Kozel – Week 12 – Reflective Review

 In the very first diary I indicated that I was unsure about how I viewed myself as a creative problem solver. I hoped that the class would help me face my own creativity because I knew that it was important for my job. Looking back at that first diary, I pleased with what I have gained over the past 12 weeks.

 Throughout the entire class I have been interested to see how creativity seems to be at the heart of so many pursuits. I enjoyed reading about accounts of creative people or creative products in the sciences and in education. Now everywhere that I look; when reading a textbook, a scholarly article in Nature or if looking over a new lesson I am considering, I am seeing the creative process that extents backwards in time that shaped the product. This new level of thinking about products has also allowed me to not view them as static items but instead as starting points for my own thinking or creation. The techniques we have learned such as SCAMPER, the Six Thinking Hats and/or IWWMI provide easy to remember ways to play around with an idea or a lesson. Knowing and aspiring to the personality traits of creative individuals has also been an interesting exercise in self-reflection. The activity of choose a trait and planning three ways to apply the trait at work led me to a transformative meeting with a colleague. In that meeting we realized the huge similarities between development of an idea for a creative writing projects and the development of a scientific experiment. It makes me want to go through the list of all 16 traits to see what else I missing out there.

 The work of this class has inspired me to make some real changes in the way that I teach one of my biology classes. I have thought long and hard about the trends in education that worry me but, like I mentioned in my first journal, I tend to be defeatist. Many of the readings and the media clips focused on individuals that when faced with what seemed like an impossible task did what they could given the resources and they had and a creative approach. This is a very powerful message. The new lessons that I wrote around problem-finding and the shift in the time I am giving students to develop their own inquiry is just a small change but one that is exciting and one that I hope has potential for influencing other classes in the science department at my school.

 As I move away from this class the techniques that I mentioned above will travel with me in all the problem solving and lesson planning that I do. I hope to continue to face the larger challenges in my classroom based on what is in front of me as opposed to the forces outside of my direct control. I know that I will keep Creativity is Forever at an arms length in my workspace. The book has been an amazing resource for this class but also as I have tried to adapt my classroom materials. When look at the cover the eyes peering back at me can remind me to SCAMPER and to take a stroll to get that motivating cup of coffee.