

The Future: A Lesson in Adaptation

As my time in the Master's in Educational Technology (MAET) program draws to an end, I have often been asked if I am happy that it is over. My reply is that it is not over. I have looked to this program as an investment in my future. It is a program that leverages the affordances and constraints of technology, design, and learning attributes to better the educational process. I have viewed this program as the bridge that will allow myself to better implement technology and pedagogical skills into the classrooms within my district. It has been a long journey, but even as this program is drawing to a close, the next path in my career is just being uncovered.

Mastery of technology is something that I have tried hard to obtain. This is a difficult goal to achieve. Technology is constantly changing. In order to best serve my district, I will use the skills I have learned through this program to support the district's implementation of technology. Technology alone does not guarantee effective teaching; instructors must also develop deep content knowledge and utilize effective pedagogical skills. In order to help my staff reach the critical nexus of these essential elements of instruction, proper professional development must be implemented. I have repurposed [Google Classroom](#) to serve as a mechanism to provide professional development to my staff. As I will provide the "assignments," the staff acts as the "students" in this environment. During meetings, we discuss new technology and how to implement it. Then, the staff is given "homework" to complete for our next meeting. This homework allows the staff to interact with the new technology in a manner that allows experimentation.

In order to keep up on the latest trends, I plan on utilizing conferences such as the Michigan Association of Computer Users in Learning ([MACUL](#)) and Michigan Association for Educational Data Systems ([MAEDS](#)) to bring the latest developments in educational technology to my district. Tools, like Twitter and Facebook, will be used to network with my fellow MAET peers in order to brainstorm about new ways to incorporate technology into the classroom.

As I have advanced through the MAET program, I have realized that technology is simply a tool to help instruction. It is not a magic bullet that will vastly improve instruction by simply including it in a lesson. [TPACK](#) (technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge) is required for an effective lesson to occur. The summer cohort really opened my eyes to this concept. It also showed how important collaboration is to the success of a group. The

summer cohort stressed the importance of establishing a connection to a student's prior knowledge. This helps to build meaningful associations to the curriculum. These are lessons I plan on passing on to my staff.

So, how will I approach the future? I will use the skills, techniques, and knowledge I have gained from my time in the MAET program to form the support pillars and beams creating the frame of the bridge I referred to earlier. Professional development and [deep-play](#) will be the surface of the bridge that will allow the staff to see the value of technology. Using [deep-play](#) allows for professional development that encourages playful experimentation and exploration of new technology. The goal is to find new uses for the technology; repurposing said technology in a manner that is different from its original purpose, yet produces an exciting experience (Koehler, Mishra, DeSchryver, Kereluik, Shin and Wolf, 2011). An example being using [TitanPad](#) to foster discussion during various class activities; creating a more interactive session of class. This allows the students to become more involved with the curriculum.

I view my role in the future as one that fosters this era of discovery for the staff. Once this structure and support has been developed, the staff will begin to see how to best implement technology into the classroom. They will be able to effectively guide the students, showing them how to best leverage technology to help them in their understanding of the curriculum that they will encounter. In doing this, I will have created an environment where technology, combined with knowledge and skill of the staff, will make learning meaningful. At this point, the gap between stagnant, uninviting lessons and lessons where students are actively engaged in meaningful instruction will be bridged. Once this goal is accomplished, I will continue down the future's ever-changing path to the next adventure.

¹ Koehler, M., Mishra, P., Bouck, E., DeSchryver, M., Kereluik, K., Shin, T., & Graves Wolf, L. (2011, January 1). Deep-Play: Developing TPACK for 21st Century Teachers. Retrieved October 21, 2014.