

Put it to Work!

Future Learning Goals Essay

As my time in the Master of Arts in Educational Technology (MAET) program is coming to a close, now is the time to *put my knowledge to work*. As education budgets get smaller and class sizes get larger, it is crucial that educators get creative in 21st century problem solving. This program has taught me that importance of adapting to rapid changes in the world and in technology to best meet the needs of our students. With each incoming class the prevalence of technology increases. Most students have been exposed to smartphones and computers since before entering elementary school. Is this the greatest distraction to education or the greatest opportunity? The task of educational technology is sizeable, but extremely important. I hope to continue to grow in my understanding of educational technology, use the best technology for student-centered instruction, and develop my students into 21st century *expert* learners. I plan on collaborating with colleagues to apply the skills obtained through this program and develop practical educational solutions.

A current goal of mine is to create an environment, which facilitates discovery-based learning *with technology* and promotes student autonomy.

My future goals start with applying what I have learned and implementing this framework and mindset in my classroom and planning. As a teacher, I am a lifelong learner. I have been a student of educational technology in this program and I will continue to work in this field throughout my career. But more importantly, I am a student of students. Achieving academic success starts with understanding our students and how to prepare them for the world they are entering. In education circles you will often hear a phrase: “We need to create 21st century critical thinking citizens”. In order to achieve this objective it is important to have the right approach. I see our current time of technological innovation and the prevalence of one-to-one devices possessed by students as a tremendous opportunity for learning. There is a world of knowledge at our students’ fingertips. I desire to not only teach *with* technology, but also to teach students *how to use* the technology. One way I would like to begin this process is through student-blogging. One such website that offers a free student blogging option is [Edublog](#). Student blogging offers a chance for students to reflect upon their learning and collaborate with others in meaningful ways. As an educator it also offers a way to measure and monitor student growth in an organized and visible way.

A second goal of mine is to create expert 21st century learners.

Students will graduate high school and, in a short time, forget a majority of content knowledge they had learned. I think a student should leave school with a skillset and understanding of how to find, analyze, and reflect upon information. Teachers often focus on training students in content and curriculum, but more importantly we should be focusing on developing scholarly skills that will transfer to real-world applications. Expert learners notice patterns, inquire about prior relationship of data, and make connections to apply knowledge to multiple circumstances. We must teach our students how to use the technology to answer difficult questions through critical thinking, analysis, and collaboration. A great deal of teaching students to be expert learners takes place in the classroom. However, I also see a tremendous opportunity for collaborating and connecting with the world through social media platforms, such as [Twitter](#). Teaching students how to link, hashtag, and connect with others through this platform will provide a collaborative skill that connects to the real world.

A third goal of mine is to become a transformational leader in educational technology and share my research and skills with my colleagues.

Many educators view educational technology as just using new and fancy tech-tools, but through the [Technological Pedagogical And Content Knowledge \(TPACK\)](#) framework, we determine that this is not the case. I have learned in the program is that educators should implement good teaching strategies *using technology*, rather than implementing technology to impress students or administrators. The best technological tools for a math class might be different from the best technological tools for an English class. The key question: *how can I use technology for student growth and meeting learning objectives* instead of the technology becoming a distraction? To continue learning, I would like to attend professional conferences relating to educational technology. I hope to connect with other educational reform leaders at such events. [The International Society for Technology in Education \(ISTE\)](#) offers an annual conference with keynote speakers and opportunities to share goals with other educators from around the world. This would be a great way to discover new ideas and *put successful solutions to work*.