Tracy Richter

Reflection 3.4

**3.4 Research and knowledge creation**

Candidates use evidence-based, action research to collect data. Candidates interpret and use data to create and share new knowledge to improve practice in school libraries.

**Artifacts**

1. [EDUC 761 Research Proposal Paper](../../Fall%202013/EDUC%20761/EDUC761_Final_WikiPD_Research%20Paper.docx)

2. [ISTC 541 Web 2.0 Tools Research Paper](../../Summer%202013/ISTC%20541/tracyr_ResearchPaper.docx)

3. [ISTC 601 Library Display Research](file:///E:\istc601%20Assignment_7_Advocacy.pptx)

**Relevance**

As a professional, you have to keep learning and improving your skill. One way to do that is to conduct research and apply the newly attained knowledge from your findings, to your professional practice. I believe this is a key component to the success of a school library media specialist, which is why I focused my graduate research assignments on the school library media program. From my artifacts, I have learned so much, and I can’t wait to implement my research findings into my future library.

My first artifact was an action research proposal that focused on the effects of Wiki-based professional development on technology towards teachers’ attitudes. Providing teachers with professional development, especially on emerging technology tools, will be a big part of my job as a media specialist. However, from experience, I know that many teachers do not have the time to attend professional development meetings and often lack enthusiasm for them. Therefore, I wanted to conduct a study that focused on using a Wiki, to learn about web 2.0 tools, and figure out if teachers would be more involved and enthusiastic about learning through a collaborative online platform, rather than a read-only webpage. From my research, I discovered that there are a myriad of benefits for teachers participating in a Wiki environment. For example, it enabled ubiquitous access to learning, it provided a co-constructive and positive collaborative learning environment, and it allowed users to archive information and discussions. The positive findings from my research, tells me that teachers not only prefer a Wiki-based professional development, but they learn more about the technology tools to use in the classroom due to the highly collaborative discussions that go along with a professional learning community. I plan on implementing a Wiki-based professional development in my future school. I would be the facilitator of the community and introduce technology tools, but then I would let the teachers in the school explore these tools, learn about their strengths and weaknesses, and discuss how they might apply them to their classrooms’. Creating a professional online learning community amongst the school, is a great way to get everyone involved and collaborate with one another to help improve their instruction and enhance their students’ learning.

Throughout my graduate coursework, I have been very interested in web 2.0 tools. Therefore, I have focused a lot of my research on this topic, to learn more about them and how they could be used effectively in schools. My second artifact, focused on the current issues, potential future directions, and impacts in schools, of web 2.0 tools. I found that students are positively affected by using these tools. For example their engagement increased, their academic achievement improved, and their organizational skills became more developed. However, I also found that although students can greatly benefit from using these tools, teachers are not implementing them, and often those that do, do not use them effectively, which then result in negative student outcomes. Professional development is a solution to this problem, and it confirmed the fact, for me, that a school library media specialist should take the lead in this area. Based on the results of my findings, I know how important it is for me to stay current and informed about the technology tools that are out there, and in my future I will continue to do this. I also know that I will share my knowledge with teachers and students in my future school, to help provide students with the benefits of using web 2.0 tools and teach them how to use them effectively through professional development opportunities.

My last artifact, focused on using displays in the library and how they can affect the school community. Often times, displays are not though of to be that important, and as a result they are not changed frequently, they are just used as a decoration, and they are not engaging or eye-catching. When displays are well thought out, and given a purpose, some of the benefits include student motivation, communication of essential information, reinforcement of instructional goals, and promotion of the library and the media specialist. Therefore, I know that in my future, I will make the time to change out my displays frequently and have a goal in mind as to why I am creating the display. When students see the same display month after month, they don’t actually *see* the display anymore, so keeping the displays fresh and exciting is vital. I can see myself using books displays to promote reading, but also to feature student work, to instill confidence and motivation in students, as well as using the display to reinforce the rules in the classroom or how to find the online databases on our website. Displays can be used for a number of important matters, and I will definitely use them to my advantage in my future library.