### “Retrospective Paper”

### Integrating Technology into the Curriculum MEDT 7464 / Fall Semester 2009 / Section 1

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**Introduction**

This course, ***Integrating Technology into the Curriculum***, has helped me master the necessary skills to be a successful teacher by allowing me to develop my curriculum while integrating technology in a classroom environment. Technology- based instruction can create an ideal environment to help teach collaboration, research, presentation and creative design elements for every student. My knowledge of technology integration has expanded as I have been introduced to the new technology and resources that can enhance a classroom. Technology integration must include the use of new resources and technology-based instruction into the daily routines, work, and management of a classroom. These resources include classroom computer labs, software, hardware, communication tools, data storage devices, as well as, media including video and audio. I believe that in order to allow for integration the teacher and student must work together to continue to use and learn from these resources. I have learned that the primary goal of any integration involving technology should be to create a well rounded, capable student able to discover ways of creatively presenting and managing data in a safe and organized environment that can be transferred to all aspects of a student’s future!

**Question #1- Impact of Technology Integration Projects**

Two favorite class assignments that made an impact on me through the use of technology integration were the *Google Documents* and *Blogging Project*. These projects allowed me the opportunity to share class content with students from my class and it became a fun collaboration tool for them as well. It was a great way for me to assess my student’s knowledge of the theater content in a fun, creative way. In particular, the Google Docs became an excellent resource for those students who do not have elaborate office software to use. This activity gave them the opportunity to effectively collaborate with others while saving and sharing important classroom documents and presentations.

Since I have been introduced to these projects, I will be able to plan and integrate them into my own curriculum as I develop future lessons and become more familiar with all tools available. I am looking forward to having some of my students create their own Blog in the future to discuss important student needs. It was an excellent opportunity for the students to learn about the Web 2.0 technology as well as excellent practice for being involved with online learning to help them prepare for a future that will involve this particular learning style.

Another class assignment that impacted my thinking about my curriculum was the Movie Maker Project where we were to create a Movie using *Microsoft’s Movie Maker*. I particularly enjoyed the fact that we were able to choose the topics from a variety of concepts and be very creative. I also think that this is an excellent tool for students to be able to develop because it shows creativity and provokes the student to use imagination. I would suggest that this project be done in groups in most classes. Allowing groups is a great way to share ideas between diverse classes; many will feed off of each other and have fun with this type of project. I had my theater classes use the Movie Maker tools as they created a TV News Script within a small group and record themselves to edit and learn the available tools this software has to offer. They enjoyed learning through this activity and now have a video to compare their learning and growth for the future.

**Question #2- Impact of CourseDen Online Discussions**

Online learning is an important aspect of teaching and it will become more prevalent in the future as the technology becomes more readily available to all students. I am enjoying the aspect of learning online for many reasons both personal and professional. Personally, I prefer the fact that I can work from anywhere with access to a computer. I have found myself taking breaks from my teaching schedule and checking in on some class discussions. I think this is an important appeal for many interested in the online classes. The negative aspects of online learning are becoming less apparent with each class that I take. I have learned that it takes a lot of dedication to be able to commit to online discussions. I hope to be able to participate more and get to know students on a more personal level for my next classes. I have learned how to maintain better communication throughout the course as did my group members while contributing through emails and Google Docs. Many detailed discussions have become significant to my class and I have built a network of other professionals who I can turn to for valuable information and ideas.

**Question #3- Positive Values as a Professional**

Professionally, the online structure was an excellent tool for sharing and interpreting classroom ideas, and communicating between group members for projects as well as sharing ideas and helping problems with technical issues. I believe that all members of the class participated in a positive environment and all were professional and helpful with their responses. As a group member, it allowed me to work from home and stay connected through email and the Blackboard Chat Rooms available. I have also learned about the use of 3rd party websites and communication tools like Google Documents. The online environment for this particular classroom was very informative and enjoyable. I have learned countless things from the sharing of ideas about other’s classrooms, lessons, ideas of design and frustrations about common issues throughout the discussions. In reflecting of the value of this class, I believe that the online experience had a huge impact on my positive experience throughout the semester.

I have learned how to develop projects that could lead to a positive change for my students with the use of software and other creative technological devices. Technology will be used in a variety of new ways in the future and the more students and teachers learn to use it, the easier it will be to get things done.

