

Now What?

By: Ariel Myers

Now what? That is a good question. Now that I have completed my Master's Degree in Educational Technology, I feel as if my opportunities in life have just grown. While I've always seen myself working in a school district, I don't feel that I am limited to do just that. The MAET program has shed new light in areas such as instructional design, computer science, e-learning and technology integration; all of which can be done anywhere. While I am not sure what I will ultimately be doing for the rest of my life, I know that my learning does not stop here.

If I learned anything through Michigan State's collusive MAET program, it's that the simplest resource is collaboration. Currently, I am an active member of multiple social media websites and have no shame in saying it. I find that this is an excellent way to reach out to people all over the world to learn more. As educators, sometimes what we fail to realize is that there are other ways to do things beyond the walls of our classroom. I use Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and Tioki to stay in touch with professional educators, like myself, that can share their experiences and ideas with me. Twitter will definitely be one of the ways that I intend to stay updated on my technology. It is fast, easy and can provide you with a lot of information with only 150 characters. While I'm sure there will be something else in existence ten years from now, I will use whatever tools I can to remain collaborative.

One of the most important things about being a successful Educational Technologist is staying up to date on the newest classroom resources. In addition to sharing ideas with others, I will also make sure to attend annual conferences and seek professional development. The International Society for Technology Education (ISTE) holds an annual conference that provides professionals with innovative learning and networking. This is a conference that I would like to attend annual in order to keep my school up to date with the best instructional methods of our time.

Professionally, there are many things that I would like to do differently at my current job. Often times when implementing a new technology, there is such a high demand for it that we typically try to get it into the classrooms as quickly as possible. However, as the only one in my department with an education background, it is difficult for others to see eye to eye on the issues with this process. I aspire to do more research and testing with new devices rather than just “throwing them into the classrooms.” I would like to conduct pre and post surveys for all faculty to fill out. I would like to “pilot” devices and test them in certain classrooms first to see if they can be utilized educationally. This would also give faculty an opportunity to have a say in changes that are being made within the classroom. It will also give them an opportunity to get comfortable with new material and provide us with feedback.

A major future goal that I have set for myself is to understand that it’s okay to not know everything. As I’ve gone through the MAET program, I’ve discovered so many resources that could be used in the classroom. In addition to these resources, there are multiple resources that I don’t know about. I need to understand that not every Educational Technologist knows every single resource; not every Educational Technologist is going to have used every technology device out there. Instead of feeling incompetent because I don’t know something, I think it’s best for me to embrace new things and accept that I do not know everything. By embracing new things, I am able to show that I am always willing to learn more. I don’t think people are expecting me to know every little thing but if they know that I am willing to learn, that is enough for them to know I am a motivated to do more.

As I glance into what may lie ahead for me in my future, I reflect back on all that I have learned through Michigan State’s MAET program and intend to apply it wherever I may be. While I cannot promise perfection anywhere I go, I can promise my hardest work, my vigorous motivation, my desire to learn and the will to better myself and the education of others. Even though my classes have ended, I know my learning has only begun.