

In April of 2013, I decided to not pursue my Master's of Arts in Special Education. At that time I was approaching the final leg in the race as a Michigan State University (MSU) Intern on the Southside of Chicago and was thrilled that I had been offered several teaching positions both in Illinois and Michigan, what I did not know was that I would take my passion for technology to the next level. One day while searching the MSU's College of Education website I came across the Master's in Educational Technology (MAET) Program and instantly my passion for useful technology integration was reignited. I applied to the program utilizing a 2 minute video of my goals, if accepted to the program and my primary focus was on useful and meaningful technology integration in my k12 classroom through technologies I had previous experience with such as, iPod's, iPad's, computers, etc., along with exploring the effects of student engagement when utilizing technology, and how to make technology accessible to ALL students, regardless of race, socio-economic status, and intellectual ability. Now, a year and a half later I recognize even more why meaningful technology integration is so important to the overall success of my students whether in a traditional bricks and mortar school or an all-online k12 program. As an elementary school teacher, my students are often expected to access technology in its' most basic forms and with little attention paid to mastery; however, the disconnect occurs when students are actually far more technologically advanced than what was initially assumed or even expected.

As a classroom teacher, I am not required to focus on technology because it is not a part the grade level standards or content expectations I am expected to cover; however, I have noticed there is a significant change in my students level of engagement when they are encouraged to utilize technology through hands on experiences. As a result of their more attentive behavior when using technology, I create regular opportunities for students to utilize technology and to show skills they have in regards to technology that may not otherwise come into fruition. Thanks to my coursework in the MAET Program I have learned more about various technologies such as emaze, animoto, and prezi; furthermore, I have been given fist hand experience on exploring these various technologies so that when presented to my students, I am more equipped to teach them not only how to navigate the technology but I am also able to focus on the material that is being taught in tandem with the technology -overall increasing student engagement.

My goals have not shifted much but they have evolved. My goals have evolved so much that instead of just integrating technology into the lessons or expectations that I am already teaching my students, I also take time to seek additional opportunities for technology integration through activities such as, Hour of Code. This school year my fourth grade students will spend time learning about coding and how apply coding to their interest and the things they are learning in school.

My profession calls for me to teach, but my passion is to educate. I educate my students in many facets, often the things in which I present to them is more widely understood when they can utilize iPods to complete a scavenger hunt using QR codes or an iPad to take assessments such as weekly spelling test on various applications. I have continued to seek ways to educate my students on

the ever evolving world of technology and how to utilize technology to help them, not just play Angry Birds or Candy Crush.