

Synthesis Reflection

ETEC 565A
Karalea Hoyano
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University of British Columbia

Flight Path

Reflecting back to my flight path shows the long journey that ETEC 565a has taken me on. I started with a very specific goal in mind, and with that I ended up going in a very different direction. I found that as the course rolled on, my ideas, visions, understandings and goals changed. The course unfolded in a very different way than I had originally anticipated. I had a vision of making a class website and connecting it to all the curriculum goals and prescribed learning outcomes, I have a vision of self led learning where I would create my own projects and assignments. As the course continued, I learned that that was not the path this course was headed. The plans I had seemed far fetched and less and less appropriate given the learning that was being acquired as the time rolled past. I changed my flight path several times, and reflected on it to a point of obsessiveness! I eventually let go of what I felt needed to be achieved and instead went down a path that seemed appropriate, enjoyable, passionate and fun. I turned my flight path completely around and am happy with the way this course has unfolded and the learning outcomes I have overcome and acquired. It is fun to sit back and reflect upon something even though it was only a few months back, it is amazing how the brain can change paths, adjust, evolve and amaze in such a short time. I am proud of the path I am currently on and feel my journey has been productive and educational.

E-Learning tool kit

What a fantastic resource. I came back to the tool kit many times throughout the course to make sure I was on the right track. In particular, I used it most when creating my Moodle. I found the LMS (Learning Management System) link to be the most helpful. The background section really helped me understand my target audience and be aware of the types of learning they will look for in order to make my Moodle successful and user friendly.

There were many links and sites within the learning tool kit that I never had time to access this semester but I look forward to taking the time to browse through the limitless applications and teachings this kit provides. I know with more exploration the information available within this kit will help encourage further implementation of technology into my personal and professional life. There is always so much to see and do but beginning with suggestions within the kit is a great start. It is also nice knowing it is coming from a very reputable source and on a well designed and laid out website helps to encourage further exploration.

Overall Reflection for 565A

Wow! This class challenged me on so many levels. I am in my 8th MET course, so I have been exposed to many sites, platforms, resources and tools but MOODLE took me down an entirely new path. I felt very tech illiterate while using this platform. I am not entirely sure why, but the space and browser made no sense to me. It was challenging to navigate and utilize as I knew I was missing key components and navigation tools. I found myself researching and watching YouTube videos often just to learn how to do simple tasks. I found myself reflecting back to Andersons quote “ The task of the online course designer and teacher... is to choose, adapt, and perfect, through feedback, assessment, and reflection, educational activities that maximize the affordances of the Web. In doing so, they will create learning-, knowledge-, assessment-, and community-centred educational experiences that will result in high levels of learning by all participants.” (Anderson, 2008a, p. 68) Reminding myself what the purpose of the Moodle was and what I was trying to create. I am not entirely sure why this space was so challenging for me, it was very infuriating to be honest. However, with patience and a lot of time I now can say that I feel I understand the platform, I understand how to navigate it and am

proud of the product/site that I produced. Many hours went into the site, and although like anything there is room for improvement it is still something that I feel I truly grew as an educator and student by using. This learning curve will help when other technological challenges arise throughout my career.

I also really enjoyed the blog. I have always been told that I am a passionate writer in the sense that I write from the heart and put a lot of thought and emotion into my work. I have never blogged before (although I have attempted to start MANY times!) but I found it to be liberating. I was able to express my likes, dislikes, challenges, success', experiences and personal feats. I found it was an easy way to communicate with my professor and a unique way to put my learning experiences out there. I know I will look back on this blog, and reflect on my experiences and remember the hard work and dedication the MET program required of me.

The digital story was my favourite assignment. I spent a decent amount of time searching for the right platform and topic. I found it enjoyable to link it to my personal life, and share my story. I can see my students creating many of these types of assignments as sharing pictures and telling a story is a grade 3 students dream! I showed the story to my class as I felt it had a good message and my students always enjoy learning more about me. I like sharing that I too am human, as sometimes teaching primary your students seem to forget this! It was a great assignment, and a successful one as my students thoroughly enjoyed it as well. It sparked an interest to create something similar for class. Whenever I can link my educational path and my professional career, then I am doing something right. I took this course to help become a better teacher, so when that theory plays out in practice, to me that means success!

