

I Met My Tech Partner in Crime

A Reflection Essay

When I began the [MAET \(masters of arts in educational technology\)](#) program in 2010, I was completely unaware of the possibilities that would unfold for me. Looking back at [my first essay describing my goals](#), I was very serious and methodical in my expectations and hopes for the program. Back then, I wanted to become a Microsoft Word, Access, and Powerpoint expert! Because that's what kids love! (insert [sarcasm](#).) I was also very interested in becoming a leader in my school and passing along ideas that could be beneficial to all teachers. While reflecting on these goals, I have begun to realize a few important discoveries:

- My marriage changed my views on technology
- The most useful technologies for me are not yet available at my school
- Students appreciate technology that makes them more involved
- Technology is all about discovery and flexibility

My marriage changed my views- I found my tech partner!

My husband and I are both music teachers, which can be overwhelming at times, (we're always gone!) but he's an incredible match for me. When we got married in the summer of 2011, I had taken time off from the [MAET](#) program to plan and enjoy the wedding. Once I started getting back into classes and he and I were together all the time, I started to share everything I learned with him. Pretty soon, he took off even more than I did on a lot of programs. He is one of those great learners who will watch tutorials for fun and google problems or ask people in forums about their opinions. He and I

began to help each other and I was fortunate to gain a lot of knowledge from him throughout my classes. In addition, the more comfortable I felt with the technology, the more willing I was to share what I knew with the world. My husband and I decided to start [our own website](#) with the idea that we would share our ideas and opinions on programs and explain how they could be used in a music classroom. While we have not been great about updating it- life can definitely get in the way- we share a common goal of staying up to date with technology and utilizing it to help our music programs.

The most useful technology is not yet available at my school!

Every time I took a class through the MAET program, I would be excited to utilize what I learned in my school. I entered the MAET classes with a goal of learning about a music software entitled Smartmusic which allows students to play along with the computer and get instant feedback. As I mentioned before, I also wanted to become a leader in my school and share what I knew with other teachers. I completed a great deal of useful projects throughout the program, and I began to incorporate what I could into my classes, but a lot of what I did was hindered because of the speed of the computers at my school. I began to realize that lot of schools and teachers have probably gone through the same problems. It hit me that the MAET program will probably keep me ahead of a lot of technology even when it becomes obsolete in the real world. I'm currently working on writing grant proposals for the special music software, but my goals of learning and implementing the program will have to wait. While I have been able to

share ideas with my colleagues regarding special sites like [weebly](#) and [remind101](#) on a one-on-one basis, I think a lot of teachers would benefit from specific professional development on these skills. While I have not had luck yet, I hope to propose this to my administration and step up to the plate and lead teachers on a few helpful ideas.

Students appreciate technology that makes them feel involved

The more I created and implemented, the more I saw my parents and students rally around the band program. With the completion of a [band website](#) and a [facebook](#) page, I could direct parents and students to useful information, but I also saw them take pride in the program by "liking" pages, pictures and comments. While the technology was not always in the classroom, the technology was helping my class by making it more interactive and having students think about it even when they weren't in the room. [Remind101](#) was a great plan to help students and parents get immediate information and students love that they are receiving texts.

Technology is all about discovery and flexibility

While I am not the most patient person in the world, I am someone that will give something a try before completely writing it off. Throughout the MAET program, this has become an incredibly useful skill. One of the most important lessons I've learned is that there is a lot of information and plenty of sites that just won't work for me. Either too complicated or too advanced, there are certain programs that won't be useful in my classroom, even if it works for someone else. Teachers have to find programs that are a good fit and not use something simply because it is there. My work in the

MAET summer intensive course with [Professor Punya Mishra](#) was incredibly useful as he truly imparted this idea that technology must be purposeful and creative. The idea of [TPACK](#) involves the idea of technology going hand in hand with content knowledge pedagogy. Technology use is all about being creative and flexible with our ideas, but first and foremost, teachers must be experts in their content area. Without a passion for their field, teachers will not be able to effectively utilize technology.