

Setting Goals & Moving Goalposts

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Applying to Michigan State University (MSU) for their Master of Arts in Educational Technology (MAET) program meant I needed to spell out my goals for myself. This was not something I had actively done before then and it was personally the most difficult part of the application process. Reflecting on them, I see how my goals have morphed over my two years in the program to clearly articulate my motivations.

“I am passionate about learning how to leverage [technological] skills and abilities to make our schools more appropriate for the age we live in, using the tools that we already have available.” – My MSU application

The largest change with my goals is separating out the ideas into clearer goals. My first goal became **to increase my knowledge of education and technology**. I love learning about music, education, and technology. My undergraduate degree in music education primarily emphasized the music aspect, so I have focused my graduate work on the other two. My MAET work has given me a deeper understanding of technology including pedagogical frameworks, new-to-me programs, hardware, and design. I saw how my musical creativity can lend itself to educational pursuits through technology and researched pedagogical strategies.

“I want to help my peers to use the technology around them and what is around their students to foster digital citizenship and students who have the skills to compete on a global stage while the jobs they may have may not exist yet...”

I want to be a role model for the next generation and pass on these qualities that I think are vital to ensure welcoming and intelligent generations in the future.” – My MSU application

My second and third goals slowly morphed to better separate the ideas inside them. One became **to foster digital citizenship in schools to assist students in shaping the future they deserve.**

Being a digital citizen is being a global citizen. I believe my biggest strength here lies in my skills as a music educator to connect people and cultures, but this program reminded me how technology helps connect us in previously unfathomable ways. The past week alone has been humbling in the wake of George Floyd's murder and resulting protests to see how people are uniting online for a single cause.

I was too self-conscious to say it originally, but my third goal became **to be a leader to peers and students by modelling empathy and beneficial technology usage.** In my leadership course I reaffirmed my belief that empathetic leaders influence real change. My school needed to bring our classes online and my MAET knowledge helped us create classrooms that met the goals of our district and the needs of our students.

Reflecting on the past two years of graduate work, I am proud of how I have worked to meet these goals, but I know that they are not goals that can be "checked off". These are goals I will continue to strive for to influence the world around me for the positively.