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CEP 807

The Future Looks Bright

Professional Development is defined as the advancement of skills or expertise to succeed in a particular profession, especially through continued education. When I became an educator I knew that Professional Development would be an essential part of my growth throughout my career. I view my progression toward “perfect teaching” within the subject area of Social Studies as a journey and not a destination. To this end, I will continue to employ whatever resources necessary to constantly educate myself and improve the teaching within my classroom. In an effort to improve my educational background and expertise, I have completed a Master of Arts in Educational Technology at Michigan State University. I firmly believe that this degree will allow me to further my growth in the areas of educational theory and the implementation of technology within the classroom. This reflection will serve as a guide to evaluate what I have learned throughout my experience in the master’s program.

What I Will Remember Most:

There is much that I have learned throughout these few years that I

anticipate will be valuable information for my profession moving forward. Most of this subject matter revolves around educational theory and best practice within the classroom, as well as evaluating and repurposing technology for educational purposes in the classroom. This master's program has prepared me to be an effective leader and teacher of technology education. All of these theories and tools are applicable as I develop projects, lessons, units, and assessments for my students. Lastly, it has prepared me for any number of future careers in educational technology outside of the classroom.

Looking back at my master's degree, there are a number of courses that will leave a lasting impact on my career moving forward. Most importantly the theoretical framework I learned while taking CEP 800, CEP 815, and CEP 820. These educational theories gave me a structure to create and establish sound lessons in the classroom. The best example of this was the course book, *Why Don't Students Like School?* This text taught me to evaluate why children do not enjoy school by analyzing statistical data about why children are not successful in the classroom. This text covers a variety of issues relating to how students learn and why they do not enjoy their schooling. While not all of these theories are applicable to every teacher, there is much that can be learned from this book. I hope to utilize these principles to improve student growth and learning in the future.

One of the most valuable schemas I hoped to achieve during my graduate classes was where to find and develop resources to use in my classroom. During my time in CEP 810, 811, and 812 I learned how to find technology tools and repurpose them for educational use. Over the last three years of teaching I have seen how positively students respond to technology based lessons. In the past I was only applying trial and error to how I created these lessons. In these courses I learned of several theoretical principles that I will apply moving forward. The first is the TPACK framework developed by Punya Mishra and Matthew J. Koehler at Michigan State University. This framework asks teachers to not just use technology, but rather to combine their pedagogy, technology, and content knowledge when approaching such lessons. When combining all three of these areas a teacher can create “good” technology education.

Another cognitive framework I would like to apply when approaching how to use technology within my classroom is the SAMR Model developed by Ruben Puentedura. I began to utilize this model when I created an online course management system while taking CEP 822. This set of principles establishes that the purpose of using technology within education should be to enhance my lessons. SAMR establishes four unique ways you can employ technology; Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition. Substitution and Augmentation seek to enhance curriculum while using technology. Modification

and Redefinition develop a transformation to change how teachers teach subject matter. While Substitution and Augmentation are valuable in certain situations where lessons can be redesigned using technology, I firmly believe that an educator's goal should always be to Modify and Redefine learning using technology. An example of this Modification and Redefinition are the many uses of Web 2.0 tools that allow teachers, students, educators, and scholars to collaborate using the Internet. This feat was previously unachievable without the use of technology in my classroom.

Another area of great interest for myself in education is the topic of creativity and how to develop this skill within learners. During my time in CEP 800, CEP 815, and CEP 822 I created my philosophical framework and outlook on creativity. I firmly believe that this is one of greatest problems facing the traditional school model today. Ken Robinson describes this issue well in his RSA talk titled *Changing Educational Paradigms*. His belief is that the traditional schooling model does not allow students to develop creativity through problem-based learning. The traditional school teaches students to search for one correct answer by listening to their teaching and reading a textbook. To develop creativity there were theories covered during this summer that will help changing this growing dilemma. The first concept to acknowledge is that we must teach students that creativity is a goal-oriented process developing solutions that are NEW.

Novel: Unique, Fresh, Etc.

Effective: Valuable, Useful, Etc.

Whole: Organic, Organized, Etc.

The next concept I will remember to include within my curriculum design is the educational five-step framework to creativity. These five steps are;

Preparation - interest in a problem

Incubation - churning below threshold of a consciousness

Insight - Aha, Pieces falling into place

Evaluation - Is this worth pursuing?

