A Prototype iPhone App for Student Success

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Introduction

Adult Learning Context

- The design team created a prototype iPhone Student Success app in response to the 50% retention rate for first year community college students (University of Texas, Survey of Entering Student Engagement, 2012).

- The design consolidates existing online electronic resources such as student success Websites and first year videos into a downloadable app that can be made available through the iTunes store. The technology is also available to users of Android devices though different coding is needed.

- The adult learning context in community colleges: mobility, communication, digital networks, virtual communities, transcendent. Learners are constantly on the move; learners transcend space and time; learners move from topic to topic; learners move in and out of engagement with technology (Wilson & Blackstock, 2012)

- Studies by PEW Research Center identify high levels of technology use by community college students and offer strong support for the use of an app as a scaffold to meet community college student success and retention goals.

Background Statistics
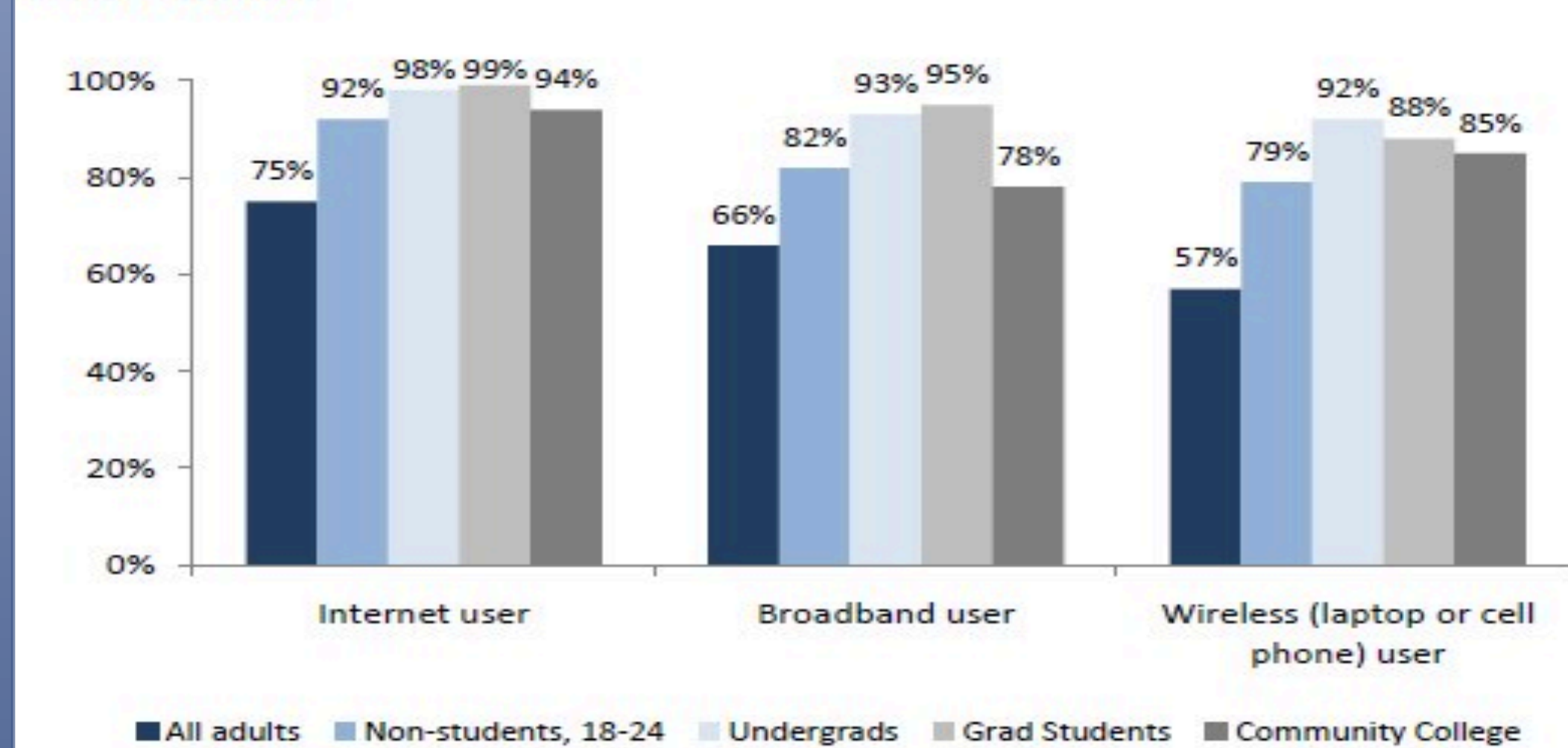
College students and their gadgets

