Blog Post: Diversity Eamonn Kelly March 30, 2014

<http://ekelly3.weebly.com/blog.html>

Diversity! “I think that’s the name of an old wooden ship,” to quote *Anchorman.* This is not the definition of diversity, but most might not have a clue about what context we are using it in. Our meaning of diversity goes along with the use of technology in the classroom. Most would think diversity is only talking about race and ethnicity, but we can also use it for equitable use of technology in schools. After reading the articles for this module, I am still on the fence somewhat of diversity in technology. I go to the first article about assistive technology, and how important it is for some students who just don’t get the concept that is being taught. In the article they show data from the student using traditional teaching, pen and paper, and the student using a website to help understand the concept. The data showed that the student failed to understand the assignment without the assistive technology. With this being said we should be jumping for joy that this student now gets what is needed to move on, but it poses a great question. The question is, what about the students who don’t need the technology and use their mental capacity? This question deals with fairness among all learners. This is where I am stuck on that preverbal fence. I think that it is great that all students will have the ability to learn now, but are we showing other students that they shouldn’t use their mental capacity to achieve higher standards. This to me is a double edged sword. From here I go to the last article by Richardson, which really blew my mind. This article revealed the “how” to making higher standards achievable. I am floored at the way that some of these teachers have given the reigns to the students and let them run with it. Implementing this strategy can be beneficial in getting your learners to achieve their highest standards. I think this form of learning is amazing, and really isn’t more work than traditional teaching would be for teachers. I am 100% behind personalizing the curriculum for the learners we have, this makes it more interesting for them, which in the end will have higher results.

Respect for technology is difficult in this digital age, where most students have and had access to technology since a very young age. This is even more prevalent in the age of the smart phone, which is capable of accessing the internet on your personal phone. I am fortunate to have a 2:1 initiative in our school, but this doesn’t come close to meeting the needs of all our students. We at Moody, have a low socioeconomic status, which there are a small amount students who don’t even have phones. With the small amount of laptops that we do have, we are working on making our students digital citizens, which is somewhat tough because of mass media and home use. It all starts with the guidance of the teacher and how to effectively use the internet within education, because these things will be needed in higher education and workplace. Modeling is the best way that I, as the facilitator can show students how to develop effective use of the internet. With any new component that is implemented in the classroom, I plan on demonstrating the process before allowing students to go off on their own. I also plan to be specific in the sites that they visit. I can do this by posting which sites need to be visited, and only these sites. Consequences will be laid out for those who do not follow directions.

Global awareness is very important in today’s world. Students have everything at their fingertips, the world actually. Students can now be impacted by people around the world and actually have a conversation with some of these people. This brings forth a new form of research, first person, which is the most important type of research, especially in my field of Social Studies. This is a great way students to broaden their horizons and view of how others around the world live and do things. The best way to implement this is through virtual field trips, and through blogging. I think blogging is key to allowing students to becoming more global in today’s society. Allowing blogging into the classroom is an effective way to allow for creative communication and gets students higher level questioning flowing. These are the best forms of assessing whether our learners actually learned the concept that was being taught. Blogging allows many to respond and view what is being communicated in the classroom, it is as good a number grade. I actually keep a blog of what is going on in my classroom for parents and students on a daily basis. This has been important for parents who are inquisitive and for students who have missed class time. Making this available, has really cut down on all the emails that I receive, and allows the stake holders in the community to follow you step by step. I have yet to implement blogging for my students in the classroom, but hope to by next school year. I plan on using it as a formative assessment in my class to gauge what was actually learned in the prior class and have them expound upon it. Basically this is to have technology or not. We want it, but we don’t. This can only be answered by your school and system. Does it work? Yes, but does it foster laziness among higher achievers? Maybe, but you will never know where you sit until you try it.

 Peer Response:

<http://clinn.weebly.com/1/post/2014/04/equitable-access.html>

Carmin,

I like that you said that closing the gap of equity among students does not fall solely on the teacher, but through the Parents and the community. I think parents can help by participating in the classroom to the best of their ability. You have mentioned through websites, blogs, and newsletters which are all great examples of staying on top of your student’s education. The hard part is the access at home. A large percent of all students does have access, but that small percent ties your hands as a teacher sometimes. You mentioned allowing for Laptop checkout for students without access at home. I worry that this might open a huge can of worms for schools who are not used to checking these devices out. This is no book and the cost is much more than a book. My question is what type of plan would you come up with to allow for these devices to be checked out of your classroom or school? My experience with checking things out to students is not very good. Most of the time these come back tattered and torn, or never returned at all. When it comes to technology Literacy, it is up to us teachers to make sure that students are given the proper guidance. Most of our students don’t have much in the form of rules when it comes to the internet at home. Parents, not all, are caught up in their daily lives and forget to monitor their child’s time on the computer properly. So I agree that we must do a great job of modeling to this students of how to be great digital citizens.