



MOUNTAIN VIEW LOS ALTOS HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

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To Whom it may concern,

Michael Fenton recently led a day of workshops with the math teachers from Mountain View Los Altos High School District, and I am delighted to recommend him as a Professional Development facilitator for Desmos and Problem Based Learning sessions.

Our main session for the day was an introduction to Desmos. Michael successfully took a room full of secondary math teachers at varying levels of Desmos use, and fully engaged us for the entire session. He balanced direct instruction and individual practice with the use of carefully created slides and his website. Teachers appreciated his 30 second “What you can do with Desmos” videos during the presentation because they quickly illustrated a variety of options of how to use Desmos. During practice time, teachers were able to choose their own skill to practice and go at their own pace through the use of the tutorials on Michael’s website. We also explored a variety of ways to incorporate Desmos into our classes, including the use of the fantastic lessons at teacher.desmos.com. This hands-on and relevant approach helped teachers see how Desmos could have a direct impact on student learning.

One thing that stands out for me is that Michael kept the focus on pedagogy all throughout his presentations. We continually explored ways in which Desmos would get us more quickly to the mathematical conversation. During our problem based learning session Michael presented us with a set of pictures of his cell phone’s main screen. We were asked to write down what we noticed and what we were curious about. Our conversations launched us into a real world math problem about how quickly a cell phone will charge, and we used Desmos as a tool to explore possible models that explained the charging rate of the phone. Through modeling this method of getting students to be curious about math and to pose their own problems, Michael left us empowered to try similar problems in our own classes.

Michael’s knowledge, humor, and flexibility make him a fantastic facilitator and teacher of adult learners. I feel fortunate that we were able to spend the day with him learning about Desmos and seeing the ways in which we can bring our learning back to students, and I hope we can continue to work with him in the future.

Sincerely,

Shelley Carranza
Instructional Support Teacher Mathematics
Mountain View Los Altos High School District
408-393-5033
shelley.carranza@mvla.net