

Looking Forward... Wow, Already?

By Jacy Nay

It seems like just yesterday I was starting my very first day of class for my Year 1 summer cohort; anxiously waiting to meet my instructors and classmates! Now that my journey towards my master's is coming to an end, I definitely have that "bittersweet" emotion starting to surface... However, what I foresee in the future is that there are many things I am looking forward to and many aspects I will be focusing on in regards to continuing my journey as a lifelong learner.

Many people have asked me, "What are you going to do with all of your free time now that you'll have your masters?!" I typically answer that I'm going to probably fill it with more aspects of coaching and teaching, but once in awhile, I'll throw in the occasional comment, "I'll probably just relax a *little* bit more!" To be honest though, I will find something to fill the empty space--I'm not one that likes a lot of extra "free" time...I start losing track of which day of the week it is!

Although my masters is nearing the end, as an educator, I know that my learning never truly suspends. With an advanced degree focusing primarily on educational technology, it is my job to ensure that I am continuing my education in order to stay up on the ever-changing times of technology. I foresee myself continuing to learn and grow in the upcoming years by utilizing my PLN. Over the last couple of years, my personal learning network has grown immensely. My instructors and classmates will play a very important role in my upcoming years of instruction.

The amount of knowledge that I have access to, primarily due to this program, is extremely comforting and gives me a sense of hope! Whether I touch base with instructors or classmates through Twitter, Facebook, or email, I know that an answer, suggestion, or advice may be just around the river bend; something that I can rely on and find very useful.

With my increased knowledge of content, pedagogy, and technology now, I am more efficient in making sense of research and actively reflecting on my own practices. I will challenge my students to help develop their own motivation to understand material and excitement for knowledge. I am excited to use the things that I learned these past couple of years while developing my lessons. I want my students to be able to creatively display the knowledge that they have obtained during each unit, lesson, activity, etc. I will most definitely continue to use technology as a support system to assist in my teaching strategies for years to come.

Ultimately, my colleagues and administrators will play a very important role to the success of integrating technology across the curriculum as well. I am very fortunate to have access to a great technology team offered through our district. Our technology coordinator has been my “go-to” person multiple times now, and will continue for many years. She is very knowledgeable; it must be because she graduated from MSU with her MAET degree too! Her knowledge and passion for implementing technology within the classroom acts as a motivational tool for myself--I plan to continue to attend as many professional development opportunities as I can to ensure I’m learning as much as possible in order to improve my own teaching.

Overall, in regards to technology integration, the implementation of TPACK and my proposal to help educate my colleagues of this concept, will be my ultimate goal. I know this will be a great challenge for me, and it will take a lot of time and effort on my part before I feel completely confident finding that balance of TPACK and repurposing technological tools efficiently to give my students the most beneficial and meaningful learning experience possible. However, when I think about this goal of mine, I know that I have a plethora of valuable resources from the MAET program that I can utilize to help with this transformation. I feel that with this specific degree I should offer the knowledge that I have obtained to my colleagues. We are extremely fortunate to have access to an abundance of technology in our school district. I think there are many teachers in my building that aren't confident with the tools they are given, and if I can help alleviate some of that stress by offering assistance with the implementation of technology across the curriculum, then I would gladly accept that challenge.

Whether I'm continuing to learn with the help of a professional development, past instructors, classmates, colleagues, or some form of social media, I gladly look forward to the many more learning opportunities that will be unveiled throughout my continuous education.