

Looking Back as I Prepare to Move Forward

Three years ago I applied for the Masters of Arts - Education (MAED) program at Michigan State University. At the time my goal was focused on filling in pedagogical gaps I felt I had as a result of obtaining my certification through an alternative licensure program, where I received a year of training during my first year in the classroom. My goals at the time were to expand my knowledge of teaching through inquiry and apply what I was learning in graduate school to my classroom practices. I wrote in my application that I wanted to gain the “tools that I need to present science to my students in a way that is engaging, exciting, and applicable to their lives.”

As I have worked towards the completion of my master’s degree I have added substantially to my original goals. Progressing through my studies, it became increasingly apparent that technology must play a role in my classroom in order to meet my initial goals. Based on this knowledge I revised my initial goals to incorporate technology. I shifted my lens to include the acquisition of knowledge that could work to enhance my teaching and my students’ learning experience. In addition to my initial goals, my current goals include integrating technology in my classroom in a way that will enhance my students exploration of scientific skills and practices. My revised goals are to utilize a variety of technologies in my teaching practice as I engage students in learning scientific processes and content.

My initial goals were formed from my continued passion for education and science. The motivation to transition out of research and into education was based strongly on my love for science and my passion for lifelong learning. These ideas are central to how I operate and have a profound influence on my actions. These goals are linked to my core beliefs and I do not anticipate that they will change dramatically as I move forward in my career and life. As I began working towards meeting these goals through the successful completion of the MAED program I also began working on my certification in educational technology. The concurrent completion of courses in science and technology helped to further refine my goals and push me to focus on the potential impact my education could have on my teaching.

Throughout my course of study I continued to explore different technologies and how to further integrate Technology, Pedagogy, and Content Knowledge (TPACK). I spent many hours reflecting on how the integration of technology into my curriculum could transform my teaching. During my reflections I made many changes to my teaching and began to see the impact that this was having on my students. The more I learned about TPACK the more I was able to see that if I wanted to provide my students with the best opportunity to develop a love of science and strengthen valuable skills, I had to make the integration of technology a priority in my goals.

As I prepare to finish up my studies in the MAED program my focus on my goals expand my knowledge of teaching through inquiry and incorporate technology into my curriculum in a meaningful way are just as strong. The pursuit of my goals will continue to drive my exploration into current and emerging technology. I will continue to use what I have learned to shape and direct my classroom practice so that my students can develop their own passion for science.