

Finding my Confidence with Technology

As a high school teacher, my goal is to prepare my students for their future and to give them tools that will help them succeed in post-secondary life. We now live in a 21st century world, with technology available at your fingertips. How am I as a teacher preparing my students for living, working and completing school in the 21st century? This was a question I often asked myself. Students at my school are lucky to be provided with a laptop starting in sixth grade and going through high school. I have always had the technology available to turn my classroom into a 21st century learning environment, but I did not have the skills or confidence to do so. This is the main reason I started the Master's of Arts in Education Technology (MAET) program at Michigan State University. I went into my program with two goals: become more comfortable and experienced with technology in my classroom, and find more ways to include technology into my math courses.

Throughout the last two years, I learn more about technology in each course I take. The MAET program is designed to work with our classrooms and what we are doing outside of MSU. Through continued practice, mistakes and achievements I have learned the skills necessary to incorporate technology into my classroom. The MAET program was a safe environment for me to grow as a technology leader. I knew I would make mistakes, but more importantly I learned for those mistakes and grew my skills. I can now say that I am comfortable using technology in my classroom as well as helping other teachers find ways to incorporate technology into their classrooms.

I have always found it hard to incorporate technology into my math courses (Algebra and Personal Finance). Since students will use math and technology in their future careers, I knew I would have to include more technology into my classroom. Many of our courses in the MAET program allow us to pick different research or course topics; I focused many on technology with math. I quickly found new technologies available for students in math and I learned new ways to incorporate these technologies. With a toolbox (or in my case a website) full of technology tools to use in math classes I am prepared to help my students learn math in the 21st century.

Throughout this experience in the MAET program, I have learned more than I would ever expect. Although my goals did not change throughout the program, they did grow. I began to expect more out of myself and push myself. I was able meet and go beyond all my goals. Not only did I learn more about a 21st century learning environment, but I was able to implement what I learned into my classroom. I am now confident in myself as a technology leader, which is something I never expected.

When I think about the future and my goals, I want to continue learning about new technologies available. There is always something new available for the classroom and a new way of including technology. It is easy to get stuck in your ways as a teacher, because you know it works and you have done it before. I want to stay up-to-date with what is happening in educational technology through social media, conferences, professional development and continued education.