Nicole Campbell –Unit 8 paper

Growing up in the digital age has made me a supporter of integrating technology in every part of daily life both at school, work, and home. Since middle school, technology has supported most of my educational inquiries. From Google and Wikipedia to Facebook and Twitter to DVDS and iPods, there are many forms of technology that enables learning every day. In high school, technology was used to research different topics, ideas, and authors. This expanded into college as Google and other search engines became more efficient and the world wide web continued to grow. Instead of going to the library, all my research materials were right at my fingers tips, right in my dorm room. Another aspect of technology I would argue has enabled my inquiry of both my education and my life is social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Blackboard. Through these sites, I have been able to discuss, share, and collaborate ideas with classmates and fellow teachers throughout the country and even the world. I feel this approach has led me to be a more diverse thinker and have a larger “tool box” of ideas. Through social networking, I have been able to ask questions and discuss highs and lows of teaching with others with different skills and strength without the restriction of distance. Another advantage to learning with technology is the endless possibilities of programs for creative projects/presentations and resources on the large databases found throughout the internet. Throughout my childhood and education, I have always been more engaged and interested when technology was involved. Personally, I seem to understand it when the information is coming in many forms as possible at once (visually, audibly, kinesthetically). As I studied to become a teacher, I got excited when an assignment came in the form of a project that would use technology as the main source of the presentation. Now as a teacher, I enjoy creatively thinking of new ways of presenting information or developing projects or assignments for my students that use technology. My favorite time of the year has become the week of the MACUL conference. I absolutely love learning what is new in the world of technology in education. It was at MACUL I learned how Twitter is a great tool for educational collaboration. Through Twitter I have connected with teachers all over the country. I have been able to ask questions and brainstorm ideas on a number of different problems and curriculum/other areas of teaching.

 As a teacher, I am continuously using different internet database/websites to expand my knowledge of both the curriculum I am teaching and how I teach it. My computer, iPad, ELMO, projector, DVD player, and tablet all enable me to both learn as well as teach my students using Bloom’s taxonomy traits with ease. My students are able to remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create all while using technology throughout the curriculum. Through new technology innovations I have learned Chinese, researched numerous historians, created projects to help others learn, witnessed the moon landing, took part in discussions with the president of the United States, and collaborated on a school project with teachers all over the country/world.

In the video, Digital Nation, journalists reported on the belief or theory that technology is actually damaging the current or upcoming generation. I would like to argue that it is quite the opposite. I feel that technology is helping this generation become more connected with others, learn a larger variety of subject areas at once, be more diverse and aware of other cultures and beliefs, and be more prepared for the future than people born 30 years ago. Throughout the video they spoke of how students were failing by long time standards, but my question is what if we need to be assessing by a new/different standard. Students will not be needing to know many of the academic standards of the past to be successful in the new technological future. They need to know how to find information and how to recognize a reliable source. Students will need to know how to perform a variety of tasks while using technology. Studies have shown that using technology actively in the classroom has increased test scores dramatically. Students today no longer learn by only one multiple intelligence instead they are “multiply” intelligent. They need to see, hear, and touch what they are learning. I have found when using computers or other kinds of technology in my teaching that my students are more engaged and involved in both discussion and daily work. Maybe according to brain scans and historical data, it seems that the current generations is becoming “dumber” but one could also argue they are evolving. In fact they are adapting to the needs of the new society, changing how and when they use certain areas of their brain and when to use or not use certain technologies.

My opinion of autobiographical inquiry is that is seems to be more challenging and subjective than the other kinds we learned about in this course. In autobiographical inquiry, one is only using data and analysis from their own point of view. One could sway their findings to come to the conclusion that they are preforming a task one way while another person could look upon the same event in a very different way. However, I have found this kind of inquiry very helpful as well. By looking back on how I do something or taught something I can learn from about my strengths and weaknesses. I think it is also important to look how far one’s self has evolved throughout the different events of life. I found this kind of inquiry similar to the inquiry Vivian Paley used while writing The Girl with the Brown Crayon. I think Paley may have used autobiographical inquiry a few times throughout the book when she compared the unit to past experience with Leo Lionni’s books and similar lessons she had taught with other classes. Also, I believe she used this inquiry approach when she looked at her own teaching and view of Lionni’s books. Throughout this class we have learned about the many ways one can look at different situations and ideas and learn from those experiences. We looked at different authors who wrote about their use of inquiry in their field to help them become better educators and help their students grasp different ideas on the many levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy. I, also, thought about the cultural inquiry we discussed when we watched the movie Whale Rider. As we used inquiry from a distance in that unit, I was able to compare it to autobiographical inquiry in two ways. First, in that although in autobiographical inquiry one is directly connected to the situation one must also disengage and try to observe from a far to be sure to get both sides of the study. Second, I began to realize how different culture looks like to someone not born in this generation compared to one born into the “digital age.” I found many of the articles and movies in this unit almost obvious and thought the video was very wrong on its observation of the digital generation. However, after more inquiry I realized that I am a member of the digital generation and maybe I am not looking at it objectively and instead need to try to understand it from the perspective of someone not born into this culture.