Learning Manifesto

1. Create a reflection (connection) that addresses your learning manifesto. Ask yourself what you are truly passionate about.

"*Sharing knowledge is the key for creating thinking learners*". J. Marquez

I truly believe in this quote. On his TEDx video, Seth Godin talks about WORK vs ART. He states that when a person is doing work, he will find the way to do less. But if this person is creating ART he will find the way to create more. I understand Seth Godin at a 100 %. The question that comes with this statement is: why? Well, I think that the answer will be **passion.** He also talks about teaching history using a thick and (most likely boring) history text book.

So, as a teacher, parent, friend, learner, how can we make a difference in education?

Passion is the answer!

I truly believe in using our passion. I can share that precisely this last school year, I heard so many complaints from my 6th graders how much they hated social studies, specifically History. I love history, I found so interesting how big and tiny decisions, events, and other things can change the history of a town, city, country, continent and even the whole world!

Now, what happened with my students? I started with a simple example. I asked what would they feel if they had to start paying a fee for using the path to the restrooms at the end of our hallway? They said no. They said it was crazy. I invited them to play along with me. They all agreed that it shouldn't be like that, but they would have to pay. Then, I asked them:

"Would you like to find a new path to those same restrooms and use them for free? And then, charge another fee for that path?"

All of my students agreed, and wanted to do that. Then I said:

"Well, that is how the American Continent was discovered! They were amazed! They eyes were so wide open that I couldn't believe the situation. I was speechless and got goose bumps. Looking at their reactions, I asked the following question:

Now, you want to know why people on this new continent were/are called Indians?"

They all answered at the same time: YES!

Then I asked them if they like History now and they all agreed and wanted to know more.

What happened here? I just found a way to try to reach my students. Try to get into their shoes and understand why they hate or dislike learning. I projected myself into their current position and

remember how much I hated to read and read without reason nor purpose. Just memorizing information to pass a test.

I put myself as a current 6th grader learner and tried to think what they might like and then the ideas start coming to me by themselves and start SHARING MY KNOWLEDGE!

Being able to pitch in this kind of thinking in my students, we manage to create an amazing research project. I asked my students to find a solution to end the Korean War. (you can read a little bit more at the end of my manifesto)

As it can be seen, one of my passions is to share knowledge, but that is not the only one. I am also passionate about technology. Since 6 years old, I was able to find my way with technology and computers. My parents said that it came natural to me and yes, it feels like that.

So, what about me, knowledge and technology? Well, I have been able to put this two passions together.

I am true believer that learners can learn by themselves. When they are in the right environment, learners can find their own way to learn. They just need guidance, help and clarification. For me, a teacher should be that. Should be a facilitator, a guide, a coach and thanks to technology, I believe the common teacher will become this. As long as we keep breaking paradigms and our mental chains, the sky will be the limit.

With technology, I have found amazing things. My students are more engaged, they paced themselves, they get less distracted. My subject is reading, and thanks to different online programs (now called apps) I have brought my students stamina and comprehension up. Technology has helped me and my students to achieve much better results that just be in front of them and read to them.

Many people might say: Hey, you are not being a teacher. I hope I am not sending a mixed message. I still teach, I still stand in front of the class and make them write with pencil, discuss with each other and share they thinking. I still develop their critical thinking and work in teams. But when is moment to practice, to build up endurance, to adapt specific needs, technology comes to me as a helper. As my teacher assistant.

Thanks to technology, I can monitor and assess a struggling reader. Identify a student that gets bored and assign a different text. Check for understanding and create my small groups. Technology is my helper, not the teacher. It makes the tedious part of my job not tedious, and now I can focus my time in

my learners and how can I share my knowledge in better ways. Again, my **two passions together**, and I named them: digital learning mindset.

2. Identify what you think are emerging issues related to digital learning and leading at the state, regional, national, and/or global contexts.

I believe there are many issues related in the digital learning. One of those, from my point of view is the teacher. Today's teachers are out dated and I am not just talking about technology. Many teachers won't like to be better. They don't go to professional development sessions and do not seek to learn new things. Now, if we add this issue to the technology barrier, the situation gets even worse. I believe that if teachers can changed their mindset and take the risk to improve as a person as a teacher, technology just will come naturally to them.

Another issue that I can think of, is the excessive amount of materials that are out there. Thanks to Internet, the world has become a handkerchief. The world is smaller. Internet plus more accessible technology, is the reinvention of the wheel! Today, millions of people are creating and developing apps, programs, software, hardware, sustainable resources, sustainable inventions and an endless list of amazing things. The downside? I believe is too much. I love technology, but it overwhelms me about who to listen, who to pay attention, who to believe, who to e-follow. My email gets tons and tons of information that I really want to read, but sometimes it seems too much. This, in a classroom can become a problem, overall with the young minds.

