Personal Learning Reflection

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I have truly enjoyed this course which I have found to be interesting and informative.   When reflecting upon this course I have learned about many new social networks, effective teaching strategies when integrating technology, and about 21st Century Skills. This class has been very beneficial. I have learned how to use several new types of technologies. These technologies can be easily integrated into my classroom since they are all found on the internet. In addition, they are all free.

1. What are some things that you have learned about effective teaching strategies when integrating technology?

I have learned that TPACT's three essential areas of knowledge (content, pedagogy, and technology) are essential when teaching children. In order for TPACT to be a successful teaching method, one must understand the content being taught, comprehend the technology tool being utilized, and present the information to the children in an effective way. These three components of TPACK must be balanced to effectively integrate technology into teaching.

Teachers also must spend time discussing digital citizenship and copyright regulations. In addition, students need to be aware of cyber bullying. Also, it is important to discuss privacy settings of the students' social networks. This knowledge is essential for proper protocol when utilizing technology.

In addition, I have learned a great deal about different learning styles. Teachers must appeal to a variety of learning styles to ensure that each child is benefiting from the way the information is presented. Technologies can often appeal to a variety of learning styles.

2. How did integrating the Internet help you think about and evaluate uses of technology?

By integrating the internet into new technologies, this expanded the potential growth of knowledge infinitely. In addition, we utilized the internet to help gather and share information. As we learned about different technologies or skills, we reflected upon them on our blog. This helped me not only share my reflections, but also taught me how to use a blog. I was also able to learn at great deal from my classmates' reflections on their blogs as well.

3. Which of the assignments that you turned in do you feel really exemplifies good teaching with technology and why?

I think our SIG project exemplifies good teaching with technology. I gained a deeper understanding of wikis in addition to many other skills. There has been much time spent in this class discussing Web 2.0 and the ability to use technology to easily collaborate with others. The

members of our group collaborated very well with each other. We used Google Docs as a place we would meet, collaborate, discuss, and put together our project. Prior to this class I had not used Google Docs, I quickly realized how beneficial it is during this assignment. I think it is fascinating to be able to work on a document simultaneously with my classmates. We found the chat feature to be very advantageous as well. During this project, we learned how to use a bookmarking tool. This was very helpful. I usually place useful websites on my favorites, but if I needed to tag several for a project I would now use Delicious. It is beneficial to be able to write notes about each site. There were many skills I learned from this one project.

4. How have you met your goals established in your Personal Growth Plan?

I am now better suited to integrate technology across the curriculum since I have more experience with different forms of technology and a deeper understanding of them. I have been exposed to a wide variety of technologies that are very easy to use and can be easily integrated into the classroom. Some of my goals in my Personal Growth Plan was to create a wiki for my classroom and learn more about other technologies. I have now begun to develop my own class wiki page. In addition, this class has exposed me to a variety of new networks. I have now begun using Twitter, Blog, RSS feeds, Social Bookmarking, and Google- Docs, Calendar, and Reader. I have already learned a great deal from these new social networks. It has greatly expanded the number of people I am able to now connect with. Through social networking with colleagues, classmates, and other people interested in the field of education, I have gained new ideas and insights, discussed a variety of topics, and have reflected upon my teaching practices which has allowed me to become a better teacher. I have also begun to implement some of these networks into my own classroom.

5. Do you have any new goals? What are your plans for reaching your new goals and your long-term goals after this course is over?

I would like to continue implementing what I have learned in this course into my own teaching and daily learning. This will improve my teaching practices within my classroom and will help me better meet the educational needs of my students. This summer I will continue adding to my class wiki page so it will be ready to be used at the beginning of the year by my students and their parents. When the school year begins, I will sign up for professional development opportunities in which I can continue learning about technology and 21st Century Skills. Also, when I create my Personal Growth Plan for my school district, I will include a technology goal for the year. Furthermore, I will expose my students to as many new technologies as possible early in the year so they can utilize and improve their skills throughout the school year. I will be using the school computer lab as much as possible to achieve this goal. Lastly, I will try to utilize technology at least once during every unit.