

A Look Back at My Journey: Pursing a Master of Arts Degree in Educational Technology

There were many reasons I decided to pursue a Master of Arts in Educational Technology degree (MAET) three years ago, all of which are reasons that currently hold true today. First, I've always had a desire to learn new things and challenge myself in whatever I'm doing. It can be a positive and a negative because I'm so detail oriented it drives me nuts when I'm not perfect at everything I do the first time! Nevertheless, one of my goals has always been to be a lifelong learner. Therefore, deciding I wanted to pursue a Master's degree was not a question. It was going to happen. If only I knew what I wanted to get a Master's degree in. I had to spend a long time brainstorming possible degree programs that would interest me; Educational Technology came to me almost by mistake!

To backtrack, I have a Bachelor of Music in Music Education degree and thus, know that my position is very specialized. When I started my first job, however, I was told I would be teaching a computer course along with directing an entire middle school choir program. This was a very fast learning curve, because although I always liked technology, I never saw myself as one who could teach it to others! So as I continued to teach computers along side choir for a few years I started to realize I really enjoyed teaching both. I enjoyed it enough that I started to research Master's degree programs that would allow me to improve my computer skills along side my skills with technology in general, so that I could apply my knowledge to all areas of my teaching. I knew a friend of a friend who had gone through the MAET program at Michigan State University who told me all about the degree in Educational Technology and how wonderful it was. I was drawn to the program because of the versatility in how I could take classes: online, over-seas, or hybrid versions. It felt so right applying for acceptance into the program.

My goals were to broaden my knowledge of technology and increase my "bag of tricks" when it came to teaching. I wanted relevant, useful knowledge for being a 21st century educator. I wanted a more versatile Master's degree that would make me a more marketable educator all while giving me a professional teaching certificate. Lastly, I wanted to take the "blinders off" and be exposed to the multiple ways for teaching and learning that technology could provide. My time in the MAET program has allowed me to pursue these goals. I feel more educated and knowledgeable of teaching with technology after going through the MAET program, but I also realize that there is always something more to learn. In order to keep up with the relevant and useful knowledge all 21st century educators possess, I must keep learning. Therefore, I welcome the opportunity to further my knowledge throughout my entire teaching career.

After three summers in the program, I can honestly say I made the right choice. I have learned so much thus far and my goals are aligned exactly as they were when I first entered the program. In addition, I've also found the ability to let go when I do not do something perfect the first time! I call it success from failure! The Master of Arts in Educational Technology program at Michigan State University has been a great path for challenging me academically and pushing me to be a better educator, student, and lifelong learner.