

Looking Back

When I applied to the Master of Arts in Educational Technology (MAET) degree program at Michigan State University (MSU) five years ago, I did so as a seasoned technology educator with 12 years of teaching experience, 10 of them spent in international schools around the world. However, when my family and I returned so our oldest child could experience her high school years in the U.S. in 1999, I opted to take on new challenges outside the world of education. One of the things I did was work for 8 years as a technology support consultant in the private sector, training a broad range of people from private individuals to Fortune 500 companies. In every practical sense, I was still teaching, but my classroom and students were markedly different.

In 2013, with all our children grown and out of the house, my wife accepted an administrative position at the Cayman International School (CIS) in the Cayman Islands. Naturally, I jumped at the opportunity to renew my lapsed teaching certification by earning my graduate degree online via the MAET from MSU while living on an island in the Caribbean. As I evaluated my strengths from both my work in education as well as my time in the private sector, I was very clear on my goals. I wanted to work with both teachers and administration to help them develop their skills and their understanding of how technology and teaching can be blended together to help students succeed.

As fortune would have it, one year into my graduate program I was offered the position of Technology Coordinator/Coach at CIS. It was the perfect venue for the achievement of my goals. The school, as part of its mission, had set its own goal of increased technology integration throughout the curriculum. I knew both from past experience as well as from my graduate coursework that staff training, from the director on down through the classroom aides, was a critical element in achieving such a goal. My experience and course of study prepared me perfectly to help build a culture of support and interest in technology that almost immediately showed benefits both within and outside of classrooms.

Of course, life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans, and so after only two years as Technology Coordinator at CIS, my wife and I made the difficult decision to leave wonderful positions in an idyllic locale to return to the U.S. once more, this time to care for aging parents. Today, my primary role is providing daycare to our two and a half year old grandson. With him, I am still teaching technology, albeit on a very different level than I ever have before. That said, his attention span, at least for technology, is not as short as one might suppose. But my goal is still one of supporting him in the development of technology skills and understanding that will help him succeed.

Looking back, I suppose my goals have roughly stayed the same over time. Only the people I've directed them toward have changed.

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