

TO BECOME THE BEST

During my last course for my Master's in Educational Technology (MAET), I find myself reflecting on my journey to become the best version of myself. It has been almost 10 years since I started on my road of life long learning. I honestly believe that everything happens for a reason; even if we can't justify it at the moment.

In June 2011, I was a newly certified teacher who, just months before, finished my internship in Hazel Park, Michigan. I held my head up high with my Bachelor's Degree from a top-ranked teaching program, full year internship under my belt, endorsements in Elementary Education and Integrated Science (DI), coupled with enthusiasm and motivation to make a difference in my students' lives. I earned my degree - how hard could getting hired be? Reality sank in August 2011, when I only had a handful of interviews and no job offers in sight.

I felt like my life was stuck on a download screen and all I could do was wait. I needed to become better and to do that I needed to continue to learn. In Fall 2011, I made the decision to substitute teach while starting my first Master's degree in Teaching and Curriculum (MATC). I honestly didn't know what I truly wanted at first. I guess you can say I just wanted to learn more about education in general. I finally decided to specialize in Educational Technology within the MATC program and felt that my goals had changed. I now wanted to learn how to effectively integrate technology in a regular classroom, but soon after I found myself teaching technology instead.

I was hired part time as a computer teacher through Brighton Area Schools in Fall 2012 and taught 17 different classes throughout the week at four private schools. My specialization paired with my new position greatly influenced my goals in the program. I worked with students that had 1:1 iPads in the classroom to old desktops with no internet access. I wanted to be flexible as an educator with the technology that was available to me. I didn't want to depend on it, but rather embrace it. Technology is something that is constantly changing and my CEP courses started to broaden my perspective of technology. I was so fascinated by my specialization that I found myself taking so many CEP courses within the MATC program. Eventually, I realized that I was basically in the MAET program! The College of Education approved my dual degree during Spring 2014.

Today, my goals have shifted away from myself to influencing others. I don't want to only integrate technology myself but rather teach others to embrace it in their classrooms. I am currently a full time technology teacher and I teach 24 different classes

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one time per week at three Catholic schools. My goal is to educate teachers on the combination of technological knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and content knowledge (TPACK) to effectively integrate technology in their classroom. Not everyone has the opportunity to go through such an engaging program that promotes technology integration. I want to share what I have learned through the MAET program with my fellow educators.

However, my journey is far from over, I want to continue learning through multiple certifications such as becoming a Google Certified Educator, Apple Distinguished Educator, and becoming more familiar with networking and computer programming. There is no such thing as perfection, but rather we can only strive to be the best version of ourselves. Every step I take on my road of life long learning will transform me as a person in and out of the classroom.