How could Pokemon GO change online learning?

…so I admit: I am **not** the Pokemon Go sought-after demographic. I am a 37 year-old attorney and college professor…and proud father. Yet my two boys, ages 10 and 12, are the target demographic. This makes it okay for me to get excited about hunting pocket monsters around town, right?

I downloaded Pokemon GO and Squirtle immediately popped up in my living room. Yes, Squirtle was in my living room…sort of. I saw it in front of my television, yet only when I viewed 'reality' through the app; it used the camera on my phone to super-impose Squirtle in front of me. I now had two realities- one through my eyes and one through the phone (*second reality*).

Squirtle had no chance of escape due to my years of playing Skee-Ball; I threw a Pokeball to catch it, which **fully** missed it's intended target, yet the power of the Pokeball (upon opening) caught Squirtle like the Ghostbusters caught Slimer!

I caught Weedle and Pidgey, at my local outdoor mall, later on that day. Hunting is simply; I open the Pokemon Go app, which is GPS-synched to my phone's location, and then look at the map to spot where the Pokemon are located. When I get in close enough physical proximity to a Pokemon, I can click on the map, which opens my *second reality*, and catch it with a Pokeball.

I felt an odd sense of accomplishment. I imagine this is how Dog the Bounty Hunter feels when he successfully apprehends a bail jumper. I then thought about my two realities…reality and *second reality*. I then realized that Pokemon Go is going to change the very nature of our reality…and thus ultimately change the fundamental concept of college distance learning.

What if Wal-Mart created a 'Wal-Spot' app based upon the Pokemon Go framework? Think about it: Wal-Mart could encourage shopping by randomly releasing Wal-Spots in their stores that customers find the same way that I hunt for Pokemon. The Wal-Spots could range from heavily discounted items to free items. The customer could 'catch' the Wal-Spot by throwing a Smiley Face ball at it and then presenting it at check-out for the special deal or discount. The possibilities are endless.

Then again, we have all seen the Black Friday opening-of-Wal-Mart camera footage of people being trampled (and even killed). Maybe this is not a good idea.

…what if a distance-learning student has a scheduled class at 1 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and the student attends class by putting on Google glasses (or something similar), clicking on an icon that populates through the glasses at a specific time, and the *second reality* is a classroom where the Professor is **actually** standing there, lecturing, and writing on a dry-erase board? The Professor would be in a classroom (anywhere in the world), live streaming on a web camera, and instructing in real-time. The Professor would wear glasses that live-stream the web cameras of the attending students, so he or she would see a series of boxes wherein the live stream of each student is occurring (think the introduction to the Brady Bunch show).

This concept could be used for mentoring, tutoring, office hours…the applications are endless. Yes, the technology for this is currently expensive, yet so were DVDs when they came out. My college roommate paid 500 dollars for a DVD player, and 35 dollars for one DVD, in 1999.

Pokemon Go has given us a new insight into our world's obsession with technology, from the positive of people voluntary 'getting off of couch' to the tragic 'walking off of a cliff' incident. It has also presented a framework for a *second reality* that might not be as far away as one might think. Higher education continually seeks to adopt new technologies to bridge the online learning physical distance gap and to foster higher engagement among teachers and students.

Who is ready to 'beam up' to my lectures? I have this lecture on how to catch the Pokemon Kangaskhan without having to physically be in Australia or New Zealand…