TLIP Draft
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Technology in Schools 7377

Overview

The aim of my learning plan is to introduce limited amounts of technology in an otherwise non-technology classroom. I teach once a week as a religion teacher to a Catholic Parish in the St. Louis Archdiocese to sixth graders. My classes happen on Wednesday nights, and despite the school owning some moderate technology resources, I generally do not have access to any of them. What I am allotted for my weekly class is the white board, and whatever my imagination can dream up; I do not have access to even internet unless I am willing to use my personal cell phone data stream.

To be fair, I have been talking with my program coordinator about the issue, and we have figured out some ideas to work with. I am aiming to design an activity where they go to an online list of activities to do at home, not dissimilar to some of the "Reverse Classrooms" that are being discussed in education journals these days, where students do work in the classroom and look at lecture/reading materials at home.

The overall idea behind this plan is for students and thusly parents, to be more engaged with the material presented, by asking them to seek out relevant information for both the class and their own interested while not in the classroom, and then attempt to work with the information in the classroom.

The first step in this plan is to approach the problem using the ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation and Evaluation) model of instructional development to better understand, analyze and then develop a solution for the challenges ahead.

Analysis

The first step in the ADDIE model is to analyze what learners already know about a given subject or material, and to begin planning accordingly. Nothing will bore a learner quicker by having to recap material they already have a firm grasp of, but not all learners will approach any given subject with the same level of mastery.

The endgame of how students will approach this topic is for students to have a better knowledge base of Christian Scripture, appreciation for how to read and process Scripture, and to understand the Catholic viewpoint on Scripture's relation to the overall faith.

Student mastery specifically will cover:

- Hebrew Testament:
    - Understanding of core narratives of selections of the Torah/History Books (Gen, Ex, Kings)

- o Understanding of the purpose of the Wisdom books (Psalms, Proverbs, Ecc. Song of Solomon)
- o How to read the Hebrew Testament in relation to the Christian Testament
- Christian Testament
  - o Why the core importance of the Gospels matters in contrast to everything
  - o The Historicity of Acts
  - o Authorship of the Letters
- Overall
  - o How to search and find things within scripture itself

Assessing prior learning knowledge is always a challenge for me from year to year. While there is some uniformity coming from any Catholic program, students in my program may or may not have had the same knowledge taught to them from both at home, and in any formal schooling before reaching my classroom. Moreover, the same standards for teaching that are typically required for regular schools or even Catholic grade schools do not necessarily apply in programs akin to my own; so some teachers involved take a bare minimum of conveying important ideas in years before my own.

My primary analysis of student knowledge base would come primarily from three major sources.

1. In-Class verbal and written surveys: I will be generally judging how much students know of scripture by both formal and informal methods; this will involve simple conversations in class, as well as information sheets handed out for students to fill out about themselves at the start of the year.
2. Trivia Games: I am always a fan of trivia games in the style of the Game Show Jeopardy!, as well as other similar sources in order to evaluate on how well students are absorbing, retaining and processing knowledge. This has the benefit of being fun for students as well as giving me a fair view on how things are progressing.
3. Observation: Students will be subject to observation how they retrain assigned readings at home and in class, as well as observing their attitudes and expressed opinions about Scripture within each new unit.

Design and Development:

Since this is my first experience with a reverse classroom, design and development will be important, especially given that the class I teach has no normal effect on my students' day school, I am merely an extracurricular program. Unfortunately, this has the side effect of making my student motivation low and reversing that can be difficult in contrast to a normal program.

In addition to studying reverse classroom models I am able to find readily online, I intend to conduct informational interviews with teachers who have already spent at least one year in the field attempting this model in order to judge their wisdom and experience on the matter.

I will be looking to rely on how well learns complete assigned activities within class as a metric on how well they have done the assigned reading at home. There will be naturally some modifications or even improvisations in class, but generally, I am looking for students to have the following.

First, given the nature of reverse classroom, the technology involved will be important. I may not have access to technology in my active classroom, but students have access, to varying degrees, to it at home. My primary design will first start with what my Analysis yields about how much or how little students reach a common metric for knowledge and application of Scripture in contrast to what they should be able to do by year's end.

- Learning Outcomes: Students overall will meet both of these major goals:
  - Increased retention of basic scripture stories and study
  - Be able to identify similarities and differences in common scripture scholarship

Merely having the technology end of a site parents and students can access from home is not enough; the use of the technology will ultimately matter the most. Primarily, I will be looking to use a Moodle site, or something similar to that LMS. The reason for this is that it is generally uniform across all access points (PC, Tablet, Mobile), and has excellent navigation skills. While I have read of teachers using something like the Blogger Platform by Google or the open source WordPress, the archiving system of being able to look at older material is considerably more difficult.

