

**“It’s what you learn after you know it all that counts.” --John Wooden**

(One of my favorite quotes from a tremendous educator and coach.)

By Jacy Nay

Since I started the MAET program at MSU, my theory of integrating technology across the curriculum has evolved tremendously! I better understand how to utilize technology as a support system to enhance student engagement and make learning more meaningful within my classroom. As a teacher, I knew I should incorporate technology, but I never fully understood why, how, or even where to begin! The past two years has been a remarkable journey that has shown me how to incorporate various technologies into classroom activities to keep students engaged and motivated with their learning process. Furthermore, living in a society where technology is constantly changing, it is vital to not only expose students to various types of technological tools, but how to effectively use those tools for a more beneficial learning experience and to help prepare them as 21st Century Learners. With that, we’re not only inspiring students to expand their way of cognitively thinking, but allowing them to take responsibility for their own learning as well.

I have always wanted a classroom that encouraged creativity, and I am more confident now how to foster that kind of environment for my students because of my experiences through the MAET program. I believe I am already a role model for many aspects in my classroom, but I feel more confident in the area of creativity. I am always excited to showcase my coursework to my students! I know, even as third graders, they will understand the idea behind using technology and how it can enhance their learning.

When thinking about technology and how it relates to teaching, I am strongly reminded of TPACK and the knowledge that it has taught me. TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) is a special framework that recognizes how to combine the knowledge necessary for an educator to teach effectively while incorporating technology throughout his/her content. This concept was initially introduced to me during one of my first summer cohort courses in 2011 with instructors Jodi Spicer and Alison Keller; *Teaching for Understanding with Technology* (CEP 810). Everything we learned, discussed, read about, researched, explored, and created were in some way or another examples of and strongly related to TPACK. Since learning about TPACK, my views on technology integration has changed drastically. As I mentioned earlier, as an educator, I knew I wanted to integrate technology into my classroom, but I never really understood HOW or WHY.

My experience with CEP 810 is still very vivid in my mind! I think this is because I was introduced to a plethora of technological tools, web 2.0 tools, and how to integrate pedagogy, content, AND technology into my own teaching. I remember being overwhelmed with every new concept and tool that I interacted with--but in a good way! I remember being so excited to start my next year of teaching just so I could implement some of the fascinating tools and ideas that I had not only learned throughout the course but actually had created meaningful assignments and projects with as well. I wanted my students to be just as excited about learning as I had been. Some of the tools that I was first introduced to are tools that I have utilized within my own classroom the past two years now: Wordle, QR Codes, Keynote, Animoto, Voki, iPhoto, Wallwisher, and my favorite, KidBlog.

One of my favorite activities that we did during my time in CEP 810 was the *This I Believe Digital Story*. With this assignment, we were to take an hour and capture 10-12 images around campus and record 5-7 different thoughts that went along with our images. Then, using either Animoto, iMovie, or OurStory (iPad App), we were supposed to create a story that told our thoughts and beliefs about teaching, technology, and teaching with technology. This was truly the first time that I had ever imagined myself stepping out of my comfort zone and really examining how I felt about those topics. I was forced to think about these topics in a way that would ultimately change my whole style of teaching. This particular project, along with the course itself, made a huge impact on how I saw myself teaching students in the future--I knew from that moment that I would forever be using technology to enhance my teaching to provide a more creative and meaningful learning environment for my students and future students. It was this course as well where I first learned the importance of building and accessing my PLN (Personal Learning Network); which is something I utilize now on a daily basis! Looking back, it seemed like such an inconsequential concept, your PLN, but I had never really given it much thought before. Now, I look at this concept in a completely different light, and I'm definitely singing a different tune!

My second summer cohort courses, *Learning in School and Other Settings* (CEP 800), *Technology and Leadership* (CEP 815), and *Approaches to Educational Research* (CEP 822), positively impacted my career as an elementary teacher as well. I consider myself to be a lifelong learner, and once again, I was impressed, pushed, and intrigued by the courses and instructors, Punya Mishra, David Goodrich, and Laura Terry, that

made up my Yr. 2 of the MAET program. The experiences I had during that summer's cohort required me to focus on technology, the teaching aspect, and how learners learn. I was able to explore a plethora of topics and issues closely related to content and pedagogical knowledge through multiple readings, powerpoint presentations, individual and group activities, videos, discussions, and my own research.

Many of the assignments and activities we completed during the summer cohort were valuable in the sense that I can apply many of the same ideas and activities in my own classroom to create learning experiences. For example, the "Just Shoot Me" activity (CEP 800) is a great icebreaker activity that I actually used this past school year for the first day of school. Students were able to get to know their classmates in a fun and creative way. Another example of how I learned to use technology to make learning meaningful was with the activity, "Alphabits." This activity made me think that I could use daily observations and natural surroundings to enhance my lesson plans. I could easily incorporate that activity into science units! Lastly, the Exploring Physics: Ball Dropping video assignment (CEP 815) made me realize that you could teach or prove specific concepts and promote understanding in an engaging way. I truly believe video can be extremely vital in helping students understand many "Big Ideas."

However, It was during CEP 822 where I felt I was transformed the most. My experience with this course was one that made me realize that I wasn't only a teacher to my students, but that I could be an educator to my colleagues as well. With the concept and development of my DreamIt project, which was a potential grant proposal for my school district, I recognized the importance of helping and encouraging other staff members to better understand technology, TPACK, the tools we had access to, and how

to effectively implement technology across the curriculum. My ultimate goal then (and still is) was to continue educating others about these concepts so they are better suited transferring that knowledge into their style of teaching (pedagogy), ultimately producing improved student engagement and creativity. Overall, all three of those aforementioned courses provided me with a rich learning experience and had, once again, helped me to reevaluate how I was going to continue to integrate technology into my classroom. Those six weeks reiterated the concept that technology must be repurposed to fit the needs in the classroom.

Having the experience that I do from these two summer cohorts, I was able to use that information and involvement to help create my online classroom illustrated in *Teaching K-12 Students Online* (CEP 820). I understood what it was like to learn in a hybrid environment; partially face-to-face and online. Ultimately, I appreciated the flexibility and experiences that a learning environment, such as those hybrid cohorts, could deliver. CEP 820 was by far my most cherished course of the entire MAET program. I had the privilege of working along side an instructor, Andrea Zellner, that not only encouraged but expanded my way of thinking that conclusively impacted the design of my LMS.

My online course module (username: msu password: guest1) focused on several units from our science kit, Organisms Have Character. I felt it was important to teach those specific lessons face-to-face to meet the needs of my students, but also be able to give them the opportunities for review and extension-based activities strictly online. During the development of my LMS I was actually able to implement the online portions during the concluding months of the school year. Witnessing my students'

enthusiasm and engagement with the activities and web 2.0 tools was so rewarding! That entire adventure reiterated and solidified why I chose to further my education within the educational technology program at Michigan State.

This entire experience matters to me because I know that this whole journey has, and will, continue to improve my teaching and my learning significantly. I better understand how technology can and should be used in ways that will enrich a student's learning environment. In addition, I have learned more about myself as a learner and a teacher, what it means to truly understand a concept, an abundance of materials and content, and pedagogical resources. As I am wrapping everything up in my final course, the Capstone (CEP 807), I cannot help but feel excited and saddened at the same time. The digital portfolio I have created showcases an extensive amount of work that I have polished off! This course not only signifies that my expedition towards my master's degree is coming to an end, but it also highlights my accomplishments in the best possible way...digitally. Amongst the many accomplishments I have encountered throughout this admirable journey, most importantly still, I am a better educator because of the Master of Arts in Educational Technology program.

~Jacy Nay