

*By publishing content to a wide audience, we say “these are my ideas, my understandings of the world at this moment.” That in itself is empowering, and with that comes an expectation that our voices will be heard. On their own, our students are learning that their voices matter, that people are listening and responding, and that their ideas count. To not embrace those feelings by continuing to look at curriculum-as-lecture is to fight against a tide that we will not be able to keep back. Richardson, 2010 (p.151).*

Differentiation is the most effective method I use to meet the diverse needs of the students in my class. As a special education teacher, I have to teach and accept finished products in a variety of formats. My students span three grades, and their exceptionalities run along the continuum. I offer as many choices to my students as I can. Sometimes the options are as basic as where the student completes his/ her tasks (desk, table, carpet). Other times, choice may result in the order in which individual students choose to complete their tasks (flexible sequencing of material). The take away here is that there is usually more than one way to get the job done, therefore, the tools (what we use) and products (what we create/ produce) will vary accordingly.

Students are using web-enabled devices at home and some of them have reported accessing social media sites as well. When we use the internet at school, we are able to connect to the world beyond the classroom. Admittedly so, I have not used many of the web 2.0 tools, but going forward, I will gradually incorporate some of them without overwhelming myself or my students. Prior to ITEC 7430, my students and I would use the interactive white board in conjunction with Google to illustrate (images and videos), explain (text and images), and supplement (images, text, and video) our learning. The internet was instrumental in assisting me with increasing the instructional vocabulary for my ESOL students. When reading text, a student may have asked about an unfamiliar word. I would immediately show several images and in most cases, s/he would recognize the image. Even though an ESOL student may have asked the question, I was able to reinforce the term and build background knowledge for all of my students with only a few clicks on the computer. As the teacher, there were times when I did not have a frame of reference to fully explain a concept to my students- like the holiday customs of a group culturally different from my own for example. The internet allowed us to gain a deeper understanding of what was important to us (ethnographic) as well as learn about groups different from us (cultural awareness).

Blogging is a platform that I will use to communicate with other stakeholders. Blogging allows users to use what they need- *“eat the meat, but throw away the bones”* if you will. My peers can pick and choose- *“use it or lose it”*, the information that is most relevant to them. Parents will have a place to communicate and possibly collaborate with other parents. Finally, I would love to use blogging as an alternative to journaling. I will allow my students to blog for homework (summarize and connect to the learning), or they can read and respond to posts created in their absence (equitable access to learning). This list is not exhaustive of how I plan to use blogs, but it a reasonable starting place- for me.

Richardson, W. (2010). *Blogs, wikis, podcasts, and other powerful web tools for classrooms*. (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin.

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