

KARI YOUNG

From Start to "Finish"

When I first applied to the Master of Arts in Educational Technology (MAET) program, I had finished my teaching internship, but I had not yet had a classroom of my own. One of my original goals was to continue to fulfill my thirst for knowledge; I wanted to continue to further my education – especially incorporating technology into my life and classroom. My main rationale behind this goal was that I enjoyed using technology and that I felt technology was essential for students to have exposure to and to utilize in order to prepare them for their lives in the 21st century. I also wanted to expand my repertoire of technological tools that would better support learners. These tools could be for whole class instruction or individual differentiation, whatever would make learning the most accessible for each student.

Fast forward two years and I am about to wrap up my second year of teaching and all the requirements for the MAET program. Even though I am a very different version of myself than I was when I wrote my original goals, they still stand true. I still want to be a life-long learner. I want to continue to better myself, but now I also realize how important it is for me model this trait to my students. I work in a low-income school where we are constantly pushing students to work hard and value academic success so that they can go to college – an almost unheard of concept for too many. My goal has expanded to include instilling the desire to be a life-long learner in my students as well, no matter what career path they choose.

I mentioned that in the beginning, I wanted to have a better toolkit to use to support student learning. I have expanded the technological tools that I have to test out in the classroom, but I think this goal will always remain for me. There are always new technologies available or ones that I haven't found yet. Each student has different needs and I know I will be continuing to search and discover what will be most effective. Throughout the MAET program and my two years of teaching, I have realized how impactful technology can be in the classroom by improving equity. I have been fortunate to have small class sizes the past two years, but I still have a variety of needs within those small numbers. How do I make fifth grade content accessible to a student reading at a first grade level? How do I fill in the gaps for a student that does not have the opportunity to do any academic work at home? Technology is not the magic cure-all, but it has made a huge difference in my classroom that allows me to meet students where they are.

This may be the end of the MAET program for me, but this is not where pursuing my goals as an individual and an educator ends.