

The past several years have revealed two trends in my secondary English classroom. The first trend involves student writers: despite persistent instructional efforts and access to the best tools available, my students were not becoming better writers. The second trend is a growing disconnect between the forward-thinking Middle Years Programme (MYP) of the International Baccalaureate -- a curriculum framework I have taught within for nearly 8 years - - and the use of instructional technology. My intrigue in these trends ultimately led to the Educational Communication and Technology program at NYU Steinhardt.

When I discovered the ECT M.A. on NYU Steinhardt's website, I was immediately interested, and further exploration revealed solid alignment with my goals. Students and faculty are immersed in elements I am passionate about: assessment, curriculum design, and use of various media in learning. The ECT program addresses elements essential to re-thinking education. Combining these elements strongly motivates me toward change.

Technology, communication, and learning work together to change education. Technology -- ubiquitous, inevitable, and at our disposal -- is both the catalyst for and vehicle of 21st century learning. A peer once said that technology is only useful if it connects our humanity and moves the community forward. Such is our challenge: without the community, we are without learning. Technology, while not the end goal, is the avenue to education. Communication is needed because communities must work together to design new situations to thrive in. *How can we best create an environment for learning?* This question fuels conversations about educational innovation. At the center of education is learning itself. Life-long learning is ever important in a world of rapid change. When technology, communication, and learning merge, educational innovations flourish and progress.

My experiences as a teacher in four countries have prepared me well for graduate study. I am fortunate to have worked with insightful mentors and to have taught culturally diverse students. My MYP experience allows participation in an educational model valuing holistic learning and assessment for learning. These core MYP elements have become part of my philosophy, which includes interdisciplinary learning and authentic assessment. In a world of networked learning, my philosophy continues to evolve. Personal learning networks give me ongoing opportunities to reflect and improve. Additionally, experience as an MYP Workshop Leader enables networking with other professionals in the Asia-Pacific region and worldwide. It also challenges me to broaden and refine my leadership skills.

My primary interest is how intersecting technology and literacy can support learning writers. This interest developed organically: I discovered that despite use of the writing process and access to a range of tools, my students' writing has not improved. Access to technologies should, in theory, aid writing fluency. Yet my students still struggle. Dr. Sarah Beck's work in literacy interests me, as she explores layers of literacy learning and examines different models of teaching and learning writing. I wish to explore supported interactive learning environments. *Can we manipulate the environment to produce better writers?* This research question leads me to Dr. JoEllen Fisherkeller's research of media in adolescent communication and media learning; these areas have tremendous potential in supported environments for emerging writers.

My second interest is to look critically at MYP schools use of technology to support the Programme's goals. A key MYP feature is interdisciplinary knowledge: *How can MYP harness the power of media in interdisciplinary learning?* Dr. Ricki Goldman's research is relevant here, as many of her projects explore how instructional technologies support inquiry-

based learning. Another key MYP component is authentic assessment: *How can MYP use web 2.0 tools to foster real-world assessment experiences?* In this realm, Dr. Diane Ravitch's research about school reform is valuable because of its relevance to progressive curriculum models such as MYP.

I suspect the career role for me after finishing a ECT M.A. may not yet exist – such is the changing nature of this field. Ideally, I want to use technology to improve communication and creativity in learning. Above all, I want to be an excellent educator. Change is about possibilities, and I am open to all of them.

I care fervently about my students' futures and I am dedicated to continual growth. I maintain two blogs, and have a personal learning network which enables regular contact (via various web 2.0 tools) with learning experts worldwide: daily professional development. My daily activities demonstrate that I am curious, open-minded, and a risk-taker. Beyond the classroom, I am a balanced individual. I write poetry and fiction, and love to learn languages. I am a musician. I practice yoga daily and travel regularly. My engagement in these activities keeps me active in learning; like the Zen Buddhist philosophy, I approach the world with a beginner's mind.

The NYU Steinhardt ECT program description states that it prepares professionals “for leadership roles in the design and production, evaluation and use of educational materials and environments for various technologies.” This proposal inspires me to become a better educator, and motivates me more ardently than anything else in my career. Not only am I willing to take on this professional leadership role, but I am optimistic and dedicated to seeking dynamic ways to do so.