

Reflecting on the Past & Considering the Future

When I entered the Master of Arts in Educational Technology (MAET) program, my goals were to improve my personal understandings related to technology designed to assist learning in the classroom, gain a better grasp of important concepts in the field of education, and find a way to merge my previous studies in business administration with new knowledge gained in the MAET program. I had been teaching ESL in China for around six years and had acquired many strategies for creating better learning conditions for students. I felt however, that there was a need to incorporate more appropriate tools into lessons to better facilitate learning. I wanted to bring content to life and improve engagement. I knew I had only scratched the surface in terms of what was possible.

During the past couple years in the MAET program, I've reflected on my role as teacher and learner. I've revised my goals many times, gained new insights, and have applied them to my personal and professional life. I still have the same intentions of improving my skill sets, but through readings, projects, and communication with professors and classmates, I have also come to view the education systems at home and abroad from entirely new perspectives. For example, reading about operant conditioning shed light on why classrooms experiences are designed in specific ways, why curriculum is structured as it is. I was able to better understand examinations and their roles in learning. The MAET program provided me with new ideas related to learning spaces, student-centered learning, and missional thinking among many other concepts. I plan to continue to implement strategies learned into my lesson plans. There are always new obstacles, and various stakeholders will have their own agendas. I've learned how to better navigate often conflicting interests and bring information into debates backed by evidence and informed argument, as well as filter research and organize my ideas to influence opinion.

I'm constantly exploring and reevaluating my personal understandings and misunderstandings, and try to have more flexibility in my approach relating to students and myself. Coming into the program, I thought the focus was going to be primarily on improving my proficiency related to various types of technology and my goals were to improve these skills. While I've certainly gained new skills and will use them, I now have intentions of applying my new perspectives to the challenges I encounter as well.