**Module 1, Assignment 2:**

***A Summary of Curriculum Trends***

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**61653-80: Trends and Issues in Curriculum and Instruction**

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I have listed five trends in curriculum and instruction in this assignment. Three of the trends, arts integration, differentiation, and 21st century learning, I have embraced for a long time – even though the potential learnings I can still gain in those areas is vast. Social and emotional learning (SEL) is a relatively new trend in my experience, yet the more I learn about it, the I believe I’ve been incorporating SEL elements in practice since I started teaching in 1989, five years before it’s unveiling in Connecticut in 1994 (Edutopia, 2011).  
 Finally, game-based learning (GBL) caught my eye as I was researching trends.

From what little I know about GBL, I can already tell that it could make for a nice addition to my pedagogy.  
 I believe that the five trends I’ve listed below provide a clear definition of my educational philosophies and practices.

**Arts Integration**

**Description and Impact**

Arts Integration involves the integration, or blending, of an art form – such as movement, dance, visual art, or music - with other subjects in a curriculum, meeting standards and/or objectives for both. There are three lenses, or variations, in which arts integration can viewed within a curriculum: an arts-integrated curriculum, and arts-enhanced curriculum, or curriculum in which arts are the center focus.  
  
Arts integration “encourages healthy risk taking, helps kids recognize new skills in themselves and others, provides a way to differentiate instruction, builds collaboration among both students and teachers, bridges differences, and draws in parents and the community. Plus it's just plain fun” (Nobori, 2012).

**Thoughts and Opinions**

I have taken multiple classes in Arts Integration over the last 15 years, as many of the founders of the Arts Integration program – resident artists from Washington, D.C.’s Kennedy Center – came to Des Moines to offer optional professional development for continuing education credits. Those were some of the best classes that I have ever taken, and I have integrated many learnings from those classers into my teaching!

**Differentiation**

**Description and Impact**

Differentiation in a classroom takes place when a teacher proactively considers meeting the needs of individual students within the curriculum, making adjustments as needed. Differentiation can take place within the content of what is being presented in a lesson. It can be evidenced in how students take in and make sense of the content” (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013). In other words, differentiation is customizing how we teach to meet students where they are – either by their interest, at their level of understanding, or both.

**Thoughts and Opinions**

I believe that most misbehaviors that have taken place in my classroom are due to a lack of engagement. If that lack of engagement is due to a lack of interest, or the task at hand is too difficult or too easy, differentiation helps greatly with student engagement. Differentiation can be difficult to manage, but I make that an essential for my math and reading instruction.

**Game-Based Learning**

**Description and Impact**

Game-based learning (GBL) is “a type of game play that has defined learning outcomes” (EdTechReview, 2013), or in my thoughts, playing with a purpose. The teacher is intentional in choosing activities - such as role-play games and activities, board or card games, and computer and video games -that lead to student achievement, reaching learning outcomes, along with elements of skill, cooperation, and acceptable behavior.

**Thoughts and Opinions**

Based on what little I know about this trend, I can say that my teaching style could often lend to utilizing GBL in my lesson planning and practice. I also believe that tenets of GBL would pair very nicely with social and emotional learning (see below). I can see myself incorporating game-based learning in my personal pedagogy.

**Social and Emotional Learning**

**Description and Impact**

Engagement is the key to making the most of the school day. However, engagement is a two-way street. While it is hoped that educators keep students engaged throughout the school day, social and emotional learning (SEL) reminds us educators to show that we are engaged with the students. SEL provides resources that also need to learn how to be respectful, and responsible to each other, along with learning coping skills in dealing with challenges within ourselves and between others. SEL is centered around teaching five “competencies”: *self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision making, social awareness, and relationship skills* (Positive Action, 2020).

**Thoughts and Opinions**

As a 30+-year veteran teacher, whose formative years were shaped by trends such has “whole-child learning” and “multiple intelligences”, I believe that I’ve been using elements of SEL in my pedagogy since my Day 1 – well before SEL came around! I do credit the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) for putting together elements of whole-child learning and character education to make our attempts to reach children more meaningful.

**21st Century Learning/Technology Integration**

**Description and Impact**

At the turn of the century, 21st Century Learning were perceived to have an emphasis on technology to prepare learners to for skills that are needed in a changing world. While that still holds some truth, the life and job skills component is just as important as the technology component. There are four essential *rules* to guide educators with 21st Century Learning (Nichols, n.d.):

1. Instruction should be student-centered. 2. Education should be collaborative.
2. Learning should have context. 4. Schools should be integrated with society.

There are twelve *skills* also associated with 21st Century Learning (Stauffer, 2020). They are:  
 1. Critical thinking 4. Communication 7. Technology literacy 10. Initiative

2. Creativity 5. Information literacy 8. Flexibility 11. Productivity

3. Collaboration 6. Media literacy 9. Leadership 12. Social skills

**Thoughts and Opinions**

Of the trends here, 21st Century Learning, differentiation, and social and emotional learning are my Top Three. I am a strong advocate for 21st Century Learning, both for the technological aspect of it, and for the life and employability skills it stresses. I would love our school to go as paperless as possible using programs like Freckle and Epic to provide for independent, small group, and whole-class study. In my research this week, I was fascinated to hear a primary school teacher mention a weekly “Genius Hour”, when students focus self-driving learning on a topic of their choice (MacArthur Foundation, 2010)… I would love to try that next year!

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