

If you are standing still, you're falling behind

Looking back to 2015 when I first applied to Michigan State University Master's program, I had three goals two focused on technology, more importantly gaining technology and technology tools for the classroom because my school was lacking technology immensely and one focused on developing tools to become a better overall teacher. For example using the very few, slow running mobile carts to implement programs like [Edmodo](#) and [CommonLit](#) seemed like an exhausting challenge in my classroom. Three years later, my school has acquired smart boards, chromebook mobile laptop carts, full size laptops for each teacher, and most effectively used wireless internet running throughout the whole school. In other words, my goal of gaining more technology has been met.

However, I am still working on my second goal of finding ways to give my students more opportunities to successfully use technology to increase student learning. Striving to meet this goal should prove to maximize student connectivity and learning in the classroom. This is a goal that I am still striving to meet as working with technology takes time and effort. Recently I have started to use [Google Classroom](#) to communicate with students and parents, I believe this is a step in the right direction in meeting my goal I set three year ago. The best part about my second goal is that I will never actually have to stop striving to achieve my goal or say I completed it as technology is constantly changing, therefore the ways that I can utilize technology with students is endless. The opportunities to use technology in the classroom to increase student learning just keep coming, which allows me as a teacher to try and adjust my teaching, lessons, and assessments to include updated technology which increases student connections and increases student learning. It's amazing how goals set three years ago can still be effective today, even if some parts have been met!

While my goals of the program were focused on technology, I also had goals to become a better, more experienced teacher with more tools in my toolbox to help students learn - throughout my courses at MSU I have come to

understand that technology can add to lessons, but cannot make a great lesson, it's the teacher who matters most. When I applied it was only my second year teaching and I was still trying to focus on presenting content to students, rather than focusing on students and how much they were actually learning. In order to become a better teacher I had to become more comfortable with content so I could develop better connections with students. I believe that at year five, I can honestly say that I do spend more time getting to know each student, their home life, their hobbies, their personalities, and much more. The reason I do this is to help my students learn, be engaged, and develop a love for education. One of the ways I know that I have made improvements on becoming a better teacher is making it to the top three teachers in the county last year. To me this is proof that I am making a difference in student's lives, I couldn't ask for much more as a teacher. I do know that while I have made improvements, I have plenty of room to grow. I know that some weeks my focus is directed toward my own classes and my own life - I still need to develop that happy balance. Realizing growth can still be made, allows for it to actually develop!

Take time today to set goals!