

Reflection Paper

Subject: Technology

Grade: Two

Module 3: Instruction for Active Learning : Teacher implements instruction in order to engage students in rigorous and relevant learning and to promote their curiosity about the world at large by:

Selected Indicator: Using technological and digital resources strategically to support learning.

Goal:

I will learn how to use and implement technology and digital resources to support learning in my classroom. Not only will my students learn how to incorporate technology in their learning but I will use technology to enhance my daily teaching. I will focus on embedding state standards in Social Studies and Science by incorporating technology in lessons.

Initial Summary:

I was lucky to begin the school year with many different modes of technology to utilize in my classroom. The technology available for me to use in the classroom was a Smart board, document camera, and laptops. It became clear to me that I needed to learn how to use this technology. How could I incorporate technology in my lessons, how could it enhance my teaching, and how could it become an integral part of my student's education/learning? These were questions that I needed to answer so that I could embrace the new technology available to me and my students. As the school year progressed, so did my journey to learn new technologies that would shape lessons to help me select the right technologies to support lessons, state standards, and district-level benchmarks.

Reflection:

I jumped in feet first and began to explore the Smart board. I attended Smart board training and learned how to use it effectively. The more I learned, the more I became comfortable with this new technology. In addition, I reached out to our school's media specialist. I asked many questions and we worked together to find the solutions. One of the biggest questions that I needed an answer for while working with the Smart board was what do I do when it freezes on me during a lesson and what do I do when the pen suddenly stops working. Together we learned the answers to these questions and I quickly learned how to fix these problems when they came up. I learned to tackle the problem head on and not be afraid to solve it. It was a great lesson for me to learn and for my students. They saw that I wasn't afraid to use this technology even when it wasn't

always working properly. If I wasn't afraid, then they wouldn't be, when strange things happened to them while using the Smart board. If I couldn't figure it out for myself then I would go to my media specialist. She has become one of my best resources in times of troubleshooting as well as, looking for creative ways to use technology in my classroom. She has helped me build a better foundation in effectively utilizing all the technology available to me.

One of the first ways I used the Smart board in my classroom was to incorporate it with my student's morning routine. I used it simply, like a word document, and I would post a morning message to my students, list the daily lunch, and write what their morning work assignment would be. This became a great tool not only for me but for my students as well. I didn't have to rewrite a message every day; I could edit my messages and save it for the next day. My students learned to come into the classroom and look at the Smart board to find the daily message and morning assignment. This eliminated having to repeat the same task and information over and over. My students used this tool as a resource, a place they can go to find information. Using the Smart board as part of our class' morning routine became an integral part in class management and setting expectations for student work and classroom environment.

As I became more comfortable with using the Smart board so did my students. They watched how it worked and became excited to use it. As I learned, technology can be flukey at times and I had to adapt when the technology didn't work. My students watched how I fixed problems and they became my greatest assistants when technology failed. We learned patience and troubleshooting techniques, we embraced technology instead of shutting down or being afraid.

The more I used the Smart board the more I began to find different ways to utilize it in other areas of the day and in lessons. I also continued to ask the media specialist how I could enhance my lessons and I had discussions with my colleagues. We were all learning together on how to incorporate technology in our classrooms and we became a great resource for one another. We shared ideas, shared sites, shared tools and activities that we have found which helped enhance our teaching.

While working on Place Value Unit in Math, I created lessons in which the students would make numbers using base ten blocks on the Smart board. Students would come up to the Smart board and manipulate the blocks to make numbers and place them in the appropriate place value. This technology was another tool for students to use and it helped them understand the concept of place value. It also helped me differentiate lessons as well. Technology allows teachers to differentiate instruction more efficiently by providing a wider variety of avenues for learning that reach students of divergent readiness levels, interests, and learning styles. (Pitler, Hubbell, Kuhn, and Malenoski, 2007) Toward the end of the year, during our Money Unit students counted coins on the Smart board and in Geometry students used the Smart board as a center to sort shapes by attributes.

As I continued to bring technology into my classroom I became aware of opportunities to differentiate instruction and to change my classroom into a more active learning environment. I added the Smart board to my language arts lessons and created Venn Diagrams and tables/charts to compare and contrast characters, stories, and genres. I moved technology into Science as well. The students and I used the Smart board to create T charts to compare solids and liquids and record observations. I wanted the students to become comfortable with technology outside of the classroom and to connect it to what we have been learning in the classroom. To do this, I again utilized our Media Specialist and our computer lab. Together with my

mentor, we created lessons in which my students would create a Power point slide about solids. We began by assessing student's knowledge in Power point and following directions. The Media Specialist gave a quick overview on how to create a slide and then we let the students try creating their own slide. At first, students were able to get into the program and type a sentence about a solid but had difficulty adding a picture to go with the slide. The next time we visited the computer lab; we gave a quick review and then had the students try creating another slide. This time the majority of the students were able to type text and add a specific picture. Only 3 out of my 17 students were unable to perform this task without teacher support. The final task was to have each student type a few sentences about what they had learned about a particular solid, (they used science journals and observations to help form these sentences) and then add a picture from the gallery to their slide. Every one of my students was able to perform this final task and everyone was proud of what they could do. This was just more proof that my students were comfortable using technology, that it was enhancing their learning, and it was helping them move into a higher depth of knowledge.

