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18 May 2015

Final Reflection – Dubuque History Project

When working on the Dubuque History Project at St. Columbkille's school, many different factors came into play when I was working with my students. Some of these factors include InTASC Standards 3, 4, and 5. These standards revolve around the learning environment, content knowledge, and application of content. As I look at these factors, I realize more and more how much they impacted my lessons.

InTASC Standard 3: Learning Environments states that: The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation. The first part of the environment I wanted to establish was to make sure the girls were comfortable with me and understood what it was we were going to be doing together. This was not too hard, but I did not want one of them to feel uncomfortable and to understand I was there to help them. Next, I wanted the students to understand that while this was a group project, they needed to do some individual work first (researching). Some times while doing the individual work, they could share a piece of information that they found interesting or important if they thought the rest of the group should look at it. Otherwise, after they did their individual work, at the end of each time together, we would come back together and collaborate on what everyone found and why it was important to what we were researching. In having this collaboration, it was also promoting positive social interactions. The girls in my group could talk about whether or not they thought

something was important and why. This was not a time to put down someone's work, but a time to explain and share thoughts. All of this research, collaborating, and interacting was a part of having the girls actively engage in their learning. In order to be fully engaged, the girls also had to have some self-motivation. I could not give them this self-motivation, but rather I had to give them praise, and give them reasons to want to investigate more about what they were learning. I saw this many times when the girls would find something interesting, they would begin looking for more information in that area – thus they were motivated by their own interests.

InTASC Standard 4: Content Knowledge states: The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make these aspects of the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content. When preparing for this project, I had to put together the information that I wanted the girls exploring and learning more about. In doing this, I had to learn about the tools of inquiry – in this case, the Weebly – so that when doing the project with the girls, I would be able to help them with any questions they had when it came to researching. In putting together the information, I also learned about the History of Dubuque Health Care (our topic). This was good for me, because then I knew what was important to our project and what it was that the girls were looking for. Without looking at what information the sites held, I could have potentially be sending the girls to useless sites or sites that held information the girls would not have needed to know. Knowing this information also helped me to better facilitate conversation with the girls about what they were learning, so that I could help guide them to maybe what information was more important and meaningful than others.

InTASC Standard 5: Application of Content states: The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity,

and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues. When learning about our topic, I just did not want the girls to know facts and be able to rattle them off. I wanted the girls to truly understand what was going on in history at that point and understand why things were the way they were. When they learned that Dr. John Finley traveled 50 miles by horseback to treat patients, the girls thought that was neat, but they did not understand the distance. To let them know that was farther than traveling to Maquoketa had them exclaiming over the distance and making more educated remarks over it. Connected to Dr. Finley and his horse was the fact that the first ambulance was a horse and wagon. This gave them a better idea of what it was like back then. They asked questions about the speed of the horse and wagon, about sirens, and how a person would get a hold of this ambulance. Making these connections was what was truly important to helping this information stick out in the girls' minds. Two of the fun facts they liked to always mention were the two above.

I really enjoyed doing the Dubuque History Project and meeting my students. I learned quite a bit – both about the History of Dubuque Health Care and about doing the Weebly Research Project. InTASC Standards 3, 4, and 5 definitely were present throughout the whole project! I hope the girls enjoyed doing this as well, and learned as much as I did!