

A Change in Thought

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Upon beginning my journey toward earning my master's in the Master of Arts in Educational Technology (MAET) program, I had very limited experiences with technology and even fewer experiences with using technology in an educational setting. I wrote in my application that my goal for this program was to become more proficient with the use of technology in the classroom. I believed that just by being able to use more technologies and adding more technology use into my classroom that it would increase my students' engagement and therefore increase their understanding of the material. I wanted more exposure to applications and different technologies that I could use in the classroom. I was stuck in the mindset that technology meant something like an iPad, Chromebook, tablet, or digital application and that educational technology meant the technology that you actually use.

After having completed 27 credit hours of course work and experimenting with different forms of technology in my classroom, I see that educational technology isn't necessarily about what technology you use but how you are using it. The technology isn't what makes the learning or the deepened understanding occur. The technology is a just a piece of the process. Like any lesson, for a lesson that uses technology to be successful and have the desired impact a lot of planning or deliberate thought has to go into design and implementation of the lesson.

The most effective lessons occur when the teacher's pedagogical, content, technology, pedagogical content, technological content, and technological pedagogical knowledge all work together to form their technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK). When the teacher considers what they want the students to learn (content), how is best learned (pedagogy), and how technology can enhance the learning the impact on the student is more profound. Learning about TPACK has shifted my mind set from what technology can I stick in this lesson to say we used technology today to what technology is best suited to enhance my lesson so my students can make deeper connections and gain a better understanding.

Being part of the MAET program has not changed my goal but it has changed how I interpret my goal. I used to think being more proficient with the use of technology in my classroom meant having my students use technology to just say they used it. Now I think being more proficient with the use of technology means using the best available technology for the given learning outcome in the most meaningful way. In some situations it may mean having the students investigate the properties of reflections by using a GeoGebra or having students using manipulatives to model fractions. Every group of students has different needs so what works best for one class may not be the best for the next. As I continue my teaching career I will keep my goal of being more proficient with the use of technology in my classroom in mind. I will continue to design lessons through the

lenses of TPACK with the focus of creating and implementing lessons that increase student knowledge.