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TE 831

Re-purposing Technology Lesson Plan Reflection

What technologies did you choose for this lesson and why did you choose them?

I chose Google Blogger for this lesson because I wanted to re-familiarize myself with the technology, and I liked the format of it, as it is very user-friendly. I took this into consideration when deciding what new technology to introduce to my students. I thought it would be a great way for students to share their creative writing with each other and with parents and other teachers. I had also planned to use Pics4Learning.com so that students could "illustrate" their poems, and so that we could discuss an element of digital citizenship when crediting photos.

What was the role of TPACK in helping you shape/create/implement your lesson?

The purpose of TPACK is to creatively combine various technologies with the content specific to a grade level or subject, and with pedagogy, or best practices of teaching to help students be most successful.

In shaping and creating my lesson, I focused mostly on combining technology and content. I wanted students to share their creative writing with their classmates and anyone else who might be interested in reading it. These could be parents, the principal, other teachers at the school, or even anyone from TE 831 who might like to use this idea with their students. Using Web 2.0 makes this possible.

I combined the technology and content pieces of TPACK with pedagogy in the implementation of my lesson. I used the combination of students' creative writing with the blog technology to scaffold students' knowledge and experience with blogs. I showed students my example and demonstrated how to create their own blog entry. I monitored them as they worked, giving them feedback and necessary assistance. After the first lesson on creating a blog post, students felt more comfortable using Blogger; they worked more independently as they added comments without much assistance after my initial demonstration. As a result, I believe my lessons were pedagogically sound, and I was able to combine all three parts of TPACK.

What was the response of your learners to this lesson? What were the affordances and constraints?

My students responded positively to this project. They were most excited about commenting on each other's work and reading the comments that others left for them. One student even asked me if she could write more comments to people once she got home. I think this reflects the positive learning community that their regular teacher has created for the class. Students were proud of their work and wanted to share it with others, and they were very respectful of others' work.

There were two major affordances to teaching this lesson. The first is that students have access to computers. Without them, the lesson would not have been possible to complete at school. Second, the teacher with whose class I worked was very flexible and allowed me to do this project with her students. The students had already been working on their stories/poems in her class, but she allowed for extra computer lab time during her literacy block for me to teach my lesson.

Although the school has computers for students to use, one of the biggest constraints on this lesson was the number of computers available. There are only enough computers for half of the class to use at a time. Consequently, time available in the computer lab was constrained as well. As a result, I did not get to teach students about adding photos to their blog entries. I thought of that as a possibility ahead of time, so I made sure students had enough time to create their blog posts and comment on their classmates' posts. In this case, I felt that those two parts of the lesson were more important than the photo part.

What other ways might this technology be re-purposed (this can be related to other topics or subject matter)?

One way I would like to expand the use of a class blog is to use it for broader topic, instead of just one assignment. One idea I have is to use it for social studies as a way for students to get involved in current events. Students could discuss and debate (by commenting on each other's entries) various events happening at school, in the community, state, country, or even internationally. Many teachers like to use magazines such as *Time for Kids* or *Weekly Reader* to find out about current events that appeal to students. I could either combine these resources with the blog, or subscribe to RSS feeds of various kids' magazines' sites for students to use as sources for current events.

How did this lesson aid your professional development and teaching practice?

This project allowed me to turn a regular literacy lesson into something creative and different for students. They had not blogged in school before. Now that I have had more practice using various technologies, including blogging, I have been able to think of ways to incorporate technology into my teaching more regularly. Previously, I may have thought of one or two technology ideas to use during the school year, but I think this lesson in particular showed me how easy it is to integrate technology into a lesson. Also, I realized that incorporating technology into lessons does not have to be a demanding task. Like I did with this lesson, teachers can start with something on which students are already working. This lesson did not take much time out of the regular schedule. Therefore, I believe teachers can find ways to add technology into what they are already teaching so that students can practice the creativeness and practicality that technology skills require.