**Reflection**

The Virtual and Blended Learning Unit Plan is one of the assignments in SPED 841, a course for the KU Master’s Degree in Special Education that revolves around advanced methods and assessments. This particular assignment was an opportunity to develop my understanding of various instructional approaches that exist in education. By the end of this assignment, I was able to identify types of instructional approaches and models within K-12 online learning as well as describe how purposeful research-based design considerations and strategies can be utilized to support all learner variability, including disabilities, regardless of the instructional approach.

The overarching purpose of this assignment is to develop my understanding, as stated above, because the education system is in rapid transformation in regards to how instruction is conceptualized, deployed, and delivered. For example, over the last few years, online education in K-12 environments (both virtual and blended) has shown consistent growth. I have learned that this directly impacts my future, especially since it is predicted that by 2019, half of all courses in high school grades will be delivered in online learning formats (Christensen, Horn, and Johnson, 2008). Additionally, online student enrollments over the last couple of years have skyrocketed. This will affect my employability, and eventually my instructional effectiveness.

　　 My reflection of this assignment revolves around the emergence of online and blended learning environments in the K-12 system. After developing my own instructional unit in a blended model along with associated materials and a presentation highlighting the vision of my plan, I came to the realization, or rather my deep understanding, of how my plan meets the needs of ALL students as well as incorporates research-based instructional design, strategies, and practices. My unit revolves around math, specifically fractions, since I am currently a certified Mathematics teacher in Oklahoma. My lesson includes many strategies that are supportive of my students. For example, my unit uses a predictable and regular daily schedule: opening activity, main activity, and closing support. It also integrates multimedia/videos to assist the learners through visual aids.

Through the research, planning, and implementation of this unit, I have learned the importance of adaptation and flexibility. As the times change, so must educators. If we continue to teach our students the same way, in the same format, with the same books, our students will get bored and lose interest in learning. It is important to teach how our students learn best and be able to differentiate our instruction to meet the unique needs of all the learners present in our classroom. For example, not everyone does well with written instructions or hearing verbal presentation of how to compare fractions. By integrating the use of iPads, laminated copies of instructions, and smart board technology, I can go the extra mile to ensure my students are engaged in the learning process.

As a result of my hard work and dedication, I received full marks on the assignment with positive feedback from Professor Ling Zhang. There was feedback to improve or work on my final paper, so I chose to revise. Professor Zhang suggested I incorporate video clips or other multimedia within my unit since the original did not have any. She also suggested I provide students with multiple means of showing their mastery of what they have learned in my class. I took these suggestions into consideration and made these adjustments. Additionally, I did review for grammatical and structural errors. There were none, and so I made sure to examine the unit carefully to determine if there was any other changes I wanted to make that might improve the product.

This unit plan allowed me to plan and design my own online class, which I had not done before. I used a variety of activities and resources, such as interactive games, exit tickets, explicit teaching techniques, etc. to support learner variability. As I reflect, I see how visually appealing my unit can be to my students as well as how the diversity of my activities yet predictability of my schedule will be beneficial and engaging for my students learning.

Overall, this assignment was new and enlightening. As a special educator, I now know that I need to continuously reflect on how my students learn, how technology impacts their education and learning styles, as well as how I can match their learning preferences with my instruction.