

Research and Development in Instructional Strategies was a wonderful opportunity to learn about teaching and learning in the 21st century using Web 2.0 tools. Dr. Smith began the course by introducing us to a “Moodle” site. All of our assignments and references were found here. Additionally, the class interacted with each other utilizing this site as we posted and critiqued each other’s work. By introducing us to Moodle, Dr. Smith started toward his goal of exposing us to the various Web 2.0 tools that are present in the classrooms today. We watched a Japanese lesson study video and compared it to a video of an American classroom’s counterpart. We were afforded the opportunity to analyze and then discuss the differences in the educational systems between the two countries.

In the framework of the Japanese Lesson Study model, our cohort created a lesson on Moodle based on the Jamestown Colony Adventure. At the culmination of the project, group members critiqued each others’ Moodle lesson plans and provided constructive, meaningful, targeted feedback. Having the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues in the development of the lesson plan achieved exactly what we predicted which is that teachers must have time for collaboration and reflection in order to improve teaching and learning. The course heightened our awareness and exposed us to the technology that is around us and is being used by our students in ways we have yet to discover.

In this course, Dr. Smith provided us with the time and opportunity to study, reflect, and interpret current research as it relates to teaching and learning in the 21st century. As we move into the 21st century, educational leaders must be prepared to confront the challenges caused by the ever changing world of technology. By creating a school culture deeply rooted in lifelong learning, instructional leaders can successfully guide educators and students into a global world.