Primarily, I want to develop a regular, uniform pattern of posting the same material by week, including the questions and readings for the week or two to come ahead. This will allow both students and parents to be aware of what is expected as well as catch up, should they miss. I am a firm believer of not using pop-quiz or other "surprise" formats in my class. While they can judge a student's completion of the assigned work, they also can put undue stress on students who do not test well, especially for assessments they do not know are coming.

- Use of Resources
  - Online lesson plans online – Students and Parents will be able to see assignments and readings that are past, present or upcoming.
    - This will be done using a blog/Moodle platform to make it consistent and easy to peruse.
  - Media uploaded to site for student to peruse at their leisure.
- Learning Integration
  - Questions posted for the next class on the site.

Structuring each individual class will largely depend on the material covered. Despite a lot of general knowledge available to both students and parents for Scripture studies, individual classes while uniform in approach, will not be uniform in material, as expected. That said, what will be established from class to class is:

1. Students will be asked general questions about the readings to gage how well they retained
2. Lecture/Discussion on the assigned readings, their background and implications

3. Activity to foster knowledge retention and analysis
    a. Students will be asked on how certain sections matter to both original audience of passages and the modern day.

Regarding assessment of students in class, up to this point, I primarily have taken assessments of student learning mostly from class participation in the assigned discussion or activity, in the last eight years of teaching this. While this is not an unfair assessment, it does have one major flaw in that not all students choose to participate as actively as others; and I have found myself frustrated when several noted stronger personalities attempt to dominate the conversation.

That said, I intent to change this somewhat by involving more individualized assessments by using the classroom site to set up short quizzes or fill in the blank entries online. Class participation will still be my primary assessment tool, but I do want to diversify.

- o Class participation effort
    - ▪ This is where I normally draw my primary grades. I am aware that not every student likes to participate as much as the others do, but I do try to involve every student at least once over the course of a class.
- o Discussion of questions from the week previous
    - ▪ This will be a major focus in addition to class participation; I want students to be aware of the questions for the class in order to have time to consider them fully.
- o Online quizzes over the week
    - ▪ These will be optional, if encouraged, just a way for students to self-test before they arrive for the weekly class.

Implementation:

Implementation of this Reverse Classroom formula hinges on two major and one minor factor. First, having the Moodle or another LMS system installed on a readily available website. While there are certainly free options for webhosting or I could already host on my existing webspace for my podcast, this will have to be done delicately, to comply with legal expectations from both the St. Louis Archdiocese and the MO Department of Education.

The second major factor, as mentioned previously, is student motivation to use the resources in the first place. While I do have some parental support, given the extracurricular nature of the class I teach, I am a low-level priority for both students and parents compared to the primary education, sports, similar extracurriculars, and even normal social obligations usually take higher priorities than I do from time to time.

A reward system of some kind, for students to be incentivized to use the resources may be an idea, but finding a reward that will apply well to all students will take time to establish with my analysis.

The other minor point is access to the internet itself. It's almost a foregone conclusion that students, and by extension parents, have access to the internet, at least reasonably reliably. However, based on home life, as it was when I was growing up, time spent online may be first prioritized for their main academics or entertainment instead, especially if parents limit the time spent online.

There's also the point of making my reverse classroom site cross compatible with most major platforms. While I have reasonably decent web coding skills; making a site that will work not only with PC or Mac, but also with tablet or mobile platforms is another concern and will require significant investment in time and coding.

Evaluation:

In total, evaluating this learning plan will require looking at not only how well students are meeting the learning objectives, but how often and how they use the provided class site.

This will be determined a few different ways. First, learning objectives will be judged in one of the methods I typically keep from year to year. Towards the end of the year, parents are typically invited in for a "parents' night" to attend with their students. My use of this night has usually been to pit students against parents in Jeopardy! style game and to test basic knowledge learned over the year. In addition to being fun, this allows me a real time look at how well students have retained material from the entire year. This is typically done by collectively checking how well students answer questions as a team.

Second, I will be seeking feedback, both formal and informal from all noted parties involved, including administrators, colleague teachers, parents and especially students. Real time feedback, most notably from students, can do well to judge on how well this approach is going.

Lastly, part of the proposed LMS site will require tracking code that shows how much each student has logged into the site and how often students use some or all of the activities available to them. This would also necessitate providing parent logins as well for similar comparative data.