

The Reflections of a Grad School Student
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Spring 2012

With a just a few short months left, I am quickly seeing the few remaining assignments in my masters program, at Michigan State University, slip away. The end is near, what an exciting time! I want to look ahead, to know where this path will lead me, but I am unable to see that. Still my curiosity spurs me to do an about face, and check the path behind me. What exactly has happened along the way that has brought me here?

Initially I wanted the challenge of earning a graduate degree. It took some time to determine what exactly I wanted to do with that degree because I didn't want just some "basket weaving" degree. I didn't want to earn my masters degree just to earn it; I wanted to be able to apply it.

I always like a project to work on, something that will challenge me. My latest project has been myself. I entered the MAET Program looking for technologies that were new to me as well as ways to implement them. Ultimately I wanted to hone my technological and teaching skills. The practical application of lab assignments was terrific in allowing me the ability to tailor them to my current teaching assignment. Technical skills as well as teaching and learning theories were put into practice, and my repertoire of quality lessons grew. I furthered my knowledge of programs in which I was familiar by implementing them into class in a different manner. An example of this is my prior experiences using Microsoft Power Point for digital presentations, now I have taken that a step further and constructed a stand alone teaching opportunity for students through the creation of my Bridge Design StAIR. The combination of teaching and technical skills continued to grow in technologies new to me, such as my Moodle class site, and digital annotating.

I think the most profound change in me is not in my skills, but in the way I view technology applications. I found technology is not the focal point. It is secondary to its application; the medium should not become the message. Using technology for the sake of technology accomplishes little. With careful evaluation, a problem of practice may be improved through technology integration and outside worlds normally not accessible can be brought to our students. However careful consideration must be made to the integration of technology so that the meaning of a lesson is not lost in the novelty of the technology. It is not that technology is inherently bad, nor is its integration into lessons, but should not over shadow the message.

I enjoyed the learning process as a master's student. As much as I look forward to employing my new skills and ideas I will miss the learning community that my classmates and I have developed along the way.