Future Learning Goals Essay

Introduction:
I am lucky enough to fill a very unique and unprecedented niche in education. I implement innovative initiatives and improvements into online secondary courses. My job allows me to experiment with cutting edge learning theories and integrate new instructional design methods into our current online learning program. I love the fact that my career revolves around pursuing progress and creating a better learning experience for our students. As an educator, I am fully committed to lifelong learning and self-improvement as well. After meticulously examining the current status-quo of secondary online learning and integrating new ideologies from my time in the Master of Arts in Educational Technology program, I have unexpectedly found myself with some career goals to strive for. While in the MAET program, I have become fascinated with the concept of Massive Open Online Courses or MOOCs and their untapped potential to reach secondary learners. I found their ability to deliver relevant 21st century skills to a large amount of students in a cost-effective manner to be inspiring and worthy of study. I have a goal of integrating accredited MOOCs for secondary use in the state of Michigan. However, I know that in order to achieve that goal, I will need to hone my own online course designing skills and eventually create my own Massive Open Online Course as well.

Policy Goals:
As mentioned before, I have a personal goal of seeing accredited MOOCs integrated into online secondary learning. I have a theory that implementing MOOC-styled courses in a secondary setting may positively benefit rural and underprivileged schools in the state of Michigan. MOOCs are highly scalable and are primarily focused on teaching high demand skills (Coding/Finance) or highly specialized skills (Digital Media/Algorithms) which typically both have a shortage of certified teachers. These courses can be provided for little to no cost to students which make them a perfect tool for providing lucrative and high demand skills to secondary students who would typically do not have access to accredited instructors. Coding for example, is currently a very lucrative job market, so drawing professionals to education can be a challenge. Due to this shortage, many districts do not offer these courses and their online counterparts from traditional online platforms can cost between $225-$400 per class. Many districts in the state can not afford that level of funding for online courses, therefore the skill is not taught.

Design Goals:
In order to see the goal of integrating MOOCs into secondary education through, I know that I too must become part of the design process. After speaking with professionals who create and manage MOOCs at the post-secondary level, they expressed concern about the lack of secondary certified teachers in universities where many MOOCs are created. While I would love to oversee the implementation of these programs in a secondary setting, I know that we are not there yet. I plan to begin creating and experimenting with MOOC instructional design myself in the near future as I continue to push for this program.

Skill Development Goals:
While I am fully set on designing and creating my own MOOCs designed for secondary education, I realize that one must learn to walk before they can run. As of now, I know that I must still learn more about the instructional design of MOOCs and the skills necessary to make a fully functional one. Many universities utilize Canvas as their hosting platform of choice when creation MOOCs, so I have taken the initiative to learn the basics of that learning management system. During this process I have also come to the conclusion that to independently create quality content I must also learn necessary web development skills such as HTML or CSS. I have been, and will continue to hone these skills while pursuing my personal and professional goals in regards to MOOCs.

Moving Forward:
This goal that I have developed while in the MAET program is vague and the path is still unclear, but the goal itself has been very intrinsically motivating. As of now, I have been slowly building a MOOC-styled course that is aligned to Common Core and the MI State Standards. The MAET program has provided me with the medium to explore truly new and innovative ways to approach education through digital formats. In my journey as an MAET student, I have seen my professional goals transform from a focus on my individual classroom, to my district's online culture of learning, and finally to encompass the state of education as a whole. I hope to use what I have learned in this nationally recognized program to create a better educational experience for as many students as I possibly can in my home state of Michigan.