

Observation Notes for Dr. Shufang Shi's EDU314 on April 27, 2009

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I finally came to observe Dr. Shufang Shi's class at her invitation. It is close to the end of the semester, so it is the day for students' presentations. This is not the first time I observe Dr. Shi's class, but it is a refreshing experience for me to observe her to teach her signature course : using technology in classrooms.

Dr. Shi began her class by informing students that she was going to offer a review session or tutor session that afternoon from 3 to 5pm. She encouraged all students who needed help to come now rather than until the last minute of the semester. To model assessment techniques, she prepared a poster entitled "*I'm hog wild about my presentation*" with very interesting cartoon pictures attached to both sides. The student-presenter, who presented his or her web portfolio, would hold the stick that was attached to the poster if he or she thought his or her presentation had met or exceeded the requirements of this course's multiple projects.

When the first presenter was a little uncertain about what to present, Dr. Shi used that opportunity to clarify what she expected each presenter to focus on. I considered today's presentation as a showcase of students' learning experiences throughout the whole semester. For this course, each student is expected to create a project while they learn each of the instructional software throughout the semester. The software suite includes, but not limited to, the following programs: Puzzle-maker, MS Publisher, MS Word, Photo-story, PAINT, and Google Site. Students' presentations of projects demonstrate their skills of using these particular software, abilities to use these software for the purpose of meeting goals of curriculum content and school activities. Such a performance assessment is the best model Dr. Shi builds up for the students.

Dr. Shi allows students to make choices in her course. She created authentic course assignments so that students do not feel that they are only creating "dead" and "worthless" course projects for her. Instead, they could use the grant writing experience, for example, to compete for funding and support in their future positions. The variety of projects I saw demonstrated today is the best evidence of her authentic and student-centered style of teaching.

While I would like to see more elementary curricular content integration with technology, I believe students have created projects that serve such specific purposes to meet the goals of curriculum and instruction. They just didn't have time to present each detail of their projects.

Overall, Dr. Shi has demonstrated a high level of competence in teaching and assessing students' learning. Her instruction is well organized and uses multiple ways to reach her students.