

The Short Evolution of My Master's Program Learning Goals

As I read over and analyze my own application for the Master of Arts in Educational Technology (MAET) graduate school program, I realize once again that life is a long term learning experience. I had written that I believe that each individual student learns in their own unique way. I still vehemently believe in this learning theory. As an elementary teacher who mainly teaches about computer science and technology, I still try to use a wide variety of assessment tools to properly identify my own students' strengths and weaknesses as learners. At the beginning of my Master's program here at MSU, I spent a great deal of time thinking about my own learning goals.

I have always considered myself to be a lifelong learner. I want to learn something new every day. As early as my freshman year at Michigan State University in 2002, I set a personal life goal that I would eventually earn a Master's degree. At that time, my main academic focus was just deciding what *major* I would ultimately choose at MSU. I started out as a Fisheries and Wildlife major. By the end of my first year, I had decided to go into Elementary Education. Teaching and mentoring children has always been a passion of mine. This passion probably stems from the fact that both of my parents became lifelong school teachers.

I have worked as the K-5 Computer Science-Technology teacher at West Iron County Schools, in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, for over five years now. When entering the MAET program, I stated that I wanted to learn new, exciting ways to engage my K-5 students. I also expressed interest in learning more about ways to use websites such as Weebly, Edmodo, Google, Twitter, and many others to actively involve my students each day. My wish was to become even more experienced in the realm of educational technology. In addition to that, I stated that the "MAET program will help me to realize one of my lifelong goals, both personally and professionally, as an elementary teacher."

Over the course of my graduate work in Educational Technology at MSU, I have been able to add many teaching tools that have continued to aid me in my career as a computer

science-technology teacher. I now find myself regularly adding to my Professional Learning Network (PLN) on a weekly basis. A new learning goal that developed is to follow more educational technology professionals on social media (and lately many fellow teachers and colleagues have been starting to follow me as well). This new goal has actually helped all of us involved by providing new communication tools for giving each other assistance and advice in regards to teaching students. I will continue to branch out and grow with my PLN into the future.

Before I started my graduate program, I very rarely blogged about anything. Regularly blogging (and reflecting) about teaching, learning, and education became a new goal. I ended up creating my WordPress blog explicitly for the MAET program. Regularly blogging about teaching with technologies made me analyze the value of learning and understanding even more. Another new goal and habit that I developed thanks to my graduate program became regularly seeking out advice from my PLN. I plan to continue with this good teaching habit. My own blog about teaching and educational technology can be found at:

<https://crcavalieri.wordpress.com/>

References:

Bransford, J., Brown, A.L. & Cocking, R. R. (Eds.), How people learn: Brain, mind, experience and school (pp. 3-40). Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 2000. Retrieved from <http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?isbn=0309070368>.