

Yearning for the Vast and Endless Sea: A Reflection

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When I submitted my goal statement in the fall of 2013 as a potential candidate for the Master of Arts in Education Technology (MAET) program at Michigan State University, I did not know all that the next few years would hold, but I did have my focus on a few areas of my life that would continue to develop as I pursued this degree. I found myself looking out at the vast and endless sea, not quite sure what to yearn for, but recognized the need to do *something*. As I near the end of my time in the program, I reflect on my goals as I seek to develop as a leader and educator. I desired to grow in my understanding of how to empower students in a digital age. I seemed aware at the time that pursuing this program could lead to, or at least be a part of, additional school leadership roles for me. On a somewhat practical level, I sought to add the Educational Technology (NP) endorsement to my teaching certificate. I am struck with some sense of surprise to find that certain aspects of what I desired then remain true today and that the last few years have allowed some clear developments in these areas of my professional and personal life.

I did not know at the onset that I would serve as an administrator before finishing my capstone for the MAET program. As I reflect on the leadership goal in my original statement, I can see in it the desire to do more than teach in the classroom. I looked to learn about integrating technology as a way to develop my leadership skills for roles that I had not yet dreamed of, and I am certain that there are others still to come. One thing is clear though, and that is that my interest and passion for leadership has not changed. A portion of my role as an administrator is to be certain that the teachers in my building are empowered and equipped to lead students through meaningful learning experiences. Whether this is specifically through technology, or recognizing how technology can play a role, my goal of continuing to grow into a stronger leader remains.

While I am serving as an administrator, I also continue to teach social studies at the middle school level. This integration of teaching and leadership is seen in the goal statement I wrote, and it is apparent that becoming a stronger teacher was a goal then and continues to be. I saw the ways in which technology could help me to accomplish this. What I did not state at the time was how passionate I am for the roles of creativity and play in the classroom. My desire to see strong social studies education that develops critical thinking skills and a love for people and cultures around the world has increased and has become a more focused part of my goal to see technology integrated in

ways that maximize student learning. Throughout the program, I have been able to explore ways that creativity can impact the study of history and can help make abstract ideas more concrete. I now feel more equipped to continue to lead students through research projects that utilize a rapidly-growing number of digital resources and to seek the use of technology in ways that will compliment strong pedagogy and content knowledge.

As I near the end of the MAET program, I find that this step of reflection is important for me as I recognize all that has taken place, both expected and unexpected. Without this look back, the look to the future would not be complete. I seek to continue these goals and others as they change with me and desire that my role as an educator will deepen my students' love of learning through rich and varied experiences. As I continue to yearn for the vast and endless sea of new adventures, even if I do not know what is beyond the horizon, I hope that my own yearning will lead to the same in others.