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ETEC 580
Summer 2016

LEARNING ACTIVITY OBSERVATION REFLECTION

Date: June 28, 2016

School Site: Signal Hill Elementary School

Topic: Website Evaluation/Finding effective websites for research

Grade level: 5th grade

Time: 11:00-11:45 a.m.

My field experience has been very educational and rewarding. Planning and teaching a lesson using technology and the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards has been a great learning experience for me. I have created many lessons before, but never one that focused on the ISTE standards. One benefit that I had was that the Teacher Librarian that I worked with had been working with students on website evaluations and wanted me to continue to expand student's knowledge in that area. With her guidance and support the lesson planning was an easy process.

The lesson included three activities to do with students. The first activity was to activate prior knowledge, the second activity was modeling and guided practice, and the final activity was checking for understanding and independent practice. I used a PowerPoint presentation to guide us through the lesson and provide a visual for students. I began the lesson by establishing expectations. Since this was the first time I met and worked with this group of students, I felt I needed to establish expectations since my expectations may be different than those of their teacher. It is very difficult to teach a group of students who you do not know, so establishing expectations makes the lesson run more smoothly. Then I explained the essential questions that students should think about during the lesson and the learning outcomes of the lesson. I do this so that students know why the lesson is being taught and the importance of the lesson.

The first activity involved reviewing the lesson that they had previously had about website evaluations. At Signal Hill Elementary School, the Teacher Librarian is only there every other week. That means that the group of 5th graders got the last lesson two weeks ago so I felt it was important to remind them. It proved to be effective when students completed their own Tree Maps because they were able to refer to the previous information learned. For guided practice, we navigated a website together and students worked in table groups to complete a Tree Map that described why the website was good using the 5 components for website evaluations that they had learned in the lesson the Teacher Librarian had taught them. This is where the first technological glitch came. When I clicked on the link in the PowerPoint presentation to the website students were going to evaluate, the website was not projecting on the screen for students to see. Students became a bit noisy as I tried to solve the problem, but I was able to fix the issue and get students back on track quickly.

Due to time restrictions, we had to rush through the second activity. In this activity, I showed students a scenario in which they had to find good and relevant websites for a research

project on the American Revolution. We only had time to look at one website and decide together if the website was a good site for their project using the 5 components as criteria. For the final activity, I conducted an informal assessment using a “Ticket out the Door” activity. I showed students one last website and they had to decide whether or not they thought the website was a good resource for their project and justify their reasoning describing two reasons. They wrote their responses individually on a Post-it note and posted it on a poster I had on the door. They had to complete this activity before they left the library.

Like all lessons, my lesson had areas of strength and areas of improvement. The strengths included the active participation strategies I used, which included “Think, Pair, Share” and rolling dice to work with students. I also had students work collaboratively to complete a Thinking Map, which is a great organizational tool. The use of the “Ticket out the Door” strategy is a quick and efficient way to assess student learning. After reading student responses, I noticed that most students did a good job of justifying their reasons for deciding whether the website was good or bad. Most students decided it was a good website, which I agree with. The five students that did not agree with me have convincing reasons as to why they disagree, which demonstrates understanding. Every student used the 5 components taught in the lesson to justify their responses, which also demonstrates understanding of the content taught.

One area for improvement is time management, especially as a teacher librarian. At Signal Hill Elementary School, students go to the computer lab for 50 minutes once, every other week. During that time, students check in their books, put them back on shelves, and then pick new books to check out. That leaves about 30-35 minutes to teach a lesson. If I were to teach this lesson again, I would probably separate it into two lessons. This would have provided more time for me to do guided practice and for students to gain a better understanding of the content. Another area for improvement is the use of technology. Like I mentioned before, I had a couple technology glitches when I tried to project the websites on the screen for students to evaluate. I checked the links on my computer before teaching the lesson, but not on the computer in the library that I used when I actually taught the lesson. In the future, I will definitely try the technology on the device I will use to teach to try and avoid technological glitches. The technology problem can also be attributed to access. At this school site, there are only 7 computers. One is used by the Teacher Librarian to conduct day to day library procedures. The other six are organized and set up in a circle that does not really allow for group work. The ideal situation would have been for each student to have their own device and be able to browse the websites on their own so that they can conduct a more effective evaluation. Overall, the lesson went well, but there are always things we learn from and help us grow as professional educators.