

When I started my teaching career I knew I wanted to continue my education by getting my masters. I asked around to see what others had done and I heard phenomenal things about MSU's Educational Technology degree. I read into the program and fell in love with their ideas and philosophies.

When I applied to MSU I had two main goals. My first one was to gain a deeper understanding of technologies and how, when, and why to integrate them into my classroom. My last goal was to create an environment in my classroom where I can use technology to benefit my students. Looking back at these two goals, I realize that I was very narrow-minded with only focusing on the technology pieces and not everything else that goes into the classroom. I know when I applied I wanted to gain knowledge outside of technology but to only really touch on that in my original goals does not reflect how I feel now.

I want to take these two goals and change them to reflect where I am now as a teacher and a learner. The first goal was to gain knowledge around technology and how to use technology in a technology-driven classroom. I instead want to focus on how to create an environment within a technology-driven classroom where students are creative and use critical thinking to show their learning. Technology is all around us and very present in our everyday life. We need to be able to teach students how to use technology the right way, not just to google search or play games. Technology can be used as a creative tool, to dig deeper into a problem, and to help solve problems. I now see that I don't need to gain a deeper understanding of technologies but a deeper understanding of how technology can be used to push my students in different ways. Whether those different ways are creative, being critical thinking, being analytical, solving problems, or learning content. Students needs to taught skills to use technology in the right manor and have the right outlook on technology.

My second goal was to create an environment in my classroom where I can use technology to benefit my students. This again should be focused on creating the right environment and not so much on the technology piece. The technology pieces is there as an aid or tool. I want to now focus more on creating a collaborative environment in my classroom. I feel my perspective on this really changed when we switched to virtual learning and I knew how to use the technology and all the fun things to do but was struggling with the collaboration piece. It is easy to do a group project in school and call that collaboration but is that true collaboration? Why are my students working together? What are they gaining from one another? How are they communicating? By creating these type of environment in my classroom, I am setting my students up for success.

I am thankful that MAET has allowed me to grow and see education through a different lens. I have gained so much more than just a degree but gained a deeper understanding of myself as a teacher and a learner.