

It's the Journey, Not Just the Destination

A Reflection by Christine Novak

When entering the MAET program at Michigan State University, my goals were simple and idealistic. Being a new teacher, my goal was to be the best teacher that I could be. I realized that having only completed my first year teaching, there was still a lot I did not know. I realized that technology was playing a bigger role in my life, and in the lives of my students. Due to this, I felt that by gaining a better and deeper knowledge of technology and how to use it, I would be better able to reach my students and allow them to have a deeper and more thorough understanding of math and physics.

I now realize how powerful technology can be. Technology can be powerful not only for my students, but for me as well. I have learned about valuable ways to use technology to maximize time and create better and more effective products for my students. I now realize that incorporating technology in my classroom is more than just creating engaging lessons in the computer lab, but also discovering ways to better connect with parents and to support students outside of class. I now realize that my goal of becoming a better teacher means bringing my entire classroom into the 21st century. I now have a class website where I post assignments and grades. Parents can contact me through it. It is just one of many ways that I can be connected to parents and students. Last year, for one of my classes, I created an online resource for one of our chapters. The resource contained more in-depth lessons, notes, and practice problems. Students were able to get additional support from home. My goal is to continue to work on this, and other ways to support my students outside of school.

To become a better teacher, I needed to continue to learn how to create engaging lessons that would challenge my students and allow them to delve deeper in their understanding of math and physics. I believed that a deeper knowledge of technology and how it could be used will help me to gain a deeper understanding of

how to engage my students. At first, with my idealistic goals, I did not realize that using technology simply for the sake of using Technology is not nearly as powerful as using technology in a purposeful way that brings something to each lesson that would not be there otherwise. I now realize that technology needs to be used in such a way that it adds to the lesson. I now realize that I need to apply technology to lessons in ways that it allows students to manipulate the world of math and build on their understanding. I now realize that by using the principles of Universal Design for Learning and technology, I can allow my students to access content easier. When my students can access content easier they will be able to have a deeper understanding.