



Kathy W.'s Portfolio

Conceptual Framework Reflection

Week 10 - Final Activity

I entered the world of education five years ago, having worked in the business world for over twenty years in computers and information technology. I immediately found schools rather behind the times in their use of computers - in the offices, administration and classroom. I quickly jumped into many areas of learning, teaching, encouraging and utilizing technology to enable the use of computers, the internet, online course tools, productivity tools, and educational software throughout our district. I think we're currently at a threshold point - there is no longer a lot of discussion about why and whether to use technology. Children are growing up in a world surrounded by technologies and have a level of sophistication far beyond what I think most of us imagined for 2006. There are still a few teachers who may not agree with integrating technology into their classroom but they are fewer in numbers and our administrators are currently dealing directly with their reluctance to change. Our focus now is how to most effectively integrate technology into schools and classrooms.

My graduate courses at Lesley have helped me understand the language and culture of teachers and schools, learn about curriculum standards and ways to teach integrating technology into their classroom and also expose me to the valuable concepts of multiple intelligences, teaching for understanding, the concerns-based adoption model (CBAM), Bloom's taxonomy, and now in this course, designing assessments FOR learning. My philosophies and teaching and education have been dramatically influenced by the writings of Alan November, David Warlick, and David Thornburg on technology and education. Stiggins work, along with Wiggins and McTighe, have dramatically improved the development of meaningful assessments. This area of education has changed so dramatically since I was a student that I found this very valuable insight. As a student, we never had teachers divulge the course goals, learning targets or criteria of quality work. This was a mystery and the more accomplished students were those that were good at solving the puzzle and figuring out either what the teacher wanted or how to best memorize and recite the facts.

The knowledge I have gained in how to define clear learning targets, break apart a content standard, build a table of specifications, select the most appropriate type of assessment, utilize a variety of assessments for a variety of purposes and a variety of learners, and work to eliminate bias, misunderstandings and errors will enable me to continue to review and revise my assessments. This will ensure that students have a clear idea of goals, learning targets and criteria of quality work and be able to translate this into productive learning. I believe that the more students are involved in their learning process, setting goals and assessing their own performances, the more they will get out of their education and the more they will learn to be life-long learners.

Some of the technology tools that we learned to use in this course provided a sampling of what the future has to hold for us. Students will come to expect the use of online testing, quizzes and surveys, PDA's in classroom use, and software evaluation tools such as we attempted in Inspiration and I think the future will expand the use of these tremendously. As new tools and methods develop, as educators we will need to learn the best way to use them. Tools themselves do not ensure quality assessments - we must figure out the best opportunities and ways to utilize the tools.

I feel in some ways, working so hard to encourage the use of technology in classrooms, I am a quiet leader in our district. My position does not connote leadership, but I constantly bang the drum, hold hands, listen patiently and work long hours helping students, teachers, support staff, administrators and parents learn to effectively use the technologies that we currently have and push to research and attempt new technologies that show potential for improving our instruction.

Some of the major changes I will make as a result of this course are to clearly state learning targets, work with students to define criteria of quality work (I did some of this before but I plan to expand it and institutionalize it as part of my classroom environment), expand the use of checklists and rubrics as more of the learning process, and assess dispositions of students. Our state (NH) and our district plan to embark on electronic student portfolios this year and we have developed a Moodle plug-in for this. I hope

to work with staff on defining how best to implement these portfolios, given what I've learned about the different types of electronic portfolios and student reflections as part of portfolio work.

I would like to learn more about using assessment data to assess teaching effectiveness and to provide input on areas to focus and improve instruction. I am currently working on district-wide data systems that allow us to store, retrieve and summarize assessment results more effectively and in a timely manner. We have a new student information system, PowerSchool, starting this fall for attendance and plan to learn and implement grading and online parent access later this year. We have a data warehouse, QSP, in place and continue to educate administrators and teachers to access and summarize data. Several years ago we surveyed all our schools and found there was a large amount of standardized testing occurring and very little use of the assessment data. We are working to put systems in place to allow the appropriate users access to data to enable them to make meaningful decisions to improve student learning.

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Page last updated: August 19, 2006

