

Has My New Learning Changed My Old Goals?

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I applied to Michigan State's MAET program in November of 2015. At that time, I had three goals: to formalize and build on the technology-driven learning experiences I was already creating, to understand more of the theories and "big ideas" of how people learn with technology, and to improve my educational game design skills through Michigan State's "Games and Meaningful Play" courses. As I approach the end of my Ed Tech Master's program, I find that those goals have not changed. While I can look back and point to definite progress with regard to these goals, I find that the more I learn about learning, games, and interactive experiences, the more I want to learn. In other words, my goals remain unchanged, but have grown in their scope.

Obtaining my Master's Degree in Ed Tech does not mean that I have mastered the material - indeed quite the opposite. It has uncovered a large body of knowledge, philosophies, and theories for learning that I cannot possibly *hope* to master. Instead, and perhaps more importantly, it has given me a set of principles to navigate, process, and leverage new knowledge and understandings. While I have acquired, internalized, and memorized new material, I have more importantly been given ways to understand and evaluate *new* material that I have not yet encountered.

My learning thus far has also uncovered another goal - how to teach and build 21st century skills in others. The successful employee of the future knows how to find, evaluate, and use information. His or her skill set is not based on an industrial economy, but on a collaborative, fluid, and ubiquitously digital environment. Students should not just be taught how to use certain digital tools - they should be taught how to *learn and leverage* new tools that haven't even been created yet. It is imperative that students be creative, innovative, and develop abilities to flexibly learn new skills on their own. The [International Society for Technology in Education](#) (ISTE) has outlined a series of [standards](#) that address these needs. My new goal - arguably the most important one - is to develop ways of thinking about how to create learning experiences that address and satisfy these standards.

How can I accomplish this new goal? As someone that straddles the divide between "Generation X" and "Millennial," I find that I am in a uniquely ideal position to guide learners of all ages toward greater command of 21st century skills. I came to ubiquitous digital technology young enough to have a natural understanding and command of it, but old enough to still have one foot in the industrial mindset of the 20th century. I can easily shift between old and new understandings, and have a deep empathy for both.

My goals, like my learning and teaching, should remain firm but flexible. Teachers should constantly be tuning their learning experiences to reflect the future needs of their students, and learners should be constantly adapting to new skill and knowledge demands. The most important thing we can teach is how to learn.