The LMS quiz was interesting for me, I had a hard time coming up with questions which turned out to be a good reflection assignment. Reading and reflecting about assessment and reviewing the many quotes and thoughts put forth, “the challenge of online learning is to provide very high quantity and quality of assessment, while maintaining student interest and commitment – something that is often best done by developing a learning community” (Anderson, 2008)

This quote is an important one, as Anderson states, assessment is what students define as important, so being in tune with your class, their needs and what you hope they achieve or take away is an important reflection. I tend to make a lot of my own math resources, so this helped me connect my critical thinking to all areas. I wanted to create a quiz that was useful, relevant and yet still challenging. When the questions didn’t come immediately to me, this required research and reflection, which always helps me improve as a student and as a person.

Next Steps

I am on the home stretch now. It feels like it has been an extra long path but with only one more semester left, there is a light at the end of the tunnel. I have LOVED this program, the professors, the platform, the expectations, the learning, the people. Everything. It has made me a better professional in so many ways, I often find myself answering people’s questions and referring them to some cool website or app that I discovered through class or online. I feel more confident in my abilities and most importantly I am proud of myself. Rewind several years and I didn’t know I would even finish my undergrad, let alone go through with my masters at an elite institution like the University of British Columbia. I feel privileged and honoured, and look forward to taking this information and doing something with it.

I am already integrating tech into my grade 3 classroom as much as possible. I have found myself referring back to the Bates and Poole (2003) SECTIONS framework to help decipher which technology is best suited for my classroom. The sections framework states:

“S - Students: What is known about the students - or potential students - and the appropriateness of the technology for this particular group or range of students?
E - Ease of use and reliability: How easy is it for both teachers and students to use? How reliable and well tested is the technology?
C - Costs: What is the cost structure of each technology? What is the unit cost per learner?
T - Teaching and learning: What kinds of learning are needed? What instructional approaches will best meet these needs? What are the best technologies for supporting this teaching and learning?
I - Interactivity: What kind of interaction does this technology enable?
O - Organizational issues: What are the organizational requirements and the barriers to be removed before this technology can be used successfully? What changes in organization need to be made?
N - Novelty: How new is this technology?
S - Speed: How quickly can courses be mounted with this technology? How quickly can materials be changed?”
(Bates & Poole, 2003, pp. 79-80)

I have found this framework to be the most powerful and useful out of the readings this term. These are valuable questions to ask myself when bringing new ideas and applications/websites into my teaching. I have printed out this framework and put it by my desk at work, it is important to check back often just to make sure I am on the right track, and this framework helps me ask simple questions to ensure that is true.

Moving forward with technology in my classroom : Currently my students have been completing an animal research project using the iPads to help with research. They are making unique presentations to share their findings using Prezi and will show them to the class at the end of this month. I have created a classroom webpage this term as well to

share information and pictures along with a way to save paper and pass on e-newsletters to my parents. This just feels like this is the beginning. I look forward to having more time to explore ways to integrate technology into every aspect of my teaching. Tying in with my original flight path goals, I look forward to accessing tech with my students in the most educational, age appropriate ways possible. By doing so, the NETS standards (2007) will continue to be a valuable resource when doing so with my class as they feel teachers should all meet the following performance standards:

1. Facilitate and inspire student leaning and creativity.
2. Design and develop digital age learning experiences and assessment.
3. Model digital age work and learning.
4. Promote and model digital citizenship and responsibility.
5. Engage in professional growth and leadership.

(NETS, 2007)

The NETS standards are ones I will continue to follow and stride for. I want to show my students unique ways to use the technology they have become all too familiar with. I also look forward to exploring the list of apps I have been adding to my repertoire ever since I started this program. I have a google doc full of 'explore' material and continue to add to it as I continue as a life long learner in all areas of technology. The completion of this course and soon the MET program is just the beginning for me as it has helped open my eyes and spark my interest in all things tech and things yet to come.

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