

I have learned to do many new things with educational significance that has been enabled by technological innovation for many years. In middle school I can remember using computers with black backgrounds and orange font and trying to learn the home keys for typing. It seemed so difficult. I can remember my teacher being able to type so fast that the computer could not keep up with her. I can remember when I was in high school I used a typewriter to type my papers. In my freshman year I was in a computer class where, again I was practicing learning how to type using home keys. Again it seemed hard not to look and that we should just be able to type by looking at the keys. Now I am very thankful that I can type without looking because after many years of practice I find that I can often type faster than I can write. When it comes to my career or even my schooling being able to type using home keys makes a world of difference.

When I was in high school the World Wide Web was just making itself known. I can remember using a basic chat and talking with people that I didn't even know at my Aunt and Uncle's house. My cousins were so knowledgeable of everything and showed me just the basics so that I would be able to communicate using this new technology.

As time went on I needed to learn how to use electronic mail, or as it is better known as, email. My stepmother showed me how to open up a Yahoo account and to this day it serves as my primary email. I barely knew how to check my mail, but before long as my schooling progressed I was required to learn how to send, reply, and forward emails. I also had to learn how to upload and send an attachment. When I was in undergraduate school, I was required to set up my own website that would serve as a portfolio. Because it was a new requirement for the program I was able to make the online portfolio very basic and the hardcopy one more detailed. To this day I am not sure that I would be able to find this online portfolio, let alone remember how to edit or alter it in any way. I have to say that not knowing how to access or alter it is definitely one thing that is disappointing on my journey of technology in regards to my education. I am sure I would be better able to add to this portfolio and truly put it to use.

One thing that I can remember having a hard time with in regards to my online portfolio was having to scan and upload copies of test scores, grades, and other significant documents. Now as I look back, it seems rather odd to me because I currently own a scanner and can scan and upload almost anything. It may take a little bit of time, but I can usually figure it out and it comes in quite handy in many tasks for my courses as well as my jobs.

In the fall of 2010, I was enrolled in the online Master of Arts in Education program at Michigan State University. I must admit that I was a bit nervous as to whether or not I would be technologically savvy enough to make the grade. I found out however that there are many people that are willing to help and I can go to them for advice and suggestions. I have been able to contact family members, FedEx Kinko's employees, instructors, classmates, colleagues, as well as many others to help me on my educational journey in teaching, as well as technology. Just this semester I was able to learn how to set up a Goggle document, my own blog, and how to reply to a forum. This may seem small to some, but for me it is a major accomplishment. I have also been able to practice skills with creating a PowerPoint presentation. I can see how these things will be able to help me in the future on my journey as a teacher as well as a student.

After taking the quiz on <http://www.pewinternet.org/Participate/What-Kind-of-Tech-User-Are-You.aspx> to find out what type of technology user I am, I use information

technology as a digital collaborator. I “connect with others and [am] confident in [my] ability to manage digital devices and information”. I am able to use the Internet to help me with many new ideas for lessons plans in my classroom. I am also able to use the Internet to help me with classroom tools and resources that make learning more interesting for my children. Some examples are file folder games and other interactive online programs to enhance learning in all subjects for my children. I am able to see many benefits of technology, yet I must ask myself what some of the negative aspects are.

Do the Internet and other modern technology help or hurt us, or both? A child may read more often from the Internet than they would from a traditional book, but does this cause a decrease in attention span? People have easier access to information, while they miss out on the appreciation for the hands-on approach of finding information. Should children be assessed on their technology skills? And if so, what about the children that may not have a great amount of exposure due to lack of a personal computer at home, or parents that may not be able to help?

Personally, I find that being able to take online classes has offered me many advantages when compared to attending traditional master’s classes on a campus. I am able to attend the University that I have wanted to since I was young as well as being able to live in completely different state. I am also able to work on my course work whenever I have available time. I work at my own pace and on my own terms for the most part. I do feel that one disadvantage is the absence of personal interaction and feedback in “real life”. But, I honestly feel in my situation the benefits definitely outweigh the setbacks.

I am curious to know what the future holds with technology. Will I one day teach children in an online classroom? I know that technology will continue to expand and improve. I must continue to keep up on the ever-changing technology in order to keep from falling behind. So many things have changed in just the past ten years; I can’t even imagine what the future looks like. Will we have libraries with no books? Will people ever leave their houses? I honestly enjoy and find such things as Kindles interesting and have even considered purchasing one, but I find myself really wanting to hold the physical book in my hand and turn each page. Besides, I love the smell of books and where would I be without that sense of comfort and my past? What would happen to families that may not be able to afford a Kindle? Will the library loan them out?

Autobiographical inquiry definitely has its positives and negatives. If one can offer their own experiences in order to help others to learn and grow it is a great benefit to the learner as well as the one that shares. A great example is Vivian Gussin Paley’s *The Girl with the Brown Crayon*. Paley is able to reflect on her own work and learn from it, while the reader is able to view her life and experiences and grows from them as well. However, if one is not in the exact same scenario or situation they will not truly be able to experience the life and lessons that may be offered. The reader in this situation may be able to sympathize but may not be able to empathize if they have not been in a very similar situation.

Educators need time to sit back and absorb and reflect on what they have experienced. By being able to reflect they are able to learn, change, and grow in their profession. Autobiographical inquiry allows one to truly reflect and determine what needs to be changed and what may need to remain in order to offer the best for students and educators alike. I am thankful that I was able to experience so many different types

of inquiry throughout this course. I have learned a lot and have found many tools that I can reference at a later date. I was also able to utilize many of the ideas and techniques in my classroom, as well as in my other course. I was also able to reflect on what I have learned and how I can use this information to become a better teacher and student. I look forward to expanding my use and knowledge of educational inquiry in the future. I have considered applying for grants to study abroad and know that this course has helped to open my eyes and offer new ways that I can approach my own learning, as well as the learning of my students.