

## EDTC627 Project 4: Reflective Essay

By Julio A. Velasco

*Each student will reflect and write a paper according to their achievement of the NETS for Teachers during the course. (i.e. What have I learned and how does it relate to NETS?)*

The National Education Technology Standards (NETS) is a project developed by ITSE to encourage educational leaders to provide learning opportunities that produce technology-capable students by providing national standards for the use and integration of technology in the classroom. Standards have been developed for students, teachers and administrators. NETS for teachers performance indicators are broken down into six categories: 1) The understanding of technology, 2) Planning technology in learning environments, 3) Applying technology to maximize learning, 4) Applying technology to facilitate assessment, 5) Using technology to enhance professional growth, and 6) Understanding the social, ethical, legal and human factors in using technology..

With regard to understanding technology, I am already ahead of the learning curve. I started my technology career in 1985 with a BS in Computer Science and have 17 years experience working for NJCU in the IT department. Computers and all forms of technology remain a passion to this day. I am constantly reading about technology and, through my position as Assistant Director, get an opportunity to experiment with new gear and software regularly. In class, I believe I demonstrated advanced knowledge and more than adequate ability to use technology appropriately. However, I did get an opportunity to learn more about how technologies, such as Jump Drives, PDAs, mobile labs and Blogging, can be used in the classroom environment. There is always something new to learn.

Through presentations of colleagues I discovered how the aforementioned technologies and thin clients, video cameras, and ePal services are used in various grades and in multiple disciplines. This knowledge helped me evaluate such technology in terms of suitability for grade-levels and indicated areas of concern that will help me plan strategies for the management in technology-enhanced classroom in the future.

The biggest benefit was learning how these technologies are integrated in the classroom per the Resource Kit presentations, including my own group's work. I learned how such technologies and the software Inspiration are used to develop higher order skills and creativity. This remains an area of enlightenment for me.

Assessment for teachers was not explicitly covered in the student presentations, which used technology to gather and evaluate data by students implied. However, there was an example teacher's assessment rubric available on the ISTE/NETS website. Within this framework, I am an apprentice when it comes to the integration of technology in the classroom. I have a lot more to learn.

Some of the technologies presented can also be used as tools for personal growth and as means to increase productivity. Some exciting possibilities are the use of blogging as a reflective tool, jump drives to provide a convenient, cross-platform personal storage medium, and the use of Inspiration for brain-storming and concept development.

Conversations in class and during presentations covered some aspects of the social and human factors of using technology in the classroom. For example, mobile labs promote equal access and leaves rooms open for multiple configurations. I also learned that technology may not be equitably distributed within the same school district. Those schools that made an effort to find grants and external funding started a cycle where providers seek out the school whenever new technology is available. While this is not surprising, the situation can be frustrating for the "have nots."

The group project was a new experience for me, and I was left with mixed feeling about collaboration. But it did help me understand social and ethical issues as we worked together to achieve a common goal. Further, the resources provided by classmates and instructor will prove beneficial references for future research. I look forward to continued communication and collaboration with my colleagues, and to learning more about new and emerging technologies in support of student learning.