Elaboration - Translation into final product

It will be important to include these five steps in the learning process when developing projects for my students. As the creator, I must embed these five steps when designing creative lessons for my students.

Additionally, as an educator I must remember to employ the Seven Habits of Mind when constructing lessons, projects, and curriculum. I learned and developed this framework in CEP 800 during the summer of 2013. These seven habits of mind or cognitive tools are:

1 perceiving - observing and imaging

2 patterning - your ability to see patterns and formulate new ones

3 abstracting - come up with the fundamental meaning and apply it

4 embodied thinking - kinesthetic thinking + empathy

5 modeling - dimensional thinking - designing and reworking

6 play - deep play is constructing a new way of being in the world by playing

(failure - trial and error)

7 synthesizing - putting multiple ways of knowing together (any of the above six)

Of all of these habits of mind I am most interested in developing more “deep play” in my teaching. I firmly believe that as educators we often do not allow students the opportunity to actually “play” while learning. Teachers often tell students they are “wrong” or give them limited time to learn a concept. The best way to utilize “deep play” within the classroom is to create project based learning and facilitate longer time period learning opportunities so that learners can grow at their own pace.

The Future:

My personal manifesto looking forward on my career for the next five years is developed from my experiences as a teacher, student, and life long

learner. It was refined during my time completing this Master's degree. It also incorporates my goals as an educator of young people. I firmly believe that my passion for my profession will continue to drive me to develop my curriculum, teaching and learning environment to provide additional opportunities for student learning.

I believe that the goal of every educator should be to mentor students, assisting them in educational discovery and construction of knowledge. I believe that this is accomplished through inclusive teaching which incorporates various learning styles and backgrounds. A teacher must diversify how and why they teach subjects in order to include all cultural, social, ideological, and psychological individuals in the learning process. Technology is paramount to the movement. Our goal as educators should also be social progress both for the person and society, this I believe is essential for education. I believe education is student driven as well as teacher driven. A teacher must not only transmit knowledge, but include students in the process allowing for a positive democratic classroom environment. This is accomplished by incorporating student input in unit planning, discipline, lessons, etc. Lastly, I believe a teacher must always be forward thinking and reflective in nature. A teacher has to constantly push themselves toward discovering new and exciting ways to teach. This is achieved through reflecting upon lessons, units, and incorporating collaboration with colleagues and input from students. In reflecting upon our practice we, along with

the students, are working towards improving education.

To employ this philosophy there are a variety of steps I will take in the future of my profession. All of these ideas were created due to what I learned throughout my time in the MAET program. The first step I must take is to continue to grow as an educator. In my career I must attend conferences, participate in research, collaborate, share, remain “plugged in”, and “risk take” to find best practice in my own educational environment. This will require that I utilize my personal learning network, PLN, to become aware of new philosophies and approaches to learning. Using social media tools like Twitter and Facebook will be beneficial in the future. The next area I must continue improve is remaining “plugged in” using educational research databases and news sources such as; Education Weekly, Education News, Edutopia, and EdTech k-12 Magazine. Furthermore, because I am an educator of Social Studies there are numerous subject area resources I must continue to make use of as well. History Channel, The Economist, World History of Us All, and various current world news sources will benefit me greatly within my content area.

Throughout my time in the MAET program I have seen the value of collaborative organizations on improving my teaching. In the area of technology education there are many organizations that provide professional development opportunities. I am currently a member of the Michigan Association for Computer

Users in Learning (MACUL), and in the future I am a member of The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE). Both of these organizations will contribute to my future as I continue to expand my use of the TPACK framework. These organizations will also help facilitate the use of new lessons and technologies within the classroom. One of the greatest challenges related to technology education is the idea that this field is constantly in flux. To become a successful educator who uses technology effectively I must stay current. I found out about the value of these organizations in my classes, and I will continue to use them in the future. This will also benefit my student body that continues to use these resources for personal use. I believe that it is also my job to build digital citizenship within my students. I must use these new technologies to help them become positive users of technology in their own lives.

In conclusion, this MAET degree has given me the tools to be a successful educator and leader within my profession. I have learned the value of educational technology and how to utilize it in the classroom. I have developed the tools to repurpose technology for educational use, and created tools for dynamic learning in my classroom. Most importantly, this program has instilled in me a desire to be a life long learner. I will continue to be guided by my passion to educate and inspire young people. I will constantly utilize all of these tools to improve upon my craft as an educator. I will be driven to improve and push

towards improving educational systems for student success in whatever occupation I pursue.