

## **Module 3 Journal**

### **Heather Metzler**

As I am nearing the end of the third week of the course, I honestly feel a little frustrated. It is not as easy as I thought it would be to take a whole unit that has always been taught in the classroom (not in a computer lab with online components) and turn it into a more updated, blended learning unit. The economics unit in my district stems from the social studies text book that is very old and outdated. I just don't believe we can engage 8<sup>th</sup> grade students using this text book. However, as I am shifting this material to the online world of learning, there are many questions and issues that I've come upon.

For example, what do I take out and what do I leave in? I feel there are definitely some areas of the unit that really don't need to be covered, but I keep going back and forth on this issue. I'm undecided on many topics. For the material I've decided to leave in, how do I change how it is presented to create a user-friendly online format? What is the best way to incorporate material into the online portions of the unit so that I know students will gain a strong understanding? With anything new, I think I feel uneasy because it is new territory, and I don't feel as certain. However, I believe the changes themselves are good and I need to start somewhere.

I rarely teach from a textbook anymore, so this type of opportunity to develop curriculum is much needed. It really forces me to take the time to develop what I've wanted to do for awhile. Each year for the past several years, we have used the text book less and less in social studies, and this year, we are not handing the book out to students. We may use the books in class for supplemental material, but are mostly developing our own curriculum based on what we think is most important and relevant to students. This is where the online component comes in. I had a conversation with a colleague in which we discussed feeling as though there is more work each year since we are constantly changing how we teach and what we teach. I always thought that after I had a few more years of teaching the same subjects and classes, my prep time would not require as much. It seems as though it's the opposite. Each year changes as we add more technology and RRR.

In comparison, the prep work for online components and traditional lessons is very similar as far as the time requirements. While traditional lessons require creating and copying handouts and worksheets, or even stations, this isn't needed with online lessons. Online lessons require teachers to check all links to make sure they are working and appropriate; student instructions must also match and the procedure must be very clear since there is not always the same face-to-face interaction. Online lessons require that teachers find multimedia material to include and link, while traditional classroom lessons have more "tangible" prep work needed. When all is said and done, I prefer the online prep work and feel that a good mix of online and traditional components leads to student success!