

Looking Back: Rewriting Intentions

After graduating from Michigan State University in 2009, I moved to Houston, TX where I would go on to teach fourth, sixth, and seventh grades for three years. During this time, I was wholly focused on my teaching; I immersed myself into becoming the best teacher I could be. I knew I wanted to get my master's degree, but didn't feel strongly about any particular program, so I felt I should get some years teaching under my belt before making a decision. In 2012 I moved back to Michigan, where I taught fourth grade for four more years. It was during this time that I connected with our media specialist, worked closely with her on any technology project or tool I could get my hands on, and realized that I wanted to get my master's degree in Educational Technology.

When entering the Master of Arts in Educational Technology (MAET) program, my goals had to do with technology use. I had already taught for five years, and felt I had a good handle on day-to-day classroom activities. I could keep 30 fourth graders on task and part of this was already due to the use of technology in my classroom. My students were adept at using Google Apps, we often used Khan Academy and Prodigy in math, and tools like Prezi and Glogster were used throughout various subjects and units. I was also one of the more technologically savvy teachers at the school, and often had coworkers asking for help. My goals for graduate school were based on these experiences: I wanted to improve my technology skills, and learn more technology tools.

Throughout my time as a student in the MAET program, my goals have continually evolved. I now know there is so much more to technology than simply using computers or tablets in the classroom. Each class I have taken has contributed to my growth and understanding of the role of technology in learning. As educators, we should be creating an environment fostering passion and curiosity. Students should feel comfortable to take risks, fail, and learn from every experience in a safe way. Technology integration should support all of these things; it should also be meaningful. Throughout this journey I have learned that all technology is not created equal, and what, how and when we use technology should be intentional for student growth.

When I began this program, I was a classroom teacher. My professional role has since changed, but my aspirations remain the same--I want to have an impact, sparking excitement, passion, and curiosity in both students and teachers through the use of technology and innovative thinking. My goal is for students to become creators, independent and critical thinkers, explorers, risk-takers, and innovators.