3. What is right/wrong with education and what should the world do to enhance/fix it?

I think this is a short question with a too long answer. Let's start with the wrongs:

- Wrongs in Education
  - Teachers are burned out. They are stuck in their comfort zone.
  - Students are not being engaged in the classroom. Consequently, students aren't interested in education anymore.
  - School books and materials are still out dated. Meaning? Materials are not adequate for the students. They become dull and boring; unattractive to pay attention.
  - Today's students need and want to be challenged and in today's school, they don't find that
  - Learning and teaching seem to happen without a real life connection
  - Available resources to improve teaching and learning are not being used
  - Humans naturally reject any change, even if it's a positive change. So, when somebody was to implement a new idea, the parties involved in education tend to show rejection
- Now, let's talk about the goods
  - Diverse companies around the world are starting to have a more active role in education. They not only offer grants or scholarships. They get directly involved by performing a community role. They talk to schools to let them know their needs. This amazing companies, support the educational community with resources to pursue success

- Students are eager to be challenged. To develop and use their critical thinking. When a teacher uses this, the learning experience changes from a boring activity to a passionate one.
- Technology has been implemented in a magnificent way into education. Thanks to technology, the teacher is able to focus on the most important: the learner. The teacher can rely in a assistant that will help not only with organization or grades. It helps him/her to monitor a students growths and needs, and it does this in a really fast and reliable way.
- Thanks to all the materials and products available, students can use technology to express in endless different ways. They can use videos, graphics, sounds, or all of them.
- STEM and PBL. This is a major positive thing that is happening now a days in the classrooms. This is something great that is happening. Thanks to this different way to teach, education is finally starting to change in a positive and amazing way.
- More teachers are starting to embrace technology in their classrooms. I believe that this is one of the biggest best things that is happening now. Teachers are willing to take risks and try to see how technology works and can help them.

4. What are your core belief systems about digital learning and the impact you hope to make in your organization?

I am a believer of focusing of what matters the most. This translates into a personal state of mind as of how I can improve myself and everything in my surrounding. In this specific case, as a teacher, I constantly try to find ways on how to: engage my students, create interesting lessons and monitor that what I am teaching is sticking in my learners brains.

Since I started teaching just 4 years ago, I constantly looked for different ways to achieve what I wanted. I asked for help from other teachers, online research, YouTube videos, observing my peers. All of this help me, but when I found out about blended learning and digital learning, I thought I was in a dream. When I started to learn how technology can be used in my classroom, I didn't hesitate for a second and start trying everything. This happened in my 3rd year. On my 4th year, I started to understand and apply way more things to my teaching using technology as an aid.

Thanks to this new era of digital learning, my classes are way more interesting than before. My students enjoy my class. They learn and they can apply what they just learned in different ways thanks to technology. Thanks to the digital world, I can tweak, adapt, change almost everything for a specific student or a group of students.

I have a true advocate for digital learning. On my campus, I constantly talk about it and try to invite my colleagues to at leas try it. I go to them and train them. I try to do PDs for them. I am available for troubleshooting and implement new things. I show them how the digital world can make their life easier everyday.

I belief that digital learning is the tool of tomorrow. Digital learning is going to help us to focus on the important things. Memorizing information is no longer needed. Applying critical thinking is what is needed for every aspect in a human being's life. Digital learning is currently helping teachers to focus on

challenging the students mind. Thanks to technology in the classroom, students are and will become better persons in a society. Thanks to technology, the skills that are needed for a successful life can be taught at school.

I am hoping to make a big impact in my school, my community and my district. I am looking forward to show all the amazing things that technology can do for us teachers and above everything else, with our students. I believe that used in the right way, technology can bring people together instead of setting them apart. I hope I can make that difference, where teachers and students use digital learning and feel that their time at school is worth every single day.

How the Korean War project worked out.

 The project sounded simple, but it was not simple at all. For me, it was an amazing experience! I can not even still believe how my students reacted towards this project. They were so engaged, they were so committed, they wanted to work on their project. One day, we had a pep rally in the cafeteria, and a lot of my students asked me if they could stay and continue to research. It was just unbelievable their attitude towards "working". They really wanted to learn more and more.

One of the most interesting things I saw with my students was how they had to go deeper and deeper in their research when they found out something. As a guide, I gave them questions to follow their research, but not all of the questions. So, when they reached a point when they didn't understand what happened, they asked me and I told them: keepr researching!

At the end of their project, they knew who was involved in the war, why they were involved and why it hasn't ended. As well, they created propaganda to bring the war at the end. They created videos, animations and posters. They worked hard. And I was so happy for them. I was sure they learned a lot, they "memorized" information because they wanted to and became aware of a global issue. It was just a great experience.

To conclude our process, I contacted a War Veteran and a Lieutenant came to our school and talked to my students about what happened in the Korean War.