

Moving Forward

Education has been a passion of mine for as long as I can remember. School and sports instilled a work ethic in me along with responsibility and confidence that has carried me to where I am today. On the cusp of earning my master's degree in Educational Technology; learning and teaching have been at the forefront for me as long as I can remember. As teachers, we are constantly changing and developing, even after formal education has ceased. Effective teachers are continuously searching for new ways to benefit their students. I look at the areas I would like to strengthen and set goals for myself and they are, technology use in the classroom, student engagement through flexible seating, and more collaboration amongst teachers to promote the sharing and trying of new ideas.

Technology

The school district I currently teach in has 1:1 technology for all kindergarten and first grade students. This technology is in the form of an iPad. These students are given the iPad at the beginning of the school year for use in school and at home. However, this is where 1:1 technology stops within our school district. Starting in second grade and on up grade levels have to share devices. These are in the form of iPads, MacBooks and Google Chromebooks. While we are fortunate to have the technology available for use it is a goal of mine for our district to implement 1:1 devices district wide. It is not enough to have these technologies. I would also like to better my knowledge and our schools knowledge on how to best use these devices within the classroom for effective use. I have had colleagues attend the Michigan Association for Computer Users in Learning (MACUL) training. I think that attending this development one day would push to improve and strengthen technology use within my classroom.

Collaboration

Moving forward I would like to promote more collaboration within my district on technology use within the classroom. Not only ways to use these technologies but the why and the research that supports technology within the classroom. I see myself working with other teachers and technology coaches to create a dialogue and forum to share what is working and what isn't. By creating a Personal Learning Network (PLN) where these ideas can be shared freely; this collaboration can strengthen our pedagogy surrounding technology in the classroom with the help of the Technological, Pedagogical, and Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework. TPACK is the overlap of

technology use, content knowledge, and teacher pedagogy. Good teaching requires an understanding of this relationship. When I work with other educators I am constantly thinking about all those who have taught me so much within this profession. I think that as a community teachers should be constantly asking for and giving help. As a lifelong learner, it is my goal to continue growing as an educator even after my formal education ends.

Flexible Seating

Student engagement has always been and continues to be extremely important for me and something I am always looking to improve on. Each year I have anywhere from 25-28 second graders in my classroom. These eight to nine year olds have high energy and are on the go constantly. The traditional four wall classroom isn't always conducive to lessons I have planned. This is why I want to transform my classroom into more of a flexible seating room, where students have more choice in terms of seating possibilities. This small inclusion of more choice for these students instills a sense of responsibility that they have for their own learning. I wrote about flexible seating and hope to implement it in the near future. Ideas such as this have helped me get a better idea of the benefits and how to implement flexible seating in the classroom.

My overall goal remains: to reach my students where they are individually in their learning career. I will continue to focus on this goal throughout my entire teaching career as student needs are continuously changing and practices in teaching change and evolve over time. I believe my three future goals in the areas of technology integration, collaboration amongst teachers and student engagement through flexible seating will help me grow as a learner and educator.