As the year progressed so did my enthusiasm to learn new technologies and methods to incorporate in the classroom. I had the opportunity to attend an all day workshop on using the Smart board effectively in your classroom. I learned how to use technology as a tool for drill and practice lessons, and for creating lessons that help students comprehend, apply, and recall concepts. After the workshop, I was more excited than ever to use what I had learned in my daily teaching. I took this new enthusiasm back to school to share with my students and my colleagues.

Earlier I mentioned how I incorporated the Smart board in my daily morning message. Through the workshop, I learned how to enhance this message by adding color and graphics, and student involvement. That Monday after the workshop, I began to incorporate these new skills into my message. My students were amazed to see the changes in the daily message and were excited to see all the new things that I had learned. Additionally, I added a new element to our morning meeting by creating a monthly weather calendar on the Smart board. My students were now able to drag a weather icon and place it on the appropriate day of the week. They were so excited to be able to use the Smart board in a new way. I also learned some new class management tools that I quickly added to my teaching; such as using the magic pen during transitions and dice that students could use to pick partners for centers and games.

This new passion for technology that I developed carried over to my colleagues. My principal asked that I share what I learned at this workshop with the staff. I worked with the Media Specialist to prepare a mini-technology clinic on what I had learned at my Smart board training. During this clinic, I shared with my colleagues the magic pen transitions, using the dice to pick partners, and how to create a weather calendar to use during morning meeting. Many of the staff left the clinic with this new information and began using it immediately in their classrooms. They were becoming just as excited as I was to utilize the technology in their classrooms. We were learning the importance of technology not only for the students learning but for the educators as well.

This integration of technology aided in moving the classroom from a teacher-dominated environment to a classroom that was more student centered. The Smart board was not the only piece of technology that was incorporated into my classroom. I also had a document camera to learn how to include in my daily lessons. Again, I worked with my media specialist and she showed me how to use the camera and how it worked with the Smart board. The document camera was a great tool to use when sharing a story that I had only one copy of because I could display the story on the Smart board and everyone could easily view the illustrations and read along with me. I also used the camera when we worked on whole group

worksheets, I could clearly explain directions and we could answer the questions together. The students could use what was displayed on the Smart board as a guide as they filled out their worksheet independently. This was a great tool for those students who worked more slowly or needed more guidance on completing a task. I also used the camera during our math unit on money. I used transparent coins to display on the Smart board for the students to identify and count amounts. The more I used the document camera the more I found ways that it could enhance my teaching. Technology can certainly be used to provide immediate feedback for drill and practice, but it can also be used as a tool for the analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of information. (Using Technology with Classroom Instruction that Works, Pitler, Hubbell, Kuhn, Malenoski, 2007)

In addition to the Smart board and the document camera, I also had four laptops to use in the classroom. The students used these laptops to practice their daily math facts using a Fast Math program. The laptops were also used to help the students complete their Animal Report project for our Husky Highlight parent night. Students used the laptops to research facts about animals, find pictures of their animals, and to type up their research. Having these laptops in the classroom helped the students learn how to use the internet and how to navigate and utilize the K-8 Resource page. The laptops were also used as a listening center during language arts. Students worked collaboratively to log on to Tumble books and select a story to listen to based on our weekly language arts theme. The laptops were also another way for the students to use what they were learning about computers in our computer lab and carry it over into the classroom. This eliminated the learning gap that might have occurred in between visits to the lab. The laptops also helped the students become more comfortable using computers which were especially useful when they went into the lab to do NEWA testing. The testing proctor and I did not have to spend a lot of time going over how to use the computer, keyboard, or mouse because they were already familiar with using these components of the computer in the classroom.

Moving forward and thinking about next year, I wonder how I can take what I have learned about technology and broaden the development of my lessons and teaching. How can I increase my student's knowledge and application of technology? Can I use technology to help my students personalize their learning goals? These are questions I am asking myself and will work to find answers for. Looking forward, I want to have my students create a multimedia project at home or school that will help develop their understanding and practice skills. I do know that I will continue to have my students learn through educational games and interactive media, such as the Smart board. I will also continue to use the technology available to me in my daily lessons.

Throughout the course of the year, I have had many opportunities to learn how to utilize various forms of technology in my classroom. Technology impacted my learning as a teacher and my students learning as well. I learned that in order to design a quality, rigorous lesson that support state standards and district-level benchmarks, I need to plan first and then select the most appropriate technologies that will support that lesson. Most importantly I learned that technology does not replace the teacher, it can only enhance the teaching and student learning.