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Throughout this Master of Science in Education course, we, as students in the Integrating Technology in the Classroom Program, were tasked with a multitude of papers and special projects. This Professional Portfolio, although an ongoing "work in progress," throughout the program, was undoubtedly the most challenging single task to accomplish. Some assignments were earmarked for inclusion in the portfolio, others were suggested or recommended, and others were found to be necessary later on for satisfying International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) or National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) standards outcomes. Initially, we assumed this project would follow that of our predecessors. Their Portfolios were set up by course number with integral parts corresponding simply to individual course content. Early in the course, the scope and sequence was changed for us aligning various parts of the course to ISTE and NBPTS standard outcomes. No where in the course material were these outcomes spelled out specifically as a guideline for setting up our respective Portfolio pages, although occasionally some goals were mentioned in syllabus textual material. This "work in progress," therefore, became the most challenging aspect of the entire program.

Given a choice of challenging assignments: intensive, lengthy, collaborative action research paper, developing and maintaining a multi-faceted Webpage, or completing a Professional Portfolio; I would choose either of the first two before attempting the portfolio under these conditions. Hopefully, the combined efforts of Pathways to Advance Virtual Education (PAVE) cohort groups will provide a roadmap for future students in this curriculum.

If it was simply a compilation of work completed for each of the ten courses required for Integration of Technology in the Classroom, it would be a relatively simple task to put together. Starting from scratch and applying various aspects of over 80 weeks of instruction against 7

standards (one General group of standards based on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) and 6 based on the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE)) and over 25 objectives was excessively labor intensive. This student would highly recommend for Walden University to include the applicable standards in applicable syllabus outlines for each course to guide students towards intended course outcomes as well as to facilitate more appropriate artifact accumulation. This would eliminate considerable guess work and ensure an enhanced final product.

Overall, I have to admit considerable technological growth during the PAVE program. From routine classroom software and an occasional Internet search, I have become quite comfortable taking on complex tasks. As an Inclusion teacher, I do not have direct control over classroom use of technology. I do, however, have considerable input to lesson plans and projects directed towards the students with special needs for whom I provide services. Primarily, I collaborate with 6th Grade Math teachers; but also have dealings with students in language arts that are on my caseload. Eighty weeks of continuous access to text, video, and on-line resources promoting continuous use of technology has armed me with considerable ammunition for supporting the view that more access to computers is best for all students. Curriculum demands and time constraints limit that access in math, but language arts classes make considerable use of computer lab and library software.

My view of technology as a tool of choice for education has deepened significantly as a result of PAVE and the Walden University course materials. When computers were first deployed to our middle school classrooms, they were viewed as expensive paper weights with limited practical application for word processing and simple data spreadsheets. Other than providing options for clipart inclusion to a document, computers were simply a nice to have

addition to the classroom that often took up more room than it was thought to be worth. A dozen years have passed since then, but sadly, some teachers have not progressed much beyond that “gotta do stuff” and occasional keyboarding. I have reached a comfort level with technology at which I can assist struggling teachers and help students learn valuable applications. PAVE has greatly enhanced my awareness of classroom computer use and provided me the confidence to continuously seek out new potentially worthwhile resources.

Whereas my overall abilities and awareness have been increased through this program, my work with students will continue to be limited to Inclusionary practices and before and after school help sessions. Colleagues call on me more and more to help with troubleshooting computer problems – which often are computer-operator problems rather than hardware or software snags. As I involve myself in more technology-based programs, I will undoubtedly become active in after school staff development. I have entertained the idea of pursuing a Campus Instructional Technologist (CIT) position. That would certainly be a worthwhile endeavor as well as a personally challenging and rewarding goal. As a CIT, I would have access to district technology personnel I only hear about as a teacher, and be tasked with training and troubleshooting continuously. As a puzzle enthusiast that intrigues me.

This Portfolio began taking shape in June 2005 and has evolved throughout the course, first as a collection of course-related assignment products and later as a complete rework in an attempt to guess which standards puzzle piece fit where, until submission on or about December 31, 2006. Early in the course we were tasked with reading a text on portfolios in which Glatthorn (2004) states “teachers’ growth comes about best when the relationship between teacher and supervisor is a collaborative and cooperative one, not an adversarial one (p. vii).” In spite of the

confusion over what to include in this particular effort and what format to use, instructional personal have been extremely helpful and courteous throughout the program.

References

Sheerer, M. & Glatthorn, A.A. (2004). *The teacher's portfolio: Fostering and documenting professional development, 2nd ed.* Lancaster, PA: Pro>Active Publications.

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