

## Lifelong Learning

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*"To keep America competitive, and to make the American dream of equal educational opportunity a reality, we need to recruit, reward, train, learn from, and honor a new generation of talented teachers. But the bar must be raised for successful teacher preparation programs because we ask much more of teachers today than even a decade ago. Today teachers are asked to achieve significant academic growth for all students at the same time that they instruct students with ever-more diverse needs. Teaching has never been more difficult, it has never been more important, and the desperate need for more student success has never been so urgent. Are we adequately preparing future teachers to win this critical battle?"*

– U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, 2009

To use any technology as an effective learning tool, a teacher must critically assess if the tool will successfully address intended learning goals. The use of technology must be closely guided by alignment to learning outcomes and academic content standards so that learning will afford educators, and ultimately students, the opportunity to connect classroom concepts to real-world applications. However, for successful design and adoption of new strategies, educators need interaction with the technology, time to build their skill and comfort levels and, most importantly, participate in active, collaborative learning opportunities to plan for implementation in their classrooms. As an educator these same goals apply to me.

As an educator, I believe the goal of education has always been and will continue to be; to prepare students for life-long learning and success in a global society. However, the tools and instructional methods to achieve these goals have advanced dramatically in the last thirty years. Technologies such as web tools, iPads, interactive whiteboards offer tremendous opportunities to students and educators as a way to improve life within a classroom and a link to the world outside of it. As an educator, I have the responsibility for developing curriculum and applying instructional methods enriched with technology and for ensuring that teachers are proficient users of these new technologies.

A requirement of my current job is to stay on top of new and emerging technologies in education. Therefore, having a plan for continuing my education is essential to my success. Below are tasks that will help me move forward in developing my skill set.

### **1. Continue to explore new and emerging technologies in education.**

It is apparent that technology in regards to K-12 education is on a linear path. Overhead projectors and chalkboards are becoming more and more antiquated every day. Therefore, I know that it will be necessary for me to continue to learn about new and emerging trends in technology. Specifically, I

would like to explore blended learning environments and how that strategy can be used to scaffold learning.

## **2. Continue to collaborate with others and grow my personal learning network.**

Gone are the days of sharing resources in the staff lunch room, and getting lesson plan ideas at the library. Now, teachers are sharing and collecting resources and information online. Learning is a collaborative effort and should be shared with as many educators as possible. My goal for the future would be to continue to build my personal learning network. Either through the people that I work with or the teachers that I help train, I will continue to expand my skills and knowledge.

## **3. Consult with educators on the classroom use of new technologies.**

Since I am not a classroom teacher, I think it is very important for me to stay connected to those that are. New and emerging technologies may seem cool to a tech geek like me, but integrating these tools can be far more challenging to someone who is in the trenches everyday. Therefore, I think it is imperative that I keep the connection with classroom teachers as they begin to implement new strategies and new technologies into their classrooms. This way I can develop best practice ideas for those who are in search of professional development training.

Curiosity and a need to learn more is what brought me to the MAET program. As I progress through my career, I hope that I can continue to be curious and strive to develop my skills and knowledge.