

# Réflexion de mon Expérience avec MAET

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*Avez-vous compris ? Qu'est-ce que vous avez appris ? Dites-moi.*

In my classrooms, I talk to the students about the difference between knowing something and understanding it. We discuss how they can test themselves to see if they actually understand a concept and can then apply it to their daily lives, or to their usage of French. As written above, I am constantly asking my students “Did you understand?” and “What did you learn?” Then I ask them to share this information with me, and with the class. Reflection is always an important step in going from knowing to understanding. It is also an important step in any journey of learning. If you can't take time to stop and think about what happened, you may miss some of the most important pieces. And, for me, I think that I would've missed quite a few had I not been required to look back at my learning journey through the MAET program.

Out of the ten courses that I have taken for my MAET masters program, one of the most influential was my first course: CEP 810, Teaching for Understanding with Technology. Not only was it a great example of online teaching, but I learned so much from it -both directly and indirectly- that it took me a while to process all of the useful things that I learned from this course.

In my CEP 810 course, one of the first assignments was to start our Personal Growth Plan (or PGP). As someone who loves to plan ahead, I find it very comforting and resourceful as my first steps into the program. The PGP had many levels and I continued the work throughout the semester. It helped me realize what my goals actually were for the course and for the masters program. It also helped me think about why I was getting this degree in the first place, instead of my Masters in Foreign Language Education (French) -- which was what I originally wanted to study. By completing this assignment, I was able to realize all of the possibilities that my MAET degree could give me instead of my other, original option. It solidified my choice in program and helped me realize just how much I was missing in my classroom and as an educator.

During this first course, I was also exposed to what a Personal Learning Network is and how it is always there for us. Though I had reached out to my colleagues and former friends from college on several occasions before this, I did not realize just how large my PLN was and how there are so many more resources out there than I had first thought.

Looking back at the PLN that I created (seen on the left side), I would now change many things. For starters, the top portion would become much larger. I use the technology and the resources that go with it so much more frequently than I reach out to the bottom: my friends and family members (who are not teachers). I reach out in-person for assistance in lesson planning, reflecting, etc. Since I have now expanded my education, I would add many things to my PLN which are not on the original, such as specific colleagues and the French Department closet (which houses both new and old textbooks as well as teacher resource materials). I would also add resources that I did not know existed before: MACUL, ITSE, TV5.org, and a long list of people that I follow on Twitter.

Thinking about it now, I realize that I was afraid to ask for assistance and was so overwhelmed by the French department closet and sites such as the IBO, that I did not access them as often as I should have. So, all in all, thinking

about my PLN helped remind me that I was not alone and that I could reach out for help. I saw people do it all the time on Facebook and on Twitter, but how come I can't do it? So I push myself to step out of my comfort zone and use the resources that I have as well as find new ones more often now than in the past.

The second most beneficial course was my summer cohort: CEP 800 Learning in School and Other Settings, CEP 815 Technology and Leadership, and CEP 822 Approaches to Educational Research. Yes, it was technically three courses rolled into one summer, but I count it as one giant influence on my education through the MAET program. It was extremely helpful to be on-campus and to be with other educators like myself. Not only did I expand my PLN, but I learned so much from each of the other students. What was most helpful were the group projects, where we all brought our own strengths to the table and we taught them to the other people. It was amazing to get to work with like-minded people who came from different schools.

Now, when I think about making a screencast or a video, I do not feel overwhelmed. I've made at least three screencasts or videos since my summer cohort. Each of my team members brought something to the table and taught me about the best ways to make a movie/screencast: ensure that your sound is clear, double-check your video, leave short pauses in between sections so you can edit them, make video shorter or longer, speed up the audio, etc. All of these things always seemed so daunting to me before and I had never taken the time to try to learn them. Having people with me, who knew what they were doing, was so helpful and comforting. I wasn't afraid to ask questions or try things out on my own then and now.

Then there is the last, most-helpful course: my capstone course. Again, I am a firm believer in the reflection process. In my opinion, reflection is the key to education. We need to take the time to slow down and let our students process what they are learning and let them make their own connections. The capstone course is just that. It helped me to look back, reflect, assess, etc. so then I can look forward to how I will apply these strategies -this new knowledge- to my career both now and in the future. During this course, I have had a chance to really delve into my understanding of technology, the purpose of its use, and how I have been applying it to my classroom. I feel as though this course has helped me remember to look backwards, in order to learn how to move forwards.

Of course, looking at where I am now, there are many things that I want to try and many things that I know I will change; but that makes me a good educator. If I am not changing along with my students every year, then I may as well be a textbook that the students learn out of on their own. That is not the teacher that I am, and that is not the teacher that I want to become. I will continue to seek out opportunities for growth, whether it be more courses similar to the MSU MAET program, more IB conferences, or whatever may be thrown my way. My goal is to continue to grow as a learner and as an educator.