Collegial Conversations – “Using Technology Inform and Inspire Students” February 23, 2012

In the world today we are being inundated with technology – internet on smartphones, wifi hotspots, and tons of software and websites full of instructional material. Students utilize technology without realizing it. Although sometimes technology can be a distraction, for example, if a phone goes off in the middle of class, technology if used correctly can be used to excite students and enhance their learning.

While I listened to the lecture on FTLC on technology there was video on using graphing calculators to teach math by using the calculators and robots. This got me thinking about my experiences with technology in the classroom. One of my favorite math classes my teacher taught us the mathematics on the board and then complemented the learning by using a graphing calculator. This helped greatly to see a visual representation of the data, to check my answers, and for future help using software for mathematics. This semester I am teaching trigonometry and this is a math that has a section that is very graphically intense. I was able to acquire a screen that can be placed on an overhead projector so that the students can see whatever I type into my graphing calculator. This was helpful to teach my students how they could graph and set parameters correctly on the calculator, and also to illustrate transformations common in mathematics. Of course, it didn’t always run smoothly, however, I think the students being able to get an additional confirmation of the mathematics principles was helpful in them retaining information.

At Collegial Conversations we discussed in groups how we could use technology in the classroom. I shared the above experience. Also, the idea of using [www.polleverywhere.com](http://www.polleverywhere.com) . This is a resource online where anyone can create a multiple choice poll that students can vote for their favorite option by texting in real time. This would be a great tool for review. For example, many of the math 1010 past finals are multiple choice tests. I have started to input a poll for a past final, however, there are problems with the mathematical typeset. Also I remembered that my classroom does not have great cell phone service, however, I am still sure it would be a great review tool.

Also at the conference I was told of a resource available through the College’s Library system ELIE (Electronic Library and Information Environment). The librarians are very helpful and willing to help and there is an instructor toolbox with many resources for the classroom.

After the Collegial Conversations I had the idea of how to use technology in the back of my mind. The other day on 60 minutes they had a bit on [www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org) and how they use these online videos that explain concepts for math classes. They have the students watch pertinent videos for homework and then do homework in class, where they can have the resource of the teacher to help them with questions. I thought it an interesting way to teach math. I don’t know if I could adopt that approach completely, however, utilizing these videos that explain concepts, or referencing them on homework assignments could be very useful. It would also aid the student to pursue learning independently. This may be something that I work into my classes.

Then, maybe because I had it on my mind, or this move to using technology in the classroom is a common practice, but I saw a post on the internet of instructors using the website pinterest to “pin” resources for students to browse through. I do not know how to apply it in math, I would have to research and find applicability, however, it illustrated that there are tons of technology and uses for it in the classroom, things that we may not at first realize we could use in the classroom could be a very useful tool. We can all improve our teaching and if we are open to ideas, we can find them everywhere.