

## Setting a New Course on my Journey in the Quest to Improve Education

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My journey working on my Master of Arts in Educational Technology (MAET) at Michigan State University has led me to a realization that as I explore and expand my knowledge, I am left wondering about many more questions than I had started with. This inspires me to continue embarking on a journey to improve as an educator. On the next step, I hope to utilize the skills and knowledge that I have gained to utilize technology in my classroom and guide my students to develop 21<sup>st</sup> Century critical thinking skills and become lifelong learners. I plan to continue the growth of my knowledge on educational technology and pedagogical practices. I am also looking to continue the expansion of my professional learning network to collaborate with other educators to share knowledge and to develop educational solutions. I have chosen these goals so that I can become a more effective teacher in my building and a valuable resource that other teachers can rely on.

The first goal of my journey leads me to my own classroom. I want to use my knowledge of TPACK (Technological, Pedagogical, and Content Knowledge) to transform my classroom into an environment where students can develop their 21<sup>st</sup> Century critical thinking skills and become lifelong learners. I have learned through the MAET program that educational technology is much more than just knowing how to use technology in the classroom. TPACK is about using technology in a way that will enhance the learning experience while using the best teaching practices to ensure that students master content and skills. It is all about finding the “sweet spot” where technology, pedagogy, and content all work together to provide a meaningful learning experience for students. I want to teach my students to use the technology to help them conduct research to answer their own questions and guide their own learning. I want to prepare my students to use technology to develop, share, and connect their knowledge with others. I plan to use online portfolio platforms such as Seesaw or Edublogs. These online tools allow students to organize their work, show their thinking, and allows students a way to practice sharing ideas, reflection, and collaboration. These tools also provide me a way to monitor and assess the progress of my students in an organized way.

The second goal is to continue the growth of my knowledge on educational technology and pedagogical practices. To continue improving the way that I teach my students and incorporating technology in meaningful ways, I plan to keep up to date with the latest trends, research, and ideas. I plan to utilize online journals and podcasts such as Edutopia, Mindshift from KQED News, and TED Talks to keep me connected to information on implementing educational technologies and teaching strategies in the classroom. These resources help me reflect on my own teaching practices and allow me to gain new insights in rethinking how I teach in my classroom. These resources allow me to continue growing my knowledge on the way I teach and help my students become successful.

The third goal of mine leads me to expand my professional learning network. I plan to seek out new opportunities to collaborate with other educators to gain new knowledge and develop new solutions to the problems we face as educators. To help me reach out and expand my professional learning network, I want to attend professional conferences such as those held by The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) or Michigan Association for Computer Users in Learning (MACUL). Professional conferences provide me with an opportunity to connect with educational reform leaders and learn about the latest research in using technology in education. It allows me to be able to discover new ideas

and collaborate with other educators in developing solutions to help us achieve the common goal of helping students reach their potential.

As I move towards graduation and set a new course on my journey, I understand the importance of continuing my quest for new knowledge and new strategies to incorporate technology into my classroom to guide my students to success and to guide my teaching to create a successful learning environment. I must continuously reflect upon my learning and teaching to ensure that I stay on the path to achieving my goals of incorporating all that I have learned in my teaching, keeping up with the latest education research, and seeking out opportunities to collaborate and learn from other educators. This will allow me to not only be an effective teacher in my classroom, but also a valuable resource in my building for other teachers.