

From Within to Beyond My Classroom Walls

A Reflection on My Goals

Emily Aron

In 2012, I first toured Michigan State University's (MSU) campus as a high school junior. Since elementary school, I knew that I wanted to be a teacher, but now I needed to decide on which teacher preparation program would best make this aspiration a reality. MSU's College of Education's undergraduate program and its top-ranking graduate programs made for a clear-cut decision, as I also planned to earn a master's degree in the future. Through MSU, I graduated with my Bachelor of Arts in Education in 2017, and then I started the Master of Arts in Education (MAED) program in 2020.

As I draw to the end of my graduate education, I reflect back on my goals from when I started. I enrolled in the program to broaden my knowledge base and experience new concepts in greater depth at the master's level. My goal was to **build on my teaching endorsements in Math, Language Arts, and English as a Second Language by enhancing my ability to make my curriculum more accessible, differentiated, and interactive for all learners.** In planning my graduate education, I sought out courses about pedagogy, equitable assessments, and creative teaching methods.

Within the MAED program, I pursued a concentration, or focus, in Technology and Learning to support my other goal of **integrating technology for more effective, engaging, and student-centered teaching.** Recognizing the increasing growth of

available school technology resources, I aimed to improve my students' technological abilities and my use of technology to support my classroom instruction.

After being in the program for one and a half years, these goals do remain at the forefront; however, another goal also developed and goes beyond my classroom walls. I have increased confidence in my goal of **leading my colleagues with technology integration** because I have gained experience in critically evaluating the affordances of technology tools and resources. This all makes me eager to support my colleagues in implementing educational technology to best support their students. I have been working on this goal in part through my school's professional learning communities (PLC) because it is a space where we discuss students' progress and best practices. Additionally, I will be piloting a new interactive panel next year. I will learn about the affordances of this tool and then coach my team in implementing their panels.

As I have worked on my goal of being a leader in technology integration, I have continued on my previous two goals concerning my instruction. I continue to work on creating accessible, equitable instruction, such as following the Ambitious Science Teaching framework. Through the MAED program and my PLC, I continue to grow in my abilities to teach best practices for the elementary education standards. For my technology goal, I continue to find ways to integrate technology, especially as it pertains to streamlining data collection and formative feedback. With the COVID-19 pandemic causing e-learning, I am motivated to keep learning about the technology tools and resources that will best support my students for individual, small group, and whole class instruction.

During my three years so far of classroom teaching, MSU's programs have supported my professional growth. Moving forward, I will continue to work on my goals of implementing best practices within my classroom and leading the way in technology outside of my classroom.