Sharing Resources and Experiences
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One of the talks that I have with my students every year focuses on the nature of mathematics compared to other subjects. When it comes to history, my minor and another passion of mine, the important things for students to learn are knowledge based. For example, students may need to know how World War II helped pull the United States out of the Great Depression, or how the effects of WWII are still being felt today. If someone does not have a basic level of knowledge about the topics in the question, then they are unable to answer it. In other words, you either know it or you don't. On the other hand, very rarely do you *know* the answer to a mathematics problem. Instead, the goal is to equip students with skills in order to be able to uncover a solution. For example, last St. Patrick's Day I asked my students to estimate the amount of dye needed to dye the Chicago River. Apart from the person in charge of overseeing that process I doubt that anyone actually *knows* that information, but with a little bit of information about the river and dye, students needed to use skills like creating a plan, applying formulas and evaluating estimates to answer it.

With the direction that technology is leading us, the need for memorizing different pieces of information is diminishing while being able to discover, analyze and apply that information is more important than ever. One of my never ending goals is to always continue improving as a teacher and increasing the student learning occurring in my classroom. Therefore, when I envision myself learning in the future I see myself continuing to apply, analyze and discover new information and new technology in order to help improve my teaching.

Being able to apply available resources is important to ensure that I keep up with best practices. During my program through MSU, I have learned to apply many new types of technologies that I had been unfamiliar with in the past, and each serves a purpose. For example, services such as Remind or Twitter are effective ways that I have used to communicate with parents and students. I have learned to create websites, wikis and course management systems (CMSs) which can help manage students and encourage collaboration among them. From a mathematics standpoint, I have also gained experience in using resources like Geogebra, Illuminations and Khan Academy to help students explore, manipulate or gain a different perspective in the classroom.

In the short term, being able to apply these particular resources will help me improve student learning in my classroom. However, as a future learner this will not be enough. Whether it is next year, five years or 20 years down the road, each of these resources will likely become outdated and less effective than something else. Part of my future learning process will involve using my pedagogical goals to objectively evaluate the way that I am using those resources. Weighing the affordances of each piece of technology was a big focus of CEP 805 which has helped me be able to evaluate a wide range of technology.

The last piece of this puzzle is to continue discovering new technologies. This is the most difficult to prepare for, seeing as I cannot make a plan to look for something that I currently do not know I will need, that hasn't been invented yet. The best way that I can prepare would be to create and participate in a professional support network including other educators, administrators, technology and curriculum directors, professional organizations and anyone else involved in education. I have already taken many ideas from (and shared with) other colleagues I have worked with and other graduate students. Most of the time a casual conversation can lead to some great ideas as long as I continue to stay receptive. If I continue to use and evaluate current tools and ideas, while simultaneously looking for and being open to new ones, I will surely continue to learn new practices and more importantly the student learning in my classroom.

Outside of the classroom, I also plan on continuing my education. It may be much less formal than taking another graduate program, but it does include any experiences that help make me a more well-rounded person. Moving to Louisiana, from Michigan, has been one way broaden my horizons in culture, cuisine and values. Traveling and visiting different parts of our country or even the world are also ways for me to gain experience, but the most prevalent and effective method will be what I stated in the previous paragraph. Communicating with people in my life and being receptive can be a powerful way to share experiences, much in the same way I would like to share mine. My family, friends, peers, colleagues and students all come with a unique set of experiences to share and they will be a key part of me learning in the future.