

Evan OBranchovic
CEP 807
10/15/2013

Technology for Technology's sake!

Nearing the completion of my graduate degree program I find myself wondering, "What next?" Completing the coursework during my full-time stint as a teacher has been a whirlwind. I have found myself challenged in a way I've never experienced before and meeting those challenges has been extremely rewarding. Now the task remains to take what I've accomplished and use it to improve my craft and ultimately reach my students in new and effective ways.

When I first started the program in the summer of 2012 my goals were pretty simple. I wanted to use technology to enhance my teaching and ultimately benefit my students learning. As I have worked through countless new concepts, theories, and tools I no longer find this goal that simple. There has been an evolution in how I view technology and its application to education.

Being able to pick up technology rather quickly it has always been something I have gravitated towards and been able to spearhead for those around me. Looking back I feel like a lot of my technology use was started with the use of technology for technology's sake and with a hope that it would be more engaging and productive for my students. The Masters in Educational Technology program at Michigan State has created a change in my thought process when it comes to technology. I am still excited about using technology in my teaching, but now I look at the tools available as just that, tools. My first decision is what do I want my students to learn and then I look to technology to try and accomplish that goal. I am no longer afraid to pull away from using something simply because it involves technology if it doesn't appear to be working. If I don't feel my students are gaining an understanding from its use then the technology is not helping. I had previously used a student blog with my class, but wasn't using it to accomplish any specific goal. I found the blog much more effective when I tied it to my students' learning goals in their reader's response work. My newfound understanding and confidence has helped me re-evaluate what I have done in the past and make changes to best benefit my students even if it means taking things more traditional until I find a technology tool that truly enhances the knowledge and skills being taught.

So what are my goals now? They have changed slightly from when I first started within the program. I still want to use technology to enhance my teaching and my students learning, but I want to be able to effectively analyze and evaluate what technology I am using and if it is helping me achieve my ultimate goal as a professional, which is to cement my students understanding of a concept. This is a goal that has also transformed into a leadership role in my school. Many of my peers know what I'm going to school for and look to me for help in the area of integrating technology. I am no longer afraid to point out if I think the tool they are using is not really helping their students understand the concept they're trying to teach. As I move past graduation and settle back into teaching I refuse to let myself and my fellow staff settle. I look to continue my development in technology and effectively evaluate how it can make my teaching better.