

A Moment to Reflect

Charlene Patten

When I started my journey in the Spring of 2012, I was an educational resource specialist hoping to expand my knowledge of instructional technology and to gain a deeper understanding of current educational frameworks. So, that summer I decided to start moving in that direction. I applied for the Educational Technology Certificate Program at Michigan State University and was accepted for the Master of Arts in Educational Technology in the fall of 2012.

While achieving my Masters in Educational Technology, I received a promotion and became the director of K-12 Educational outreach for WGTE Public Media. I found myself absorbing the lessons of each course and quickly turning around and applying them to the professional development opportunities offered by my organization. I could not have anticipated how immediately useful and rich my educational experience would be at Michigan State University.

Although my job position changed in the last year, the end goal of gaining more knowledge and understanding of educational technology has stayed the same. My goals for starting this program were to obtain an understanding of the various frameworks that support the use of technology in the K-12 environment. Ultimately, I was hoping to understand and therefore help shrink the gap between technology and content that has been preventing teachers from accepting the integration of instructional technology in their classrooms.

With a bachelor's degree in business, I felt as though I needed more experience in educational technology from an academic perspective. Furthermore, I recognized a growing need within the school districts my educational technology agency serves. As access to instructional technology increases, teachers need professional development that not only explains how the technology works, but also how tech tools enhance the curriculum and improve student comprehension.

From the very first class, I started to obtain relevant information for the construction of sound and essential professional development. I was surprised by the impact implementing various technologies for class had on my ability to successfully teach those same technologies to the teachers I serviced each week. It was somewhat embarrassing that I had not thought to truly explore the classroom applications of instructional technology simply by forcing myself to perform the tasks of a classroom teacher. Without a room of students to test my newfound knowledge on, it was difficult at times, but every challenge revealed a new and interesting understanding of the complex way uncomplicated technologies transform learning.