

Teaching Educators How to Fish
Dan Hoekstra's Goal Reflection Essay

I have discovered during my decade and a half of teaching that I am driven to constantly change the way I teach in an attempt to better reach my students. This desire to improve my teaching and excel in my new role as a Technology Coach led me to pursue a [Master of Arts in Educational Technology](#) (MAET) at Michigan State University. I believed that this degree would allow me to achieve two important goals: to learn about technology tools that would allow me to become a better teacher and to empower me to share my knowledge with my coworkers to help them become better teachers as well.

I have always believed that technology can be used to build a stronger learning environment in the classroom as it can generate more excitement, boost motivation, provide personalized learning, and lead to deeper comprehension. I hoped that by learning more about the specific types of educational technology available, I would be able to directly apply that knowledge in my own teaching and technology coaching. While I was comfortable with experimenting with new technology, I felt that the time had come for some formal learning and I believed that the MAET program would provide me with technology tools, resources, and ideas that I could not get on my own. I could then use this newly gained technology knowledge to impact my own teaching as well as supporting other teachers within my school.

While I have not strayed away from these goals, my original goals have expanded. I still want to become the best teacher I can be and I still want to be a valuable resource for my co-workers. However, due to the rapid pace of changing technology, it is not possible to know about every technology tool that exists. Therefore, my updated goals do not just revolve around being taught about new technology tools, but rather the goal is to become a lifelong learner who can find a piece of promising technology, explore it,

and apply it in a way that improves my classroom.

As far as my goals related to my Instructional Technology Coach position, I no longer see myself as just a technology coach but rather I am an instructional coach. My goal is to help others understand that technology is not a standalone element but rather needs to be combined with appropriate pedagogy and a sound understanding of content. In addition, I have broadened my intended audience; while helping educators within my school is great, I have discovered that through my blog, website, Twitter, as well as through participation at conferences, I can expand my influence in the Ed Tech arena by helping educators from around the world. Finally, while I still want to provide support for my coworkers, my goal is to also teach them the skills that they need so that they can be confident when they approach technology on their own. In other words, rather than giving them fish, I want to teach them how to fish.