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Reflection

I am not too proud to admit that at the beginning of this process I was a nervous wreck about research. It scared me. I didn't know where to start or what to do. Research was this thing that scientist did in labs to create incredible cures and technologies. I never thought of myself as a researcher. This course has taught me how wrong I was. I have learned that I am a researcher each and everyday that I choose to observe and question the happenings around me.

When I started researching, it was overwhelming. There was so much information on my topic; I felt as though I would never be able to learn it all. It was hard to process the information. The more I researched the more I felt I didn't know anything. After reading more about research and watching a video Jill posted, I tried to find a few common threads in everything I was reading. I found three right away. I refocused everything and had more purpose. Categorizing and organizing the information was the key to research for me in my lit review. It made my research feel more meaningful and that it wasn't a bunch of articles being forced together. There was some continuity for me to build on.

After the lit review, it was time to do something with the research. Research doesn't really mean anything unless it is used for something. I knew I wanted this research to mean something, so I chose to write a curriculum that I hope will be implemented in my school district. I knew it was going to be hard work, but if I made it through the first part of the research, I could certainly make it through this project. I learned a lot about taking research an applying it to real life. It was not enough to just

read, I had to talk to people and students. I couldn't just rely on what I was reading; I had to test ideas out. I had to collect my own data.

There is no short cut to research. It is long and time consuming. I learned to trust the process and be ok with brain blocks. I learned to be flexible with time when the ideas started flowing so I would not lose momentum. I also learned to not feel alone in the process; talking with others and asking for help is key to success. There is no express lane to research. It takes time and energy. The more I talked to people about what they have seen and experienced in regards to social media in the classroom, the more I felt confident about what I was doing. It was a very important step to take what I had read in articles and connect it with what real people I know are doing in the classroom and my curriculum. If there is a disconnect between the research and your own real observations then the research won't work.

I think what I learned more than anything this semester is to be proactive. I had such a hard time coming up with a topic for this research. I have had so many conversations about school blocking social media from students, and how this staying current with trends. Who is educating students on laws, ethics, or the possibilities of social media? I felt, as an educator, it was my responsibility to educate on this topic. This research gave me the confidence to be proactive instead of sitting around and complaining. It taught me to become an expert. It gave me the tools to peruse something I didn't think was possible. With the research I have backing the curriculum I developed, I have a strong argument to bring to my school district. What I learned in the class gave me the ability to make that happen.