A very important aspect of the class is the ability to share my knowledge I have learned with other staff members. I hope to be able to create a collaborative environment at my school and help the staff toward effective multimedia/technology instruction through professional development sessions for my Fine Arts Dept. The values learned in this course will be beneficial to me, as well as my colleagues and students through my implementation of the technology concepts learned.

**Question #4- Acquired Skills in the Course**

**Knowledge/Content**

Many of the main knowledge/content concepts taught in this class are important for all learners. I believe that the acquired skills that I learned through this class will be beneficial to my own students as they prepare for college and the work-place. I have learned how to use the tools to create effective plans and design a plan to keep students interested while learning important lessons. The content that I learned will allow me to keep my students interested as well and hopefully teach them how to be productive in their other classes besides my theater class.

**Skills/Applications**

This class was instrumental in building my knowledge about efficient design elements to produce other applications of educational and entertainment values of information for all aspects of education. The discussions on specific topics were a great way to share ideas and special skills. I was able to read through other class members’ Blogs and found many other great ideas for integrating technology into my classroom with these skills acquired.

**Attitudes/Dispositions**

It is my hope that through utilizing these ideas into my classroom that I can continue to create an attitude of continued learning for all my students. I am optimistic that future integration of technology will benefit all my students from the projects I will be able to produce from the information taught in this class.

**Question #5- Challenges in Online Collaboration**

Many projects were challenging at first because it was used to introduce a new technology or computer element to work with. I enjoyed the idea of having Project Leaders to help us with issues and they were there to become the experts on their assigned project. I believe that this is a great way to introduce new projects to all students as they feel a sense of accomplishment while collaborating and working towards the same goal with other members in a classroom.

A second type of challenge was also involved with this course. These challenges are considered the technical challenges that are introduced when you are new to online learning. The school help lines were a major help at first in dealing with the technical aspects of using the new web site and Blackboard technology. These challenges were also addressed by Dr. Baylen with a specific discussion board that was monitored by the class. I have learned to read through the discussions posted to prepare myself for facing these challenges. The students in the class were very insightful with answering the needs of the questions asked and offered suggestions in a timely fashion.

**Question #6 and #7- Online Learning Experience/ Future Course Experience**

The online experience was excellent with this course. I enjoyed the fact that we were able to critique the project leader and all contributions made by group members. This allowed for all members to share equally in the project load. This course prepared me to be fully responsive to who and what I am preparing to teach.

**Question #8 “Surprises” of Course Experience**

I truly enjoyed the PBL presentations that all groups presented during this class. It was a “surprise” to learn so much with this format that I would also like to add this to my curriculum. It is important to learn these techniques but even more beneficial to be able to present the learning to a specific group. I liked the fact that other West Georgia Professors were able to be present and take in some of our projects and share their ideas and valued input. I was able to get some great ideas from the presentations and feel that this was one of the best parts of the actual projects that we were assigned.

**Question #9- Borrowed Curriculums**

Many ideas and thoughts shared in this classroom will be utilized for my students. I believe that the group concept was an important aspect of the class that will be most beneficial for all my students. I have been able to take so much from collaborating with my group members on all concepts introduced. This will be an ideal way to integrate technology into my classes because it helps students gain confidence while learning the required information. I would like to try all the projects including: *Comic Life*, *Voicethread* and *Movie Maker* while integrating the theater curriculum. I feel that I have learned enough to try to utilize these ideas for all my students to benefit from my experience with this class.

**Summary/Conclusion**

Technology is an important part of any classroom and the projects developed in this class gave me more confidence in producing and designing meaningful activities with video, sound, animation and other options offered through modern classroom technology. Through this class, I was able to not only learn Project-Based Learning tools like: *VoiceThread*, *Comic Life*, *Google Documents*, *Blogging* and *Microsoft’s Movie Maker*, but the class also allowed me to actively interact with other students by creating weekly topic discussions and create usable projects using the skills presented through the class discussions and textbook readings.

 I have enjoyed the concepts taught in this class and have created many valuable projects that will be useful in my theater classes. I think that my student’s have also enjoyed working on all the required projects that I subjected them to while I was learning how to integrate technology into my classroom. Technology will need to be integrated into every classroom for all students in the near future. As technology advances so will the need to learn new skills and in order to keep up with the new elements. The Project-Based Learning activities can be utilized in many classes and used in all types of environments including business, educational, entertainment and many others. The elements introduced in this class teach students to be creative and effective collaborators. I believe that the lessons and projects taught in this class will be extremely popular in the future as technology becomes more available in all schools.