Lita Brown
MEDT 7475
Virtual Mentor Meeting Notes

I am observing Dr. Cristine Goldberg's MEDT 6466, Library Media Program and 7469, Supervision of a School Library Media Program.
March 5 I sent an introductory email with a follow up on the 6th. We agreed that I would attend the Wimba session for the 7469 class on Tuesday March 13.

The hour and a half Wimba session was not very active. I could not find a description of the session, there weren't any reminders sent out and the date for it was confusing in the syllabus. Also, there was no time stated. As a result, We trickled in starting at 7 and the last student showed up around 8. It seemed to be a touching base, if you have any questions about your project meeting, but the students only asked a couple of questions. Dr. Goldberg showed photographs and tried drawing the students out to discuss visual literacy, but again, there was not much participation. After the session Dr. Goldberg said that usually the students were more talkative. She also said that there were guided questions for the next Wimba session for the other class, which I think is a good idea, considering.

Thursday March 15 - Skype meeting
The Skype meeting was short, we talked about her issues with missing students and her surgeries. She let me know that all aspects of the classes should be accessible and for me to make myself at home, poke around everywhere. Mostly it was just a get to know you chat.

I have read all of the discussion posts for both classes, and a good portion of the assignments. The classes don't seem to differ that much in content from my program at GSU, but the online structure is very different from Dr Huett's and Dr Moller's classes. Organization could be better, it isn't as intuitive as some of my other classes have been.

My goals for the first week are to finish looking at the graded assignments. During our next meeting, I hope to talk about the grading process.

3/19 I have been monitoring the online discussions and assignments and have seen a few assignments that Dr. Goldberg has returned for editing, but I did not see any notations for what changes the students should make. I have asked Dr. Goldberg how she communicates her expectations with her students via email.

3/26 Dr Goldberg has opened up Wimba rooms for some of the students to meet in and chat. While this is a solution that gives students experience with the platform, I am a bit baffled. Some of the groups want to work together in GoogleDocs, but one of the members doesn't have a Google account and can't access the doc. A suggestion should have been made to the students, explaining the collaborative benefits of working within Google. Another option would be the Blackboard IM client, which has a chat feature and a collaboration feature.

4/2 I have sent Dr. Goldberg an email requesting dates for the virtual class meetings she mentioned, and asked her the following questions: I was looking through the student submissions and there are some assignments that you sent back for revisions, but I can't see any notation for your change suggestions.
How do you communicate that with your students?
If you do not see anything and I asked them to redo, then I spoke with them on the phone. I do that a lot because a lot of my students are sooooo anal and it I don't soften the blow, they go ballistic.
 You might also note that I gave them full or close to full credit. In that case, I gave them the credit but asked them via phone to redo some things before they put it into their portfolios.

For the grading, most everyone has full credit for the submitted assignments. How do you decide how to break down value, both for the submitted work and in setting up the assignments?
This is much different from my undergrad classes. For these courses, we are project heavy. If they are close enough to what the project asks them to do, I give them the credit. If it is one or two points off, they know in advance that it is only grammar or spelling. I tell them that in the syllabus or FAQs and when I do an equipment check.

Normally, the projects really stretch them and a lot of my stuff is open-ended and they have extreme difficulty with open-ended projects. Therefore, if it is close, by the mere fact that they did the work and the project is a growth experience, they do not need anymore. I've been teaching this class since 2004 and I've tweaked and changed the course each year. However, having taught the course so long, I know how this level of grads work. They have a master's so they already are above that level. I also know that a lot of them do have a knowledge base, but often they have not grown for awhile or they think they know it all. My course takes about three quarters of them on a path that they are not used to. If it is not 1, 2, 3, they cannot handle it. What the course does not show is the number of whining phone calls I get at my house the first five weeks each time it is taught!

Whining phone calls?? ok, please share. What do they complain about?? Your coursework seems acceptable to me - both classes.
The whining phone calls are that they read the whole syllabus and then they look at everything and they complain about the work load and then they complain about the projects because they have not done any of the work yet but they know for sure that they will have trouble because it is obvious that the work is open-ended. They want sample projects. I've done that in the past and all I get is clones. I do not want clones.

