

Initial and Final Reflective Essays

EDCI 66000A

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Initial Reflective Essay 660A

As a Special Education teacher, I thoroughly enjoy my students and am energized by their excitement and engagement in learning. However, the aspect of my work from which I draw the most satisfaction is creating and designing the learning materials. In my 513 course we are studying evolving definitions of instructional design. The 2008 AECT definition views the major functions of instructional design as “creating, using, and managing” (Reiser, 2012, p. 4). My passion is clearly in the creative aspect of instructional design. My career goal is to create and market learning materials/curriculum for those with special needs. Despite legislation such as the 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, my experience is that this population is often undereducated. The students in my class receive a variety of services from related providers such as occupational and physical therapists, speech language pathologists, behavior interventionists and psychologists. These professionals not only have my respect but also a much wider perspective as they work with a number of schools and school districts. I have been told multiple times by them that my classroom environment is unique and needs to be more widely implemented. Or, as our school psychologist told me, ‘you need to get on it’.

In preparation for beginning the LDT program, I analyzed my past curriculum. Rather than it being the random funfest I feared, I found that my instruction is extremely systematic. I utilized this knowledge to structure my latest curricular units and the ease with which I was able to produce cohesive yet fresh instruction was like magic. I am invigorated by this discovery yet realize this is simply a rough draft. Through the knowledge and experiences I will gain in the LDT program I hope to build on and hone these materials. In the first week of instruction, it has already become apparent that I am only envisioning the tip of the iceberg in terms of potential and that this field is so much richer and full of possibility than I had imagined. My mind is spinning from not only the instruction but also from the diversity and wealth of experience and expertise of my fellow students. I believe the knowledge I receive through this program will equip me to not only achieve but to redefine and surpass the career goal I currently hold.

Reiser, R.A. & Dempsey, J.V. (2012). Trends and issues in instructional design and technology. Boston: Pearson, 4.

Final Reflective Essay

Although I found all modules extremely useful, Module 3 clearly stood out. I have limited background in research and writing a ten-page paper was a novel and unnerving experience for me. The introduction to the Purdue library and the OWL resources was invaluable. Discovering that I had access to a myriad of books and journals was magical. It was difficult to draw a halt to reading and begin to write. The OWL resources on APA formatting were extremely clear although I will need continued practice and applied effort. I know that I will continue to utilize them as I move forward. I also feel the time management module will be helpful in creating study schedules. I plan to use the Digital Badges to gain expertise in Evernote as my research methods and note keeping were problematic. Writing the annotated bibliography was also new to me and was a helpful exercise. It highlighted a certain amount of frustration in that even the mechanics of creating a hanging indent were unfamiliar. On the other hand, although I need continued work in APA formatting, I do feel I have mastered the hanging indent.

My career goals remain largely unchanged. I feel even more strongly committed to curriculum development with an increased interest in on-line education. My expectations for the program have perhaps increased as I become ever more aware of the wide-ranging and varied potential of learning design. I hope to develop increased interaction with other students in future courses as I have seen what a wealth of insights and varied experience they offer.