Name:_____

DreamIT Final Report

This year has in some sense flown by but looking back at all that I accomplished, I cannot believe it has only been a year. I was very skeptical going into the year with all these high hopes and aspirations to completely transform my classroom. I have had many professional development experiences where I am very excited about what I have leaned, but reality sets in once I'm in my classroom with the daily dilemmas and constraints. This learning was different for me however. First, I knew I was going to have support throughout the year. It was helpful to know that I have my instructors and other fellows to bounce ideas off of, post on Facebook for advice, and see other ideas happening on Twitter. Also, I knew that with the structure of the DreamIT assignments, I would allow myself time to actually plan and reflect in a way that would be most beneficial. Finally, I was highly motivated from the summer session because when it comes down to it, these initiatives are just down right cool and I couldn't wait to share them and try them out with my students.

I learned a lot through each aspect of the DreamIT project. First the design of project changed from month to month. I knew I wanted my students to experience learning in a new way. I knew I wanted my students to make connections to their everyday lives. And I knew I wanted my students to bring their daily encounters into the classroom. What this looked like changed depending on the unit, depending on what my students were interested in, what their background knowledge was, what they were able to experience outside of the classroom, and it changed with how our classroom and the tools in our classroom changed.

I thoroughly enjoyed going into a school year with a new design and a new approach with something. So much so, that I will be looking forward to doing this year after year. I am looking to choose something about my teaching or my students' learning each year that I want to focus in on and enhance with STEM initiatives. I can see that over the years, what I do each year will continue to develop instead of being an isolated focus one year and forgotten the next. Even with this year, I feel a lot more confident implementing elements into our day as if it is just a natural strategy I include in planning and executing. Building that confidence is something I am looking forward to continuing.

This DreamIT project has influenced my teaching immensely. I created an entirely new teaching and learning model in my classroom that stemmed from my project. I allocated funds for 1:1 iPads for my students and subsequently created a blended learning environment for my students. This goes hand in hand with my initial DreamIT project of blending the walls of my classroom with the real world through our science instruction. My students have experienced meaningful learning through project-based activities, interactive and virtual modules on the iPads and rich discussion that had infiltrated all content areas. Students have explored science in a different lens this year, created many projects to demonstrate their understanding and had ample amounts of opportunity to share their learning with others. It has been such a rewarding year!

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