Introduction

My name is Ramon Veral, and this is my technology mentoring project for EDEL 590. I am completing this as part of my course work for my Master's in Education at Cal State Fullerton.

Mentee background

For this project, I chose to mentor my colleague, Ianna, because she has shown lots of interest in revamping many of her lesson plans. I have shared many of the experiences that I have had in my Master's program and shown her that even teachers that are not new to the craft can always change in order to improve their class instruction. Although she teaches science and I teach math, we do share many students and felt that some of the technology I have introduced to my students could be very beneficial in her class. Also, considering my students have experience and have gravitated very well to using Edmodo and twitter, she feels that her students could do the same. Ianna is an experienced teacher but feels like she needs to evolve or risk getting left behind considering how tech savvy today's students are.

Action Plan

In my initial meetings with Ianna, I asked her about her needs in regards to how she can implement technology tools or use instructional technology to benefit her professional skills, and her students' needs. Her biggest concern was that she wanted to use technology to improve communication with her students and their parents, as well as with the Samohi community. Ianna expressed interest in integrating more technology in her classroom to connect with her students to motivate them in biology. She also wanted to learn about incorporating more tech tools into her biology lessons.

Initially, we met weekly after school for about an hour. As the mentoring progressed, we were less formalized with our meeting schedule, but still managed to meet every week or two,

sometimes for longer than an hour. Initially, I showed Ianna the benefits of using Edmodo in her classroom. I demonstrated the process of setting up an account and gave her ideas on how to instruct her students on setting up their own accounts. Ianna and I also discussed how to introduce the concept of digital citizenship with her students. We spent an entire day talking about the importance of this, and how to encourage her students to be thoughtful about how they use technology. Finally, we talked about ways she can use Edmodo as a distance education learning experience and we decided that she could find Youtube videos of biology concepts, and then assign students to groups to create their own videos based on these concepts.

After we worked on Edmodo, Ianna and I discussed setting up a Twitter page. Ianna did not have a classroom twitter page but she had used twitter on a personal basis. We spent some time perusing educational websites and getting some ideas about how to connect with students. We then set up the account and began collecting some followers. On the weeks between our meetings, Ianna began using twitter with her students. She shared her account information in her classroom, and she also added it to her email signature. After a few weeks, she began tweeting to remind her students about upcoming assignments and tests, as well as to share scientific resources and interesting biology news. We both got excited when she got her first retweets!

Reflection:

Upon reflection of our meetings, Ianna enjoyed learning the uses of Edmodo and Twitter. She feels that both are great resources that are helpful for students. They also both provide her additional ways of improving communication with her students and the school community. She really liked being able to post daily the assignments and work for that day so students can stay up to date.

From my perspective, if you have the time, one-on-one mentoring is an extremely useful form of professional development. I feel that I am benefiting just as much as Ianna from the guidance I am offering. I am able to think critically about what we as teachers can do to enable our students to have important information available to them in a way that is accessible to them when convenient for the students and not just convenient for the teacher. Showing students that technology is critical in the learning process can also help them stay engaged considering most students are very comfortable using most of the different platforms available.