or intellectual pursuits. I suppose I might refer to this as responsive design if I were being

more ed-techy. But even with complex design, there is still structure, however amoebic and fluid. So, the nooks and crannies of the Abbey's space lends

itself to broader learning and novel connections. By putting the objects of observation directly in our view and in our immediate consciousness, the space begs for connections and assemblies. If one stares at the tomb of Elizabeth long enough, it begins to recede into the background. That isn't because it ceased to be interesting; rather, it has been assigned space, connected with other memories, and made available for reuse. It is an artifact for later learning.

So I caution against sequestering, but I do look for loose, chaotic structure in my elearning design. Some place with some nooks and crannies, with some space to spill out on the proverbial floor the tools of my learning. This is how PLEs are designed, I think. Responsive spaces, but jammed with meaning both real and imagined. We want to build and assemble these things into meaning. So design elearning and mlearning accordingly. Give it space and give it a pliable structure, simultaneously. Completely open and completely closed often produce the same result. Nothing.

Design the mind into your learning spaces

And by that I mean design the flow and structure of the mind into your learning spaces. Challenge memory with juxtaposition (seemingly incongruous juxtaposition), challenge understanding with contradiction. Provide space where a vantage point is changed often (not unlike the Shakespeare to Garrick and Olivier vantage point, which obviously privileges Shakespeare—we never exceed our parents, this positioning might suggest). Provide spaces for those sorts of confrontations, contradictions and juxtapositions. This doesn't always have to be dramatic redesigning of content and processes. Merely flipping a view from left to right, from up to down, from black to white. Shades of difference with significant learning impact.

The mind (at least mine) works in assemblies. Westminster Abbey begs to be assembled based on the people, the light, the structure, the mood. In shifts with each passing hour. Have mobile learners assemble, reflect, evolve, and synthesize. Construct montages of an intellectual vantage point, challenge inclusions and exclusions. Broaden discovery through these assemblies. One of my montages is below. Each image is a reflection of some adage or idea or theory that resonated and structures my view. As a learner, I look to be challenged on including any or all of those.

Space for me to wander and wonder

The beauty of Westminster Abbey (or at least one of the beauties) is the nature of the engagement the average visitor has to the place. Everyone is given audio guides and everyone is unified through Jeremy Irons (all hail Jeremy Irons). From there, however, it is designed as an exercise in flânerie. Wander here and there and take it in as you please. Use the audio guide when you want to learn more or not, depending on your level of interest. Make meaning for yourself. Pick a vantage point and construct something from it.

It struck me that one could pick any number of pivots in which to engage the place itself. Architecturally, spiritually, historically, romantically, etc. All were available to use as a gaze in which to construct further meaning. Elearning spaces can be this as well. The Internet itself is. A thousand points of entry and exit depending on want and need. But I suspect design should be more than merely utility (although one should always have utility). There should be a sense of grandeur in the arrangement of space. It is the mystical glue that holds the entire structure together.

So I wouldn't hesitate to construct some presentative flair into my designed spaces. Let learners marvel at the space and the content and community within the space. We have always done this with our learning tools or spaces like illuminated manuscripts. These aren't merely functional texts (vehicles of information). They are poems of praise to the mystical glue, the fluid spaces of awe and wonder. Wikipedia is this to some degree. It is our collective memory and it can awe with its assembly of text and media. It awes me daily with its breadth and capacity for self-directed learning. Yet, I want more. I want to be inspired by my spaces online. Thanks, Westminster Abbey for providing a model for how I might do that.

