**4.3 Diversity, Cultural Understanding & Global Awareness**

Candidates model and facilitate the use of digital tools and resources to support diverse student needs, enhance cultural understanding, and increase global awareness.

Reflection

The Diversity Cultural Understanding and Global Awareness Blog was completed to showcase my ability to blog about how I address diversity with students with disabilities (SWD) and English Language Learners (ELL) in my teaching practices. At the time I created this artifact, I was teaching a multi-grade of Kindergarten, first, and second grade students in the small group interrelated resource setting. The diversity blog post demonstrates the International Society for Technology in Education’s (ISTE) Essential Condition of Equitable Access- “Robust and reliable access to current and emerging technologies, digital resources, and connectivity for all students, teachers, staff, and school leaders” (Williamson and Redish, 2009, p.12).

4.3 Diversity, Cultural Understanding & Global Awareness outlines the criteria candidates need to model and facilitate the use of digital tools and resources to support diverse student needs, enhance cultural understanding, and increase global awareness. The artifact I chose, demonstrates how I differentiate and make accommodations for my students so that they have access to digital resources. After studying and learning about diversity, cultural and global awareness, I blogged about how it applies to students in my class setting. I included examples of how I allow students to turn in their work in various formats (written, oral, drawings, etc.). I offer choice in the order in which students may complete assignments, and choice in the location or area of the class students may go (desk, table, carpet, etc.) to complete their work. So, when the time came to access digital tools, I took into account ways that I could support my students’ diverse and cultural needs. I posted acceptable student-friendly websites they could visit independently or in pairs. I bookmarked sights for students who did not spell well and for those who had other difficulties including physical limitations like not having the ability to use ones’ fingers independents to type well. For SWD and ELLs, I activated the read to feature for students who did not read well independently. During whole group, I often accessed images using basic Google search terms to illustrate unknown or unfamiliar vocabulary terms for my students on the interactive white board. This is not an exhaustive list of how I differentiated instruction for students with diverse and cultural needs, but this are the accommodations that I used the most.

Completing this blog post was one way for me to share my experiences as a facilitator and user of digital tools with students who had diverse needs. Accessing the internet with my students helped to enhance our cultural understanding and global awareness of life outside of their text and library books. We would immediately go anywhere in world that we read about with a few clicks of the keyboard keys. We would also use the internet to learn about one another. I recall sharing with the class a map of Mexico because Dylan (not his real name) was born there and the other students were curious. Would have liked for my students to have completed a research project of their cultural background that included their country of origin, continent, population, demographics, languages spoken, import/ export, and the flag. This group was a bit young and inexperienced with using the internet. At the time this artifact was created, technology was not as prevalent in the classrooms like it is now. Many students did not have access to the internet outside of school hours. Now, having students to complete such a project is reasonable because of the access to digital tools, at school, at home, and on the go with mobile devices such as tablets and cell phones for example.

I was able to share my blog post with the teachers on my team. We talked about how blogging could allow teachers to communicate with students and parents outside of school. We could use blog post for homework assignment and to communicate with students when they are absent. I would say that those of us who discussed ways to address student diversity were exchanging in a collaborative professional learning community with a common goal to increase student access to digital tools and communicating with stakeholders. The measure of such an impact of this initiative is quantified in the number of students, parents, and teachers participating in classroom-based or school-wide blogging. Embedding survey links within the blog is a second form of assessing such an impact on school improvement.