

The Birth of the Change Agent

On May 19th, 2012 my wife and I welcomed our first child into the world. Violet Christine Greger was born at Sparrow Hospital in Lansing Michigan and she was perfect. Thanks to the expertise of dedicated doctors and nurses, my wife and daughter survived a scary birthing processes which included blood pressure increases and fluctuating pulse rates. The nurses especially contributed toward the successful birth utilizing their skills of practice while simultaneously managing our emotions through their training in therapeutic communication. I had previously managed to stay healthy and out of the hospital for extended periods of time, so I really did not know much about the nurse's role and their extensive contributions to patient safety. They treated everyone in the room that day as a patient, myself included.

According to the [American Nurses Association](#), "The nurse's primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, community, or population". In short, a nurse is committed to the world. I always desired to be part of a contribution to the greater good, but the birth of my daughter ignited something deep inside me to chase after that goal with more intensity than I had ever had before. But how in the field of technology could I ever dream to make as large of an impact as a nurse who literally saves lives daily?



Shortly after my daughter's birth, I returned to my work as an IT systems administrator for a company whose main goal was to sell and service forklifts. This is certainly a necessary function in our current society, but I could not find a solid connection to the greater good. Shortly after



feeling an eagerness to search for something different, I discovered a job opening at Michigan State University's College of Nursing. The open position called for someone to support technology in College of Nursing classrooms and meeting spaces. I considered this an opportunity to join a team working to make a large impact on the world. So I applied for the job, and though I took a pay cut to make the change, I took the job. Little did I know how much my life would change. Diving into the world of education I found how limited my views were on the capabilities of technology. The world of instructional

design and educational technology opened new doors for me. Not long into my time at the College of Nursing, I realized it was time for me to go back to school. Through much consideration and council with those around me, I applied to the [Master of Arts in Educational Technology \(MAET\)](#) program at [Michigan State University's College of Education](#). The combination of working at the College of Nursing and the MAET program has changed my career path and my impact I will have on the world forever.

One of the greatest aspects of the MAET program was the ability to integrate my current work environment into my coursework. This gave me an opportunity to expand my impact for the college while at the same time furthering my development as a professional in educational technology. A specific example of this occurred in my first course in the program which was [CEP 820 \(Teaching Students Online\)](#). The timing of this course in my life seemed like a case of serendipity. Prior to entering CEP 820 as my first class into the MAET program, my co-worker and main support person for faculty teaching online courses, was placed on extended medical leave. This meant I was the only onsite support person for technology in online courses along with my responsibilities for face-to-face courses. First and foremost, this course taught me how to utilize the resources around me to troubleshoot issues related to online learning. I also learned valuable lessons in course structure and reasoning behind the use of specific technologies for learning. As a middleman between instructors and students, I found great value in learning how to view online courses from both perspectives. It was key to communicate how technology may function differently from the instructor's PC to the student's PC and find ways to test models before issues arose. I also utilized this course to create online models and other resources for instructors related to common issues that reoccurred throughout the college. Building online tutorials and resources for best practices saved me valuable time and taught instructors a certain level of troubleshooting they would not have learned in the past. Watching how instructors I support on a daily basis interacted with the products I created in CEP 820 provided immediate feedback measuring the quality of my work. The feedback provided by course faculty certainly added an important perspective, but it was difficult to compare to the feedback I received from the individuals who rely on me to support the technology related to their online courses. CEP 820 was a wonderful beginning to the MAET program. From the start I felt as though I was making great progress in my goal to become a great asset to a team working every day to make improvements for the greater good of society.



As I continued forward in my quest to better myself for the betterment of society, I realized how central intentionality was to achieving the goals I set forth. It seems like common sense, but I seldom considered the depth of the level of detail I could go into to influence organizational adjustments that lead to meaningful change. [CEP 817 \(Learning Technology by Design\)](#) allowed me to experiment with a problem of practice of my choice to work through the design process



and discover possible solutions that I had never previously considered. During this course I was an active member of the College of Nursing's Simulation Task Force. With the task force in mind, I chose simulation within the field of nursing education to focus on as my problem of practice. My first action was to go through the same experiences our nursing students encountered in our simulation lab. I was always on the observation side of the curtain and this exercise gave me a new found respect for the students participating in our simulations. In this process I discovered

2012 was the year in which I finally made a move that set me up for what I really wanted in my career. I wanted to be connected to something greater than myself. My desire was to make a larger impact in the world and become part of a team that was working every day to make improvements for the greater good of society. I have discovered that I do have the capability to make an enormous impact in the field of educational technology and I even made it on TV. The



MAET program has presented opportunities for me to vastly expand my knowledge in online learning, technology within simulation education, technology integration and so much more. I did not reference all of the courses to took in the paragraphs above, but each course did have a positive impact on my professional and personal life. Along with gaining knowledge surrounding teaching, learning, technology and leadership, I learned a great deal about

intentionality and design around my goals. I found areas in all aspects of my life to dive in and become the change agent I deep down always wanted to be. Throughout the program I grew in my confidence as an educator. Though I am not currently categorized as an instructor, I have found ways to get in front of the classroom and share my knowledge to support learning objectives. Two of the greatest examples of this is earning seats at the table on the [College of Nursing's Social Media Task Force](#) and the [Simulation Task Force](#). The Social Media Task Force led to an opportunity for me to facilitate a thirty-minute classroom exercise for students entering the nursing profession which focuses on preventing inappropriate use of social media, especially related to patient information. I am honored to be a part of nursing education. Also, as mentioned above, the Simulation Task Force has led to me be a valued member of the college's simulation efforts as I coordinate technology integration to support outcomes. My goal has always been to prove myself as a valuable member of our society. The MAET program and my experience gained through my work in educational technology has connected me to a group of educators making a difference in the world and has shown me a path to continuing my education as I work to expand my abilities to improve the lives of individuals around the world. As I continue forward in my career, I will always remember the moment I has called to make a greater difference...May 19th, 2012.