

Times they are a changing
By Jessica Eden

Lets be honest, the education field is changing. We are asking more of our students, i.e. Common Core and districts are asking more from us, performance pay. What does this entail? It requires us to become more in tune with our students and their needs. In addition we have to be accountable for our actions and plans within the classroom. How can this all be accomplished within the school day? Technology! We use it to assess, plan, grade, enrich, intervene, and so much more. These are the times we are living in. In order to prepare our students to be successful in the future they have to be able to be well versed in technology.

When looking at technology and how it has helped me, it allowed me to receive my master's degree entirely online. Through this process I found out a lot about myself as a learner. I have learned the importance of time management, organization, and being able to write an essay. I have also realized the importance of knowing your learning style, I am a visual learner, and this helped me adapt the information I was trying to learn. I had to make adaptations for myself in order to be successful. While I have learned a lot about myself, I have also used these insights to be more understanding of my students and their needs. I think that it has made me more compassionate and flexible. This process has taught me a lot about my students and myself.

Being an educator I believe that in order to be successful we have to be life long learners, always growing and evolving. It's funny because my school district has begun using www.pd360.com. You get credit for every video you watch, respond to questions, and then three days later respond to reflection questions. It reminded me of some of my work I have done in the MAED program. In order to address the needs of all of my students I have to assess each student and in our state that involves assessing one on one using a computer. In addition to this my students have to take assessments on the computer all by themselves. From these assessments, they get work that is on their level. All of this technology is new and I have to use it to make decision based on the level on needs in order to create interventions, enrichment, and create my small groups for reading and math centers. Some of these websites that I utilize for my students are www.ixl.com and www.myscilearn.com. When I started my masters the only way to learn from other teachers were to ask them or go into their classroom and observe. Now I utilize Pinterest and Teacherpayteacher websites in order to learn from other teachers and get tips of things that are working for them. It is amazing the change in technology that has come just since I began this program. In addition I utilize an Ipad and four iphones within my classroom. I am able to use applications that are geared towards my student's specific needs. My students get excited to use this technology. Technology is changing the way I learn about my students and how my students learn.

Now that I have completed my masters degree it has encouraged me to focus more within my classroom on projects and ideas that I have learned from my classes. I have to say that being a full time teacher, mother, and student has been tough and there is so much that I have learned that I want to implement or create but have lacked the time. While my degree is a stopping point for my online classes, it is a starting point for my creativity and energy that I want to provide to my kindergarteners. I am excited to have the time and energy to start some of these projects and programs. I also feel that I would like to pursue another Masters degree whether that be in the field of counseling, child psychology, or speech therapy or perhaps continuing my education through a Doctorate degree. I think it will depend on the workforce and how the field of education changes and where the needs are.

I have seen a change within my classroom; I am now providing my students with more online homework. I am able to communicate more frequently with my parents because many of them have email. I also utilize more technology within my classroom. My students enter kindergarten better versed in how to use technology. Technology and learning are tied together, the classroom culture is changing daily, and I have to stay up to date on the newest technology in order to be a better educator.