

Beyond Technology: What I *Really* Learned and Will Keep Learning

When I first graduated from Albion College in 2005, I knew that I would pursue my master's degree at some point in my career. For various reasons I delayed beginning the process because I had changed jobs and was also uncertain of what direction I wanted to go with that degree. Then, in the spring of 2015, I attended the Michigan Association for Computer Users in Learning ([MACUL](#)) conference in Detroit with my colleagues. After loving my first few sessions, I wandered through the exhibit hall and was drawn to the Michigan State booth where I learned about the [Master of Arts in Educational Technology](#). I spoke with students who were so enthusiastic and I distinctly remember walking away with my pamphlet, certain that this was the right path for me. I began my application that evening when I got home.

At the outset of the program, I had predictable goals. I wanted to learn about various technologies and how to effectively implement them in my classroom. Furthermore, I wanted to learn ways in which I could be an effective technology leader in my school and gain confidence in my abilities to use more complicated hardware and software with my students. I was excited to see where the classes took me and what this degree could do for my career and my effectiveness as an educator.

Since beginning the program, my enthusiasm has not wavered, but my original goals have changed and adapted as I have progressed. Whereas I may have started out wanting to learn how to implement effective technology and stay abreast of best practices, I discovered that technology is not really the point of the program. This may seem like an odd statement, but as anyone who has been through the program can attest, technology cannot drive curriculum. Technology cannot drive learning. Technology cannot fix what is wrong with a school. Instead, technology is a tool that can be used to enhance education when properly grounded in objectives and goals. Technology can open new possibilities when implemented effectively.

I may have explored technology and its various uses (extensively), but I really learned, first and foremost, *about learning*. In focusing on the most effective ways to learn, teach, and lead, I much more profoundly understand how technology can help me do the best job it is possible to do - no matter what direction my path may go from here. As I move forward as an educator, I will continue to learn about new technologies far beyond the acceptance of this degree and how they can be used to help my students learn in the best possible way. In the end, that is the most important thing I gained in the MAET program - the confidence to keep exploring the best ways to help students learn, teachers teach, and leaders lead and the technology that can assist in these mighty endeavors.