Kathleen Landolt
4/6/2014
Blog #12
IT 7430
Dr. Goetzel

Diversity
http://klandolt.weebly.com/1/post/2014/04/diversity.html

Today's classrooms are filled with diversity. Not only are our classrooms made up of students from different cultural backgrounds, religions, and economic situations, but also of students with different learning styles and educational needs. Education is not one-size-fits-all. Students need a more personal connection to what they are learning and the way in which they learn it. Richardson (2012) suggests allowing the students to help create their own personalized learning plan for how they will meet the objectives of a course. This will require teachers to be more flexible so that students can be more self-directed.

Technology is an important tool in creating this type of learning environment. Through the use of technology teachers are able to differentiate their instruction to meet the needs of the various learners in their classroom. In a classroom with personalized learning plans the students would decide which tools would best help them to learn and to present what they have learned. This will mean that not every student has the same technology and/or digital tools, which some might see as unfair. Edyburn (2006) made a great point about fairness being about everyone having what they need, not everyone having the same thing. The choice of tools should be as diverse as the learners themselves.

In my own classroom, students come to me with various musical backgrounds. Some have had no experience with reading music while others are also in the band program and have been reading music for years. Having technology available in the classroom or at home would allow students to work on their music reading skills at their own pace. Those with more experience could be using programs such as Finale Notepad to compose their own music while the beginners learn the basics with programs like Music Ace.

Along with being a tool for differentiating instruction, technology can also be used to teach students about the cultural diversity of their classmates. Using tools such as Skype in the Classroom allows students to connect to people all around the world to learn more about their culture and beliefs. In the music classroom this type of technology could be used to learn about the musical traditions and musical instruments of other cultures. Students can connect to performers, composers, and other music students in different parts of the country and around the globe.

Web 2.0 tools such as blogs and social media sites like Facebook and Twitter have made it easy for students to connect to and learn from others both locally and globally. By visiting the blogs of performing artists, composers, music producers, etc. students can participate in conversations about music of all different types. Students could also create blogs about their musical experiences in order to start conversations of their own. Using social media students can follow the latest news about their favorite artists and interact with other fans. The list of ways that students can interact with others online continues to grow and create even more opportunities for them to learn.

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Comment
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I like the way you used technology to teach your students about different cultures and resolve the conflict in your classroom at the same time. The internet has really become a great resource for students to learn about the world outside their classroom. Have you ever tried using Skype or a similar tool to connect to people in other countries?