

## **Reflecting on My Own Timeline: A Look at Where I've Come From**

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As a history teacher, I see the value in looking back at the past and analyzing the journey. In history you will find new clues as to how and why a particular event unfolded or how a series of events had an impact on groups of people. In your personal and academic life, reflecting back can help you see how much you have grown and just how much you and your goals have changed.

If you had asked me five years ago about pursuing my Masters degree, I would have scoffed. I was doing my best just to stay afloat with my tough teaching schedule in the Alternative Ed program, juggling a minimum of six preps, and under taking the new responsibilities of writing my building's School Improvement Plan and supervising the state testing. In my mind there was no way I could add in another responsibility.

By 2008 I was well entrenched in School Improvement and began seeking new ways to engage students and improve our school's test scores and overall rating. At the same time, more and more of my classes were being switched to online classes. While the online curriculum allowed the Alternative Ed program to offer a larger variety of courses, I was not convinced that students were engaged with and truly learning the content. I began supplementing the online programs with my own material and began searching for new resources to help me do so.

That is when I stumbled upon the Ed Tech program at Michigan State University. I enrolled in the certificate courses as a way to both help bring new ideas to the Alternative Ed staff and renew my teaching certificate at the same time. In my first course, CEP810, I was required to write a Personal Growth Plan. In this plan, I listed some very short sighted and easily attainable goals: learn to use Blackboard, create a class website, learn ways to create or move towards a paperless classroom, etc. I was focused on tools that I could take back to my colleagues and my students. I was not focused on my personal academic goals and what changes I hoped for within myself.

After completing CEP 812 in 2010, I decided that the MAET program was definitely a perfect fit for me and I applied to the program. I loved how the classes I had already taken had caused me to think differently about technology and was eager to continue my transformation. I was no longer viewing technology as just a cool trick to engage students. Instead I was thinking about technology integrated with the content and the pedagogy. I wanted to make sure I was using pedagogy and research to present the best lessons to my students. I also wanted to train fellow staff members on how to choose which technologies to use and why they made sense in terms of the content being taught and the pedagogy behind it.

In the Spring of 2010, I created a Prezi presentation of my Professional Learning Plan and included that as part of my Masters application using a Jing recording. In that plan I outlined my goals to integrated technology based on TPACK, learn ways to use technology to differentiate learning, train fellow teachers, add technology goals to the School Improvement Plan, and create my own online materials. I also wanted to write grants for my school to help acquire new technology.

As I look back it is clear that I have achieved some of these goals and others are no longer a priority. Through CEP820, I created my own CMS using Schoology and began creating lessons on the CMS based on TPACK. I also began training teachers in my building afterschool and on professional development days. Sadly, as I prepared to brainstorm with the Alternative Ed staff on technology goals for the School Improvement Plan, the Board of Education voted to close the Alternative Ed program. Thus, my goals of adding technology to the School Improvement Plan and writing grants for the program are no longer applicable. Instead, I am looking for a new position and perhaps a new career using all of the knowledge and skills I learned through the MAET program. While many of my goals had previously revolved around the Alternative Ed program, I am now beginning to reassess my goals and my future.