Percentage of all adults in each group who own different devices

	All adults	Non-students, 18-24	Undergrads	Grad students	Community College
Cell phone	82%	89%	96%	99%	94%
Desktop computer	60	58	59	73	67
Laptop computer	52	64	88	93	70
iPod or mp3 player	45	69	84	86	72
Game console	41	64	58	49	61
e-book reader	5	4	9	7	4
Tablet computer	4	4	5	5	4

Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project 2010 tracking surveys. All include landline and cell phone interviews. N for all adults=9,769; n for 18-24 year old non-students=717; n for four-year undergrads=246, n for grad students=112, n for community college students=164.

Connected college students

Percentage of American adults in each group who use the internet, have broadband at home, and connect wirelessly
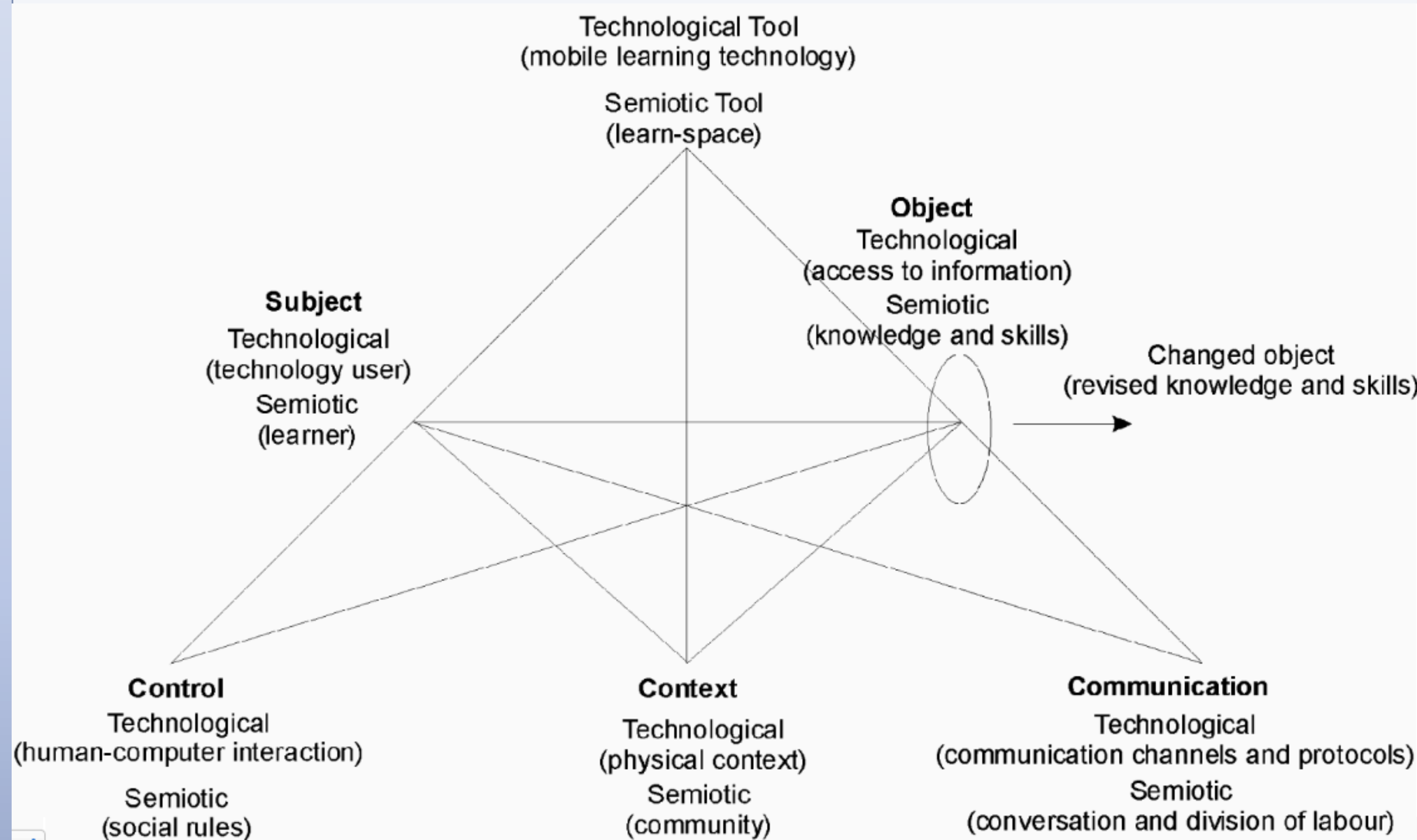

