

Looking into my Crystal Ball

Katlyn Witt's Future as a Learner Essay

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Looking ahead to the next few years, I need to focus my attention and efforts on a few specific ideas. I will be focusing on five things: adopting some sort of digital citizenship course for the high school students where I teach, sharing my knowledge and supporting my colleagues with our continued incorporation of technology, incorporating Blackboard as a learning management system for my classes, developing an online/hybrid Physics course, and staying relevant in the world of educational technology by attending conferences.

One of the first things I would like to do is to come up with some type of digital citizenship course that all students have to complete in order to receive their iPads at the beginning of the year. Our school district issued 1-1 iPads for students in grades 3-12. The high school runs a block schedule, which has a 50-minute Seminar everyday. This Seminar is similar to a study hall or homeroom, where the students can use that time to work on homework or missing/absent assignments or get help from their teachers. Since the digital citizenship course will take place at the beginning of the year, the students' workload for their classes should be fairly light. This will give them the ability to put quality time into completing the course. I would like to work with our district's technology coordinator and other teachers in our building to either create or find worthwhile resources that we can utilize. There is a [toolkit](#) available through Common Sense Media, although I'm not sure if this is exactly what I want to use. The National Cyber Security Alliance also offers [tips](#) for online safety as well, for all grade levels.

Over the next few years in the realm of educational technology, I foresee a lot of growth both for my colleagues and myself. Since the deployment of the iPads last year, many of my colleagues have felt lost as to how to integrate them into the classroom, along with myself at times. Although students use plenty of technology outside of school, they do not typically use it for educational reasons. This is something that I would like to help change at my school. Although this will start small, I plan on working with the teachers within my PLC and department, and expand to teachers from other departments. Just because they may not teach the same subjects that I do, does not mean that the information or experiences they share will not be worthwhile. They may do something or use something within their classroom that I would have never thought of.

Another technology that my school uses, besides the iPads, is Blackboard. Many of my colleagues are concerned because our individual use of Blackboard will be included in our teacher evaluations next year, and they do not feel adequately prepared with how to use it. I hope to have students use Web 2.0 tools, along with Blackboard, for inquiry, communication, construction, and expression.

Something else that I can see myself doing in the next few years is teaching an online course. The school where I teach currently offers Hybrid programs, meaning both online and face-to-face sessions, depending on the day. I plan to create (and have already started) a Hybrid Physics course that we will offer sometime in the near future. Having the students use technology to create videos demonstrating their understanding would be a component of the online course I design. I'm also trying to think how I can use technology, like the iPads, to enhance some of the labs and activities I already do in the classroom.

At the beginning of my teaching career, I focused most of my professional development and conferences on my subject areas of Math and Physics. As I have gained confidence in my mastery of the material, I am turning my focus to Educational Technology conferences instead. I attended the MACUL conference last year and felt so invigorated and left with a long list of new ideas and Apps to try out. I would love to be able to present at a conference similar to MACUL someday, or possibly even MACUL itself.

It is hard to believe that I have learned so much in the past year and a half. After completing the Master of Arts in Educational Technology Program, I hope to become an advocate for the infusion of technology in education, and further expanding what can be achieved through the use of technology. The possibilities are endless, and I am looking forward to the challenge.