

A New Path on My Journey with Educational Technology

By Regan Kwong

When I first applied to Michigan State University's Master of Arts in Educational Technology (MAET) program my goal was to gain more skills to utilize technology more effectively in my classroom and use those skills to also help other teachers in their classrooms. I wanted to gain experience and knowledge on how to use technology to be able to differentiate when it is best to use technology to enhance learning and teaching. I aimed to develop the knowledge and skills to be able to maximize the use of technology in a meaningful way and not just use it for the sake of it. I wanted to gain more teaching strategies and more knowledge to become a more effective teacher. I hoped to investigate ways to use technology to help me differentiate work for students or help improve problem based learning for students. Lastly, I also felt it was important to share the wealth of knowledge surrounding technology and teaching with other teachers to enhance the teaching and learning experiences in the classroom. Although, these are still goals that I strive for, my work through the MAET program has shifted the focus of my goals.

Now that I am in the final semester of my MAET program, looking back at my coursework, I have grown to see that I should be focused on more than just my skills with utilizing technology in an effective way. The focus should have also been on my pedagogical practice and content knowledge as well. I have learned through Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge (TPACK) that instead of starting with a piece of technology and thinking about how I can use it effectively in my classroom in a meaningful way, I should start with thinking about what I want my students to be able to achieve in learning. My goal is now to think about how I can effectively get my students to think about content and gain the skills necessary to be successful. I need to seek out and think about the best teaching strategies I can use to help my students learn before I think about the technology. Once I have figured out the best strategy to teach my students, then I should look at whether there is a technological tool that will help me carry out my plans in a beneficial way. Although, I still want to enhance the teaching and learning experience with technology, my number one goal should still be thinking about the best teaching methods to allow my students to learn the content and skills they need.

As I journey through my years as a teacher and through my graduate work, I realize that as I gain more knowledge and experience, the more questions I have on what makes effective teaching. I may never perfect my goals, but I believe the journey of developing more strategies and sharing the wealth of knowledge makes my goals worthwhile.