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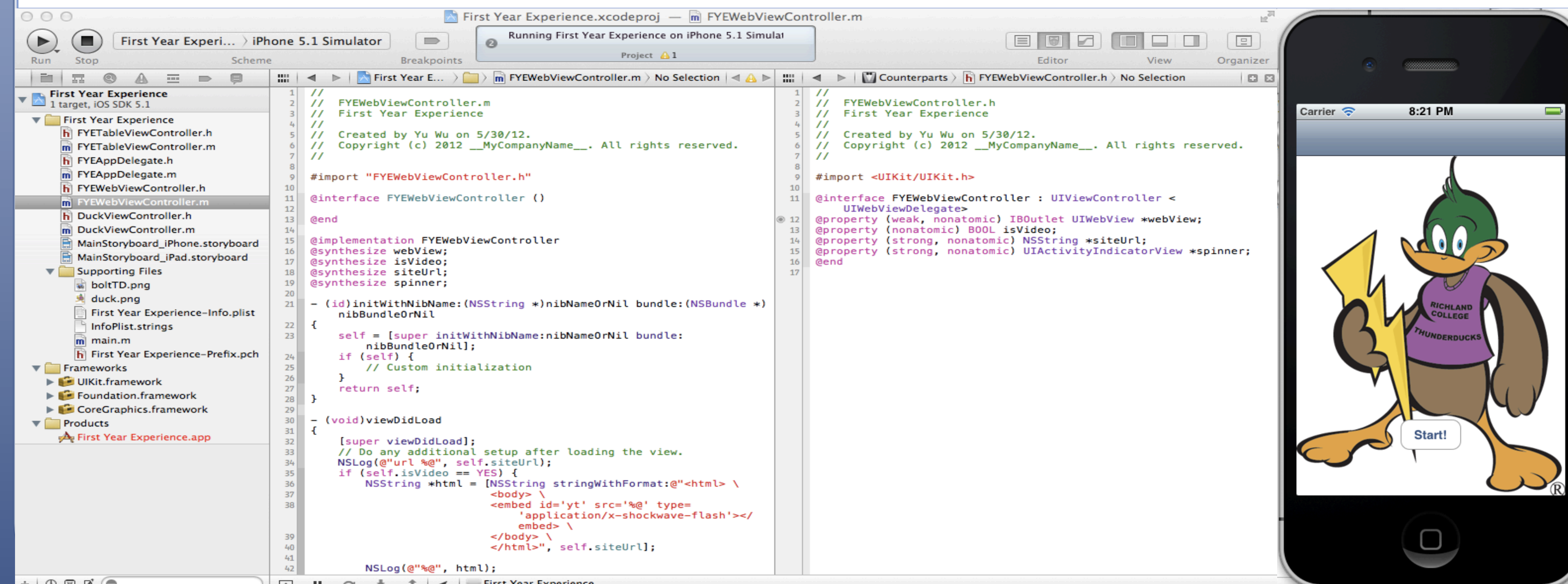
Toward a Theory of Mobile Learning for Student Success
An Application of Cultural Historical Activity Theory
(Sharples, Taylor, Vavoula, 2005)

- Apple's Xcode software provides all the tools you need.
- Form a design team with key stakeholders and involve students in the process--try a school-wide design contest!
- State clear goals and objectives
- Coding; create and configure the project and develop the app. You need a great avatar for the app store.
- Publish the app in the app store.
- Conduct a pilot test with students and other stakeholders. Make changes based on feedback.
- Publish the app in the app store!

Conclusions

- Community colleges need to experiment on the leading edge of technology that has the potential to impact students in a big way for a small cost.
- Use your college's values and local culture to build an app that fits your culture, students, and environment.
- Intention and Design Matter!
- Use the app to collect data and survey information on students' first year experiences. Apps are flexible and can be coded to do almost anything. Be creative!
- Message students directly to their phones with important communications and motivational messages.
- Consider hiring an expert coder as a consultant for your project
- Devise a systematic way to assess the project's impact, but expect blind spots as you move forward.
- Evaluate other school's use of apps such as Stanford and Central Michigan
- The app is only one piece of your student success effort.

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