

Learn, Expand, Collaborate

I always knew that I wanted to get a master's degree within my first 5 years of teaching; however, I didn't really know exactly what area I wanted to pursue. During my first three years of teaching I began to realize I had somewhat of a passion for using technology in the classroom. Imagine my excitement when I discovered that MSU actually had a master's program that was exactly what I was looking for.

It all started with an ipad. I purchased my own as a Christmas gift and started using various apps during student interventions. I became amazed at the endless interactive possibilities I was uncovering and I just had to share with other colleagues. By the end of the year the school was using grant money to purchase a set of 5 ipads for every classroom. The next year I became teacher's "go-to" person to help with ideas and troubleshooting and I loved it! This school also was interested in STEM (Science Technology Engineering Math). They encouraged me to explore, try and share the various STEM lessons, and I encourage others to do the same.

After reading my application goals for the Masters of Arts in Educational Technology (MAET) program it looks like I knew exactly what I wanted, and I did. There's one statement, however, that could not have been more true; "I know that I have only touched the surface of what can be done in a classroom with technology". I knew that there was more to technology in the classroom than just ipads, Smartboards, and teaching STEM. I just had no idea how much this program would open my mind and create a toolbox of endless possibilities!

Though I still want to implement more technology in the classroom to help engage, differentiate and teach students. I also want to incorporate more problem based learning, use Maker Spaces, Genius Hour, Coding, Augmented Reality and so much more to accomplish these goals. I want to give students the opportunity to explore, create, and learn from the mistakes they make along the way. I now realize that technology is a tool that will help reach your goals.

Collaborating and sharing ideas with others is also something I have been passionate about throughout this process. I am always looking for opportunities to share the things I have learned with others. This has led me to a possible career shift. Though I am still interested in teaching in a classroom setting (general education or technology), I am now also interested in becoming an instructional coach. Through this position I would be able to take all that I have learned (and will continue learn) to other classrooms and "share the wealth". Technology can be intimidating and so can trying something new, but I would hate to see teachers and students miss out on so many endless possibilities because they don't have the knowledge or support.

So after looking back at where I started I have realized my goals haven't changed, they have expanded. I plan to continue expanding as learn more about

how to effectively use technology tools to reach learning goals, while also collaborating and encouraging others to do the same.