Self-Reflection on Learning Experiences in ED5060

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As I look back over the past 3 months of experiences in ED5060, I feel that an “A” would be an appropriate grade. I really can’t highlight one piece of work as my best for the course because I feel that all my work was my best and each piece is important for different reasons. I think the piece I enjoyed completing the most was the concept map (<https://bubbl.us/?h=1cc4fa/39f0a9/18QyA4nHxBptk>) because it used new technology (Bubbl.us) that created a simple challenge while referencing Pink’s book which I found very interesting to read and plan to refer back to for my own personal development as well as to utilize in my teaching. Now to look back over the journey in more detail.

When I started the first reading assignment, I was very discouraged because the reading was textbook material and, while it was very interesting and provided much new information for me, it was a struggle to get through. It took me 4 weeks rather than the provided 2 weeks in order to get through the material but I did finish and have a list of pages that I need to go back and study in more detail with the focus on how to use these ideas in my own classroom. While the textbook format was dry and did not draw me in to the reading, I am thankful to have lots of information available in the Practitioner’s corner sections. I completed the theory paper assignment but still feel that there is no single theory that applies to every teacher for every student in every situation and that it is extremely important to be very flexible in how we interact with students looking to their needs and finding the procedures/concepts/techniques that best fit as well as we can to help foster success and individual learning. The newsletter that I created highlight many of the points that I want to remember as a teacher trying to help increase success in student learning.

After How the Brain Learns, Pink’s book was a refreshing change. The story format made reading easy and spotlighted the human ability of *Story* that is just one of his six fundamental abilities that will be needed in the future. Again, in this book are practical exercises that I will return to for my own development as a person and as a teacher. This energizing text was followed by Wagner’s more left-brained text where the story starts and stops becoming more textbook like and less conversational. I struggled through this text and then completed the Pink vs. Wagner paper where I compared both texts highlighting the difference between a story providing information and information parading as a story. I am glad that I enjoyed the Pink book because it made the prezi assignment of analyzing a learning theory and supporting it through Pink’s (my choice) work.

While all these readings and assignments connected for me, I found some of our discussions too open-ended (research learning theories, gender differences) without enough time to fully develop a better understanding of how they relate to or influence learning. The number of resources available when you do a Google search was overwhelming and contradicting. This is one instance where having a face-to-face class may have allowed for a deeper discussion if everyone was required to provide 2-3 articles and small groups discussed them all. Speaking of face-to-face classes, I greatly appreciated having a completely online class given my vehicle, financial, and familial issues but the way posts are submitted as independent articles instead of as a conversation made some of the discussion too abstract. Maybe if everyone just posted to the main discussion post then replied to individual responses inside then it would feel more like an interpersonal interaction.

I still haven’t assimilated the Strengths Finder report into all of this as it was a personal assessment while much of the class referenced generic learning habits. I need to go back through that action plan and see how to apply it to my teaching and how to use similar assessments to help students create their own action plans for learning.

Here are some things I’ve learned or want to investigate further:

* How to incorporate humor into the classroom
* Saying “I can’t” negates all efforts at learning the skill
* Creating meaning and making sense increases chances of retention
* Creating learning in chunks to increase amount of material that can be presented and remembered
* Separate teaching of similar motor skills to avoid confusion in memory
* Inviting Pink’s theory into my lessons
* Studying right before test/quiz doesn’t assess retained memories
* Most importantly, just because I give the information doesn’t mean the students will remember it. If they don’t, then I need to figure out what is inhibiting the retention and find activities/lessons that will circumvent the problems to encourage student memory.

I enjoyed this course and look forward to using what I’ve learned to become a better teacher who can create a more successful environment for my students.

References

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