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“Technology is an area that my staff often have questions about—whether it’s looking for new resources to diversify their teaching or finding tools to help streamline their busy workload.” Jai Dubyna

New Professional Degree Offers Technology Expertise

by Janine Lim and Michael Gayle

A new Master of Arts in Learning Technologies was launched at Andrews University in fall 2019—a first for the Adventist church in North America and the first Adventist program of its kind worldwide to be fully accredited at its start.

This professional degree prepares digital educators to design and facilitate inclusive online and blended learning environments for K–12 students, adult learners, and lifelong learning in a variety of contexts. Digital educators prepared in the Learning Technologies program will be able to leverage the technologies available to them in order to succeed in the rapidly changing 21st century classroom.

In addition to core courses on Adventist philosophical foundations and assessment and teaching, program participants choose from classes including Trends and Issues in Educational Technology, Digital Storytelling and Visual Learning in a Diverse World, Assisting Special Needs Learners with Instructional Technology, and Digital Collaboration and Citizenship.

Graduates of the program may serve as classroom teachers, curriculum specialists, teacher educators, educational/instructional technology specialists, directors of digital learning, instructional technology consultants, and researchers.

JANINE LIM, program director, views the program as fulfillment of a lifelong dream. While she was a graduate stu-

dent at Andrews University in the fall of 1996, Janine asked for an interview with Jim Bembenek, the director of educational technology at Berrien County Intermediate School District, now called Berrien Regional Education Service Agency. Based on her experience working as a student training students and faculty to use email and the internet, she asked him who would train the teachers to use technology in the classroom. That provided an opportunity to participate in an internship at Berrien County ISD. She visited K12 schools in the tri-county area and connected their computers to dial-up internet. In the summer of 1996, she assisted in teaching a week-long workshop to teachers.

When she returned to Andrews in the summer of 1997, Janine’s hope was to teach Bible at Andrews Academy. No positions were open there, but Berrien

County ISD created a new position, which Janine was offered and accepted. Two weeks later, the Andrews Academy Bible teacher position opened up. Janine says, “I’ve always seen this as a clear sign that God wanted me to work and learn in the educational technology field to benefit Adventist education.”

Janine worked at Berrien RESA for 14 years as an instructional technology consultant. She also served Adventist education through the Adventist Virtual Learning Network (AVLN) during that time.

AVLN offered several courses in educational technology, specifically designed to complement the Adventist higher education institutions who taught basic educational technology courses.

For almost 20 years, Janine has had a dream to provide a master’s degree in educational technology for the Adventist church. Ever since she began serving as associate dean for online higher education at Andrews in 2011, she has focused on building the online program. During the 2018–2019 academic year, the time and resources finally came together.

MICHAEL GAYLE, assistant professor for the Department of Teaching, Learning & Curriculum (TLC) and Curriculum and Learning Design Specialist for Digital Learning & Instructional Technology (DLit), has been interested in learning technologies for many years. As a middle/high school music teacher in the early 2000s, he created a music tech-



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nology curriculum and lab at the St. Andrews Episcopal School. He also taught religion and philosophy classes where, in the days before social media, his students were blogging and having online conversations about their experiences with religion.

In 2004, Michael began work at the State University of New York at Buffalo. He and his new team wrote grants that brought together social justice, technology and college access. Students from local high schools came to the university where they learned how to use digital media tools to address social issues in their communities. The students made films and participated in political actions such as advocacy in the State legislature, social protests and community organizing.

Michael continued in the field of digital technology—including the design of an online platform to support the delivery of online digital resources for the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

As he transitioned to work fulltime in the Adventist school system, he realized there was a need for teachers and students in Adventist schools to have the same types of opportunities he had in other institutions. “To learn the tools and techniques of digital technology and then, in turn, to use those tools and techniques to share God’s love and His call to salvation is a great gift,” Michael says.

Michael met Janine Lim and Luana Greulich, chair of the Department of Teaching, Learning & Curriculum, in spring 2018. He sensed that God might have a place for him at Andrews to contribute to their work.

In January 2019, Michael moved to Andrews to work in DLit and teach in TLC. Within a few months, Janine asked Michael if he would be interested in writing courses and teaching in the new Learning Technologies program. Michael, of course, said yes. ■



STUDENT HIGHLIGHT

Jai Dubyna is one of the first students in the MA in Learning Technologies program. As a child, she viewed teachers as heroes—people who could transform lives and truly work to improve their community. Shortly after high school graduation,

she spent a year as a student missionary in Micronesia and taught Grade 5. “That first year of teaching solidified in my mind that God was directing me into the field of education,” she says.

For most of her teaching career, Jai has been a junior high teacher at College Heights Christian School. She has a passion for giving students multiple opportunities to try new things, especially in the area of technology. In particular, Jai appreciates using Google Suite to help students and staff get organized, collaborate with each other, and share what they have learned.

Recently, Jai became the assistant superintendent of micro-schools in the Alberta Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. “I tend to lead by serving, and my job is to support and encourage my staff much the same way I formerly encouraged my students,” she says. “Technology is an area that my staff often have questions about—whether it’s looking for new resources to diversify their teaching or finding tools to help streamline their busy workload.”

Jai sees the Learning Technologies degree as an opportunity for information, strategies and philosophies to broaden her knowledge and abilities related to improving the learning programs at each school. She hopes to enhance the learning experience for students while incorporating technology into the classroom and, as a result, to better serve the families her students represent. Especially as an administrator, she feels it is important that she understand how to best use technology in education.

As for her experience in the program so far, Jai states, “I am excited about the courses that make up this degree, as they are very relevant to Adventist education today. Dr. Lim has done an amazing job at maintaining the flow of communication and giving me personal support and guidance.”

Jai encourages interested educators to consider the degree. She says, “The courses in this MA are relevant to today’s learners and teachers. This is a great opportunity to understand how technology can impact and change education.”



Janine Lim & Michael Gayle