The Journey Continues
Goal Reflection Essay
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I have been taking classes towards a Master's degree in Educational Technology and I'm about to cross the finish line. This makes it a good time to look back on the goals I had at the beginning of this journey and reflect on how they have changed. First, let me give you a little background. My teaching career started quite differently than most. I graduated from college with a degree in computer science and went straight to work for Lockheed Missiles and Space Company as a computer programmer. I liked programming. I was good at it. However, I always had the feeling that I was meant to do something more than corporate work.

Several years and many life events later, I decided to try a more fulfilling career in teaching. It took me a while to weave the education classes into my home life, but eventually I succeeded.   Getting my first teaching position was difficult. I bounced around from school to school, taking subbing positions, and jobs with low hours or offering little teaching experience. Ultimately, Kent Career Technical Center offered me a position as an instructor teaching computer programming. I was thrilled; I finally had my dream job. Even now, four and a half years later, I'm still excited to be teaching there.

A couple of years ago, I began thinking about moving forward in my career. I enjoyed teaching and didn't have a desire to do anything else. Therefore, I decided to concentrate my energy on improving my teaching skills. My main goal was to increase my knowledge of teaching technology with technology. I was already quite knowledgeable about computer technology, but I wanted to be a better teacher by learning ways to teach with technology. Therefore, I chose to pursue the Master of Arts in Educational Technology (MAET) at Michigan State University.

Even though I am about to graduate, my original goal of improving my skills of teaching technology with technology is ongoing. However, through my work in the MAET program, I have re-shaped my original goal. Before taking classes, I thought that to be a more effective teacher, I needed to learn and use all the best, new educational technology tools available. Now, I know that I need to first look at the big idea of the lesson and ask myself, "What do I want my students to know?" Then I can consider how to teach the lesson and determine what technology would be most effective in

teaching it. This changes the emphasis of my goal from using technology to planning lessons that use technology.

We know that students come to school with different skills and abilities. They also come to school with different prior knowledge, motivation, self-images and persistence in the face of setbacks. I want to motivate my students to learn technology by creating an environment where they aren't afraid to fail and emphasizes that hard work pays off. It's also important to remember that some of the jobs my students will have might not even exist yet. Therefore, I need to prepare my students to be persistent problem solvers and future innovators by helping them master the thinking tools of creativity. For these reasons, I reshaped my original goal to include how I teach technology and to consider the impact this has on my students.

My goal is now to prepare students for their future by teaching them to be better problem solvers and innovators and to first consider the big picture of a lesson before choosing the best tools for teaching it and to create an atmosphere where students aren't afraid to fail and are motivated to work hard.