As I started putting together the themes of the technology in my life in order to clump them into groups, I noticed that most of the technology usage for me has to do with connecting with others and connecting with outdoors. My definition of technology as communication was much more broad than tool such as pencils, pens, internet and cell phones, because although those were ways to communicate they don’t seem to have influenced my communication and connection with other as much as boats, skis, basketballs, animals, books, and bicycles. In my first years, technology had to do with boats, skis, motorcycles, camping and all the things that made the Russian River, my backyard, a fun engaging experience. It was because of these technologies that I connected with others. Although I did to friends with the phone connected to the wall, sitting in the livingroom steps, it was the communication that happened (both verbal and nonverbal) as we played on the river, engineering amazing mud balls, catching turtles and kissing pollywogs that was the most meaningful and memorable. It also had to do with my creativity and my ability to construct my own experiences, my own path as a very young child. I would pack up the canoe with firewood, sleeping bags, ice chests and friends, paddle 25 yards across the river and camp overnight. We built our fire. We swim in the dark and we created our own adventures. There was an element of risk and fear, excitement, cooperation, independence and success. All the technology that went into the camping and exploring adventures was how I built relationships!

As I got older I continued to explore a little further in camping and the great outdoors going to other lakes and the ocean with my friends. And now my technology also had to do with the physical, social aspects of school sports. It was basketballs, soccer balls and all the swim team paraphernalia. It was about being the best athlete I could be but more importantly it was about being a team player, helping each other, challenge, community and belonging.

It wasn't until after high school, when I entered college that I got my first computer but that was only a tool so it didn't seem to fit into what I believe has to do with my technology use. I didn’t use it to connect with others, only to write papers and that had nothing to do with relationship or communication to me. My important technologies outside of high school were my journals in order to reflect, grow and discover who I was. My second set of technologies in college continued to be my equipment to connect with outdoors snorkel gear, camping gear, my car and technology that allowed me to travel. I traveled to Europe and stayed connected to family with letters in the mail and an occasional phone call. I connected to the people I met by sharing stories and adventures.

After college I was teaching but the technology that I used during teaching seemed often times insignificant. I did create movies with my students, take pictures, sing songs, videotape parent presentations, record children reading, make podcasts, create autobiographies and create year books. those were all important ways to connect with my students and their families. But as much as I tried they didn’t seem to be co-created nor did they build relationship. However the most important uses of my technology we're connecting with my children and connecting my children to nature. Again these technologies were boats, camping gear, cages that kept the frogs, turtles, bearded dragons and the bunny. It was the car and the kayak that got the kids out and about meeting people and exploring Yosemite, Yellowstone, Tahoe, Big Trees State park, bioluminescence, white water rafting, the Mendocino Coast and much more. It was the adventure, the campfires and the boat rides that allowed for relationships to develop and allowed us to learn and grow.

I have always been the mom who did not want my children to have video games, cell phones and be lost in their devices. It wasn’t until this August that my 14 year old and 18 year old daughters received their first phones, iPhone, and there are many times when I question my decision to let them have them because they have become appendages in a very short time. My son is 11 and doesn’t have a phone except the ones his friends give him when they get an upgrade. He uses the data at home sometime, not as much as many kids, but really too much in my eyes. I do appreciate connecting with them through text and being able to call or connect when I wouldn’t have been able to before, but I’m not sure the disadvantages don’t outweigh the advantages! I use e-mail and internet to communicate almost exclusively for work. I have had a phone for several years, but didn’t get a smart phone until about a year and a half ago. I do not use Facebook except to post photos of our trip to El Salvador for our friends and family members. I have tried twitter, snapchat and instagram, but I cannot get motivated to use any social media. I do have tools that I use for my teaching on my phone, but they are not participatory, so I don’t see this revolution in education that Sir Ken Robinson speaks of and I really do not know how to get there!

My final reflection on technology has to do with the technology that we've have experience for four years of traveling to El Salvador during the summers. Our group of youth and adults have constructed buildings by mixing concrete by hand. We have delivered eco-stoves to hundreds of families to decrease the deforestation that happens in El Salvador to decrease lung disease and severe burning of women and children. We've installed solar lights made out of soda bottles, learned to cook on a comal and baked bread by kneading dough  with her our hands. We have learned what it's like to have a completely different level of technology. This past summer we gifted a bike to a deaf mute homeless man so he could sell yuka around the community. We have made water accessible in schools for handwashing and bathrooms. We have built classrooms, the kitchen, and it early childcare center, but more important than that we have built relationships.  These are relationships that we have had for four years now. We receive phone calls and face book messages from youth in the community where we have volunteered. We use the technology that we have access to in order to support the education of our friends in El Salvador.

I know that my technology use is growing and changing every single day. Before I started this project I was thinking that my use of technology was growing exponentially compared to how I used technology in the past. Now I would say that is not true. My use of technology has been growing and changing from the day I was born. Many of the technological tools that I am using today are very different than the ones I used when I was five, but the purpose of all of the technology I have used was to build relationship, to learn, to grow and to better my world and the world of those around me.