

Goal Reflection Essay

When I first applied to the Master of Arts in Educational Technology program at MSU, I wrote the following statement on the application:

“As a current professional at Northville High School, I am seeking to improve my craft through the MAET program. I am the Online Learning Coordinator for my district with the duty of managing and implementing improvements to the Online Learning Program. I am currently in the process of pushing through some initiatives for the online program at my school. I would like the digital content to be more updated, hands on, and authentic for the online learners at my school...Furthering my understanding of effective online teaching in the MAET program will allow me to better meet the needs of my online learners and hopefully allow me to better design this transition for my school.”

Initially, I entered the MAET program to improve my practice and legitimize my qualifications as I tried to push forward fundamental changes to my district’s online learning program. My goal was to become more qualified and learn innovative instructional design methodologies for digital classrooms. At the time of my application, I personally felt that it was necessary for me to become highly educated in my field in order to fill a talent void in my district’s online instructional design area. I saw the MAET program as an opportunity to obtain the essential skills needed to create our own system of online courses rather than depending on 3rd party online course providers.

Much of my original goal on my application still holds true. I am still the Online Learning Coordinator for Northville Public Schools, I am still pushing through my original structural changes to the Online Learning Program, and I am still honing my skills as an online instructional designer. The goal I had upon entering the MAET program has held steadfast this entire time and I am still focused on creating a better learning experience for the online students in my district. However, as I gained new experiences through the MAET program I have had a shift in focus. As I was filling out my application to the MAET program, I was thinking purely about my own program and my own district. Through my extensive research and personal experience as an online MAET student, I can clearly see that there are some systemic flaws in the current application of online courses in a secondary setting. These courses are being utilized as a cheap method for recovering credit and many of the 3rd party online course providers are failing to integrate authentic and legitimate assessments into their curriculum.

In the recent year, have become more focused on improving the overall utilization of online learning in the secondary setting. Instead of being seen as a cheap alternative, I’ve been trying to promote the educational potential and innovative nature of online secondary learning. Online learning has the ability to bring high-demand skills that are scarce in secondary education to rural and underprivileged districts. I personally know how hard it is for privileged districts to hire and retain highly skilled computer science teachers, let alone struggling schools. I truly see online learning as the potential next medium of delivering high-demand skills to students and districts with few resources. To pursue this, I have expanded my goal of improving the online learning experience of my own district to include all students in the state of Michigan.