

# “Every New Beginning Comes From Some Other Beginning’s End”

-Seneca, Roman Philosopher

By Lisa Mele

The title of this essay has great meaning for me as I think about my future as an educator with a masters degree in educational technology. I can credit this “new beginning” as being a direct result of the “other beginning’s end,” which is my journey through the MAET program. Through my various courses in the MAET program, I have learned everything from how to create an online course to examining the reasoning behind why we use technology in an educational setting. It has caused me to look very closely at myself as a teacher and to ask myself how I can make learning more authentic and effective for my students and how technology can act as a tool that can assist in meaningful learning.

One of the lessons that has had the greatest impact on me from my courses is the importance of first asking what are the goals of this lesson/unit/classroom/school, and then considering how technology can guide those goals. Too often we get caught up in how cool technology can be and just want to get the next best thing for our schools. When really, technology should come second to the goals we intend to achieve. Sure, technology can make learning more engaging, but does it make the learning goals more attainable, achievable, authentic, and meaningful? This is the question that educators, and those working in an educational setting, must consider before investing in the next latest and greatest form of technology. Lessons such as this are ones that I will take with me as I continue my role as an educator and in the school setting. It is clear that technology has had major changes in our education system. From online learning to using mobile devices as tools in the classroom, education has transformed to include technology as not only a fun component of the classroom, but a necessary component when used correctly. It is my goal as an educator to continue using technology as a purposeful tool to help meet the goals of my units.

As I look towards my “new beginning,” I am not really sure where I will end up in the future. I dream of one day getting a job as a school technology specialist because I want to help other educators meet the learning goals of their classrooms and help them find the most effective ways to do this. It is my hope that in this role I could help even more students learn in the authentic, engaging, effective ways that technology can assist with. I know that with the information I learned in the MAET classes, I am prepared to help others with my knowledge of the philosophies, resources, and skills I’ve learned.

I also know that regardless of whether I am a classroom teacher, a role that I love, or a technology specialist, a role that I aspire to reach, the learning never

ends. It is so important that learning is viewed as a lifelong process. In order to continue learning about new technologies, research, and more, I will do a few things. First, I will continue to access online resources that provide new and updated web 2.0 information. One site that I read regularly for such information is ISTE, the International Society for Technology in Education. The site provides links to research that will keep me up to date with educational technology news. Other sites I will continue to reference for continuing education are Edutopia, Tech & Learning, and eSchool News, to name a few. Other resources I will continue to use to keep myself abreast of new information include message boards like McRel and Classroom 2.0 where I can learn from other educators. The great thing about these resources are that they are continuously updated and always available. I will also attend professional development events that allow me the opportunity to continue expanding my knowledge as an educator. Fortunately for me, the school district I teach in allows for many different professional development workshops. I've been able to attend everything from reading conferences to technology workshops to seminars about professional learning communities.

To continue to grow as an educator, I know that it is imperative that I continue to make learning a priority in my life. Although I will no longer have the MAET courses to guide that learning, I have been given a toolbox of resources with which I can continue my education to develop as a lifelong learner. The future is always a mystery. At this point in career, I feel that my future is as big a mystery as ever. While I continue as a teacher, I strive to use the knowledge I've learned to guide my lessons. I use different forms of technology in my class every single day that help my students to meet their learning goals. Technology has helped my students to be more creative, innovative, engaged, and to work with a purpose. Whether I stay in the teaching field or become a school technology specialist, I know that my continuing education will help students to learn in more effective ways. My "new beginning" is a great chance for me to take what I've learned from my "other beginning's end" and continue to grow as an educator, colleague, and lifelong learner.