This is a course that is supposed to stretch them (mind you that I am talking about 7469 here) and it is not 1, 2, 3. That's when they panic and they are positive that they cannot live and have a life and make it through this course and will I consider changing some of the assignments. I kid you not; this is exactly what happens. 6466 I get only a few calls.
 3401 I get no calls unless someone has had an accident, a death in the family, or whatever. 2401 is a first time course for me this term but I've had no whining calls, only

two people that needed clarification.

For the 6466 course, I usually get a lot of books from publishers - some give, some I have to buy. Then I look at what the others are using and I normally see that they do not update often - sad, but true and not for publication to anyone other than your professor. Anyway, I look at where the field is going and how the thinking has changed so much and I try to match up our needs for them to know with their need to know how to run a media program. For 7469, I have two kinds of students. Most fall into the category of have not read much since they got a master's degree. There are always a few that are more up than others. In addition, some are running more modern programs just based upon what comes up in their district or if they actually attend conferences. With that said, I knew that I needed new books.

Three years ago I got a new book, two years ago I added another one. It became apparent to me that I needed to replace the three year old book and to add a third book because of my search for 6466 books. I then asked for another book to be sent to me from libraries unlimited (which has merged with whatever, I cannot remember) and they did so. It turned out to be a good one so I added it. I used to use a ton of articles, but I knew that a third book would be a reach for people who are not reading a lot so I took away the articles for this spring and I'll see how it works. You will see when we meet to talk about visual literacy projects (which precious few of them never even heard of until this class) that I end up the evening by asking them some specific short questions about how the books worked for them and which project they grew the most from.

Your classes are very similar to my coursework under Nancy Brown at GSU. What are the drawbacks, in your opinion, of face to face and online instruction?
I especially like a meet two times f2f and the rest online. As I explained to you before, I went to all online because that's what we were told to do two years ago and I complied. Anyway, f2f you get a slightly better feel for the person. However, if they actually put the camera on during class, by the time it is over, you start to feel better about it. I usually meet three times with each class not counting equipment check.

This term it was not going to work as I have five f2f classes for 2401, a lot of conferences, and some things with the department that I'm not allowed to divulge. So I just met with each of the other three classes two times. I am not comfortable with twice. I think three times is better. If you meet more than that, you start to infringe on people's time. I know people who meet every two weeks and the students tell me that the classes are over in 20 minutes and it is more like a chat session and, thus, a waste of their time. I normally try to think of what I would think if I were the student. That approach does not always work because I am independent, a self starter and naturally intellectually curious. But I really do try to put myself in their shoes a lot of the time.

4/4 – in reply to the Wimba rooms: When we do equipment check, I tell them all that when the groups are formed, I will put the group on the discussion board and that I also

will build them a chat room if they want that. I also tell them that the wimba room is open any time for them to come and go and meet and that they do not need me. I finally tell them that I do not care if they use google docs or any other thing like that so long as they put it in word at the end. I tell them that they can also call each other, IM, or any other method that works. I tell them all of that twice during equipment checks and then I tell them that I do not mess into group work or look at what they are doing unless there is a problem or unless they ask me to. I tell them not to let things fester, etc. and that they need to do their part of the job. I also meet with them by groups in Wimba and repeat all of that during their group meeting. (I think you came to me right after I'd finished all of that so you would not know that)

At that point, if some groups choose not to tell me when they need help, I feel that it is their choice. I set it up, I will do anything they need and I make it clear that I can meet just about anytime during that group meeting, I think they need to be professional at that point. So, honestly, if they do not do as well as they could, I figure they made that decision as adults. At graduate level, I do not peek or look or interfere because, unless invited in or asked to come in, I think it is a violation of their privacy to work together and to learn how to do a good job. This term they appear on the surface to be about the worst groups in two whole years. I will see in the end.