

## From Using Tech to Integrating Tech

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As I come to the close of my master's degree, I wanted to reflect on my goals that I originally had as I entered the program. This was a little difficult to start as, full disclosure, I had completely forgotten that I even wrote a goals plan when I applied for the program. However, after being reminded by my instructor, I was able to look back at where I was when I started and determine how far I've come. I have always classified myself as a "lifelong" learner, it was stressed in nearly every education program I have been connected to. So when I applied to Michigan State's [Master of Arts in Educational Technology \(MAET\)](#) program, part of the reason was because I wanted (needed) to continue my education. I say wanted because I had a genuine interest in continuing to learn, I say needed because the state of Michigan requires teachers to continue their education. What I realize now at the completion of the program is that this has become more than the goal of "just getting a master's degree". This has been a journey from just using technology in the classroom, to being able to integrate technology in the classroom.

Prior to hearing about MSU's program, I knew I wanted to focus on technology for my master's. Since I am an educator, I also knew I wanted to focus on how to integrate technology with education. Schools in general are quickly experimenting and advancing different software, applications, and tools to assist with the learning process. I felt that if I wanted to advance myself as a teacher, I needed to adapt to the new processes and resources that could potentially assist students in ways that were not possible before. It is for this reason that my number one goal, aside from simply acquiring a master's degree which I now view with slight discomfiture, has remained unchanged. After I had heard about the MAET program from a fellow graduate, I felt that this would be the opportunity to marry technology use with education. This was my true goal from the start and it remains my true goal through the finish.

I also had a goal in mind for after I was done with my program. I originally wrote that one of my goals was to potentially move from the classroom into an instructional technology specialist type position. While I feel this goal has remained unchanged, I think I have a different motivation for it. A major goal as a teacher was to have a lasting impact on others. I even wrote as my original goal to help instructors instruct students through the use of technology. As I mentioned earlier, this goal hasn't changed, but, having been in the classroom for several years, I realize now that the support for teachers to learn about new technologies and how best to integrate them is lacking. I feel now that I have a better understanding the role technology could play in the development of the learning process, I am better equipped to fill in the gap that teachers need to go from knowing how to use technology for the sake of using it, to integrating technology to create better learning experiences.