

Goals with a Broader Impact By Allison Birbal

I decided to look into getting my next degree toward the end of my third year of teaching. At the time, I did not have a passion for technology, and while I did use the technology we had available here and there, I never really thought it would be the focus of my master's degree. However, I had some goals for myself and after looking through various programs, I decided Educational Technology was an important field in the changing world of education and something I would want to focus on with my degree.

When I began my coursework to earn my Master of Arts in Educational Technology (MAET) I had, what I thought at the time, a good vision for what technology looked like in classrooms. I was part of a school that was beginning a 1:1 program with laptop computers and had gone through the summer trainings provided to teachers to prepare us for the school year. I also had a general interest in technology and student achievement and was interested in ways to enhance student engagement.

As part of my application process, I made a video expressing my goals for the MAET program that also included my educational experiences growing up. I had goals of wanting to be at the forefront of the changes happening in education and wanting to be a technology leader in my school. I also wanted to see student learning accomplished through various digital means and wanted to have an impact on students. Now that I am in my final semester of the program, looking back at these goals has made me realize how my goals have slightly changed. Instead of just wanting to be at the forefront of education, now my goal is to show and help other educators be at the forefront of educational technology. I had a goal of being a technology leader in my school, and now I see that being a leader in the school should not be the end target. I now have a goal of leading other teachers in general whether they teach at my school, or are part of my professional learning network and teach in a different country. Instead of focusing on using digital means as a way for students to learn, I now have goals of seeing the misconceptions in student learning, and using technology as a tool to help students apply these concepts to the real world by connecting with other students, scientists, etc. These goals will help far more than my original goals with having an impact on students.

Looking back at my decision to further my education and the goals I had set at the beginning of this journey I am reminded of a bigger picture. I am reminded that my goals do not necessarily need to be focused on here and now or even immediate future, but instead can have a broader impact.