Reflection on Learning: Application to Professional Practice

Barbara Snidow

University of West Georgia
Reflection 2

**Introduction**

I entered this program less than a year ago and I will finish next May. I have proven to myself that I can do just about anything. I love teaching and this course, as well as all the others, has given me some new light into ways in which I can challenge and enrich my students. The numerous technological tools that I have researched have and will continue to aid in my classroom instruction. I will continue to find ways to make my activities more engaging.

This is my 12th year of teaching eighth grade mathematics in Cobb County. This is my second year teaching at a very affluent area within the county. There is little to no transiency, parental support is amazing, minimal to no discipline problems, and students want to learn. The only downfall, to some, of teaching at this school is being able to keep up with the students and parents levels of technology. This paper will expand on ways in which these levels can be reached. Using technology in the classroom is extremely valuable and if used correctly will increase the students’ knowledge and understanding of key concepts.

**Review of Learning**

Teachers need to present information to students at a level in which will be challenging as well as up to date. In order for this to happen, teachers need to have the most current strategies in their bag of tricks. This can be accomplished by being open and participating in professional development and advanced learning (Carey, Kleiman, & Russell, 2008). Researching new ideas is a way to attain this. An important part of researching a topic is being able to narrow the search so one can focus on the topic at hand. When I first started researching my topic, my search was too broad and it was difficult to find articles that pertained to my topic. Once I refined my search, I was able to locate articles quickly (Course Objective 1). The purpose of conducting research is to find new ideas and strategies that would have a positive impact on classroom instruction. I am
hoping that the technology tools that I research will have the same results in my classroom. The majority of the articles support my hypothesis that technology can enhance curriculum and instruction (Course Objective 2).

The county in which I teach is very diverse. The technology that is available varies from school to school. However, all schools have computers and graphing calculators but many do not have interactive whiteboards and digital presenters. Therefore, a small portion of my research does not apply to them. Hopefully, they will be able to get the funds to purchase the other tools so all teachers in the county have access to the same materials. After all, students from all over the county will be competing for the same scholarships, so they should have access to the same level of instruction (Course Objective 3).

This course has taught me to be a better writer and researcher, not to mention better at typing. I am looking forward to implementing this action research to find out if my hypothesis is true for my current school. This course has also validated what I already know about myself, I can do anything in which I set my mind. I am hardworking and dedicated to doing my very best. One thing I need to do better is submitting projects that adhere to the specific guidelines.

**Implications**

My school implemented Professional Learning Communities, where subject area grade level teachers meet weekly to plan, create common formative assessments and collaboratively grade student work. We also decided to research new ways to engage and motivate students. My research goes hand in hand with this. I have shared my research with my colleagues, and we have decided to incorporate graphing calculators in our next unit on linear equations (Cavanagh & Mitchelmore, 2003). We are hoping to have the same results in that incorporating graphing calculators into classroom lessons will aid in the understanding of the concept. I am planning on
carrying out my research next semester and am confident that my data will support the findings of previous research (Course Objective 4).

**Conclusion**

This course was extremely valuable to me. Not only did I become a better researcher, but also a better teacher. The information that I obtained has aided in my development of new lesson as well as the delivery and instruction of them. I have incorporated technology into every lesson and have had great results. Because I teach math, the strategies are geared toward reviewing and enriching and not introducing the concepts (Antonijevic, 2003). It is important for teachers to stay current on new strategies and ways of teaching. If we as teachers stay the same and not learn to embrace all the new technological tools that are offered, how can we expect our students to learn the concepts that we are teaching. We need to teach to them and by learning through researching we can do just that.
References

