

“Then and Now: A Journey in *Purpose* of an Educational Technologist”

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As I embarked upon my Master of Arts in Educational Technology (MAET) program at Michigan State University, I had many listed goals with little direction or focus. As I read through my application into the program from fall 2013, I noticed that my objectives have become more focused and much richer than once stated. As I read through my program goals, I listed many topics I hoped to investigate and research to develop technology skills. To summarize my previous goals in three points:

1. Develop expertise in “blended learning” and online instruction
2. Understand methods to develop online relationships and a virtual classroom
3. Become a leader in technology-based learning

At the time of my application and acceptance into the MAET program, I had recently been hired as a high school social studies teacher at East Lansing High School in East Lansing, Michigan. This position was unique because it offered an opportunity for me to teach a “zero hour” which was to be run as a “blended or hybrid” class. The structure of this blended course was that the class would meet face-to-face at the school at 7:00AM on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday. On Tuesday and Friday the class would meet digitally. The times the class met digitally were flexible and could be completed at any time during the day. Not only did I embark on the challenge of being a new teacher in a school district, but I also had the challenge of learning to teaching a blended class with no experience. As soon as I was hired I immediately applied to Michigan State University’s MAET program. I was eager to learn, but inexperienced in my understanding of educational technology.

As I look back at my goals, it is clear they were based solely on succeeding and developing the “zero hour blended” course I was assigned to teach. However, as I advanced in the program and learned more about educational technology I began to see a broader opportunity to improve education, specifically my teaching craft. My previous goals are narrow compared with my current goals.

Currently, my goals are broader and more *mission* focused. One thing that I have learned about goal setting and technology leadership is that transformational leaders focus on the *mission* rather than the *instrument* in technology integration. This means that technology is not implemented because it is “the new thing”, but it is only implemented to reach educational and learning goals more efficiently. This program has taught me about this through the [Technological Pedagogical And Content Knowledge \(TPACK\)](#) framework. This means using the proper technology that most effectively and efficiently meet the objective. It is not necessarily about using the latest technology, but rather a framework where content-knowledge, technology knowledge, and pedagogical philosophy meet. It involves creative thinking, repurposing tools, and effective application in instruction. TPACK has shaped my current philosophy of teaching and learning.

My current goals are:

1. Create an environment, which facilitates discovery-based learning *with technology* and promotes student autonomy.
2. Create expert 21st century learners.
3. Become a transformational leader in educational technology and share my research with my colleagues.