

My Itinerary for the Continuing Voyage

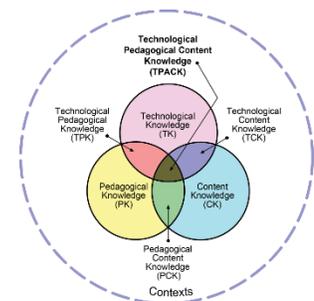
My Future Learning Goals



My journey through the Masters of Arts in Educational Technology program at Michigan State University (MSU) may be ending, but the learning voyage continues. Just like any trip, my trek needs a map or a plan to keep me on the road to acquiring the knowledge I need to be a successful teacher. As a lifelong learner, I am constantly seeking knowledge in many things. However, as an educator, I plan to focus on three main destinations. First, I want to continue developing my teaching skills to be a highly effective teacher. Second, I am determined to make my classroom a learning experience for all my students. And third, as a computer programming instructor, I need to keep up with constantly changing technology.

Becoming a More Effective Teacher

Each class along my MSU journey taught me important elements of instruction and learning. For example, I learned the importance of teaching creativity. I learned the importance of motivation in learning. I learned the how, when and why of integrating technology. I learned about TPaCK and Universal Design for Learning. The list goes on and on. This new knowledge has already helped me make changes to the way I teach. However, I want to continue to increase my understanding of these ideas to be a more effective teacher. My plan is to review the material I created for each class and seek out educational articles and books. However, the largest source of new knowledge will come from the personal learning network I created here at MSU.



Develop a Creative and Collaborative Learning Experience



Another important learning tool I explored on my journey is collaboration. I would like to learn more about how to make my classroom more collaborative. Learning to program tends to be a solitary activity. However, in a professional working environment, programming is actually a collaborative process. I plan to explore the possibility of purchasing furniture such as the MediaScape by Steelcase. I have already spoken with a representative from Extron who claims that they can provide the same capabilities as the MediaScape but for less money. I plan to use his expertise to learn how to best use this technology in my classroom.

Another technology that I would like to bring into my classroom are the tiny and affordable computers that are programmable and fun. There are two types; the Raspberry Pi and the Arduino. I already started purchasing some of these along with additional materials for students to play with. I have the beginnings of a Makerspace in my classroom. A Makerspace is a place where students can work together on projects while sharing ideas, equipment and knowledge. A Makerspace fits in nicely with my plan to continue developing



a creative and collaborative learning experience for my students. I plan to look at websites that contain ideas for working with this type of technology.

Keeping Up with Changing Technology



I also plan to continue learning about computer programming and get more involved in robotic programming and game design. I already own a large collection of technical books and manuals that I'm anxious to read when I have more time. Additionally, there are many websites that I can't wait to explore such as SoftBanks Robotics and Learning Unity. An unusual way I like to learn more programming techniques is from my students. I love it when they have great ideas for doing something new and we research together to figure out how to do it. One of the best sites for researching computer programming ideas is a forum called Stack Overflow.

When I went to college for a degree in computer science, I wrote programs on one of a few, shared computer terminals connected to a room-sized computer. Now, most of my students have their own smart phone with more computing power than that first computer. Technology is changing at an exponential rate and can be found everywhere; your TV, your vehicle, even your refrigerator. It is very important that I keep the content I teach current and therefore, I must continue learning about new technology. To stay current with industry, I plan to maintain a connection with IT professionals and attend the Grand Rapids Dev Day conferences and evening events sponsored by Software GR.

Conclusion

The day I finish striving to be a better teacher is the day I should retire. My on-going voyage of learning about teaching and learning will continue. Who knows what technology I will be teaching in the future or what educational policies we will have to deal with? As long as I continue to learn new technologies, get students excited about learning and use proven pedagogical ideas, I think I will be ready for anything.