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Now What?

This is essentially the first time in my academic career that I have had the opportunity to say, "Now what?" The initial first step was to graduate high school. Then to graduate college. Then to obtain my teaching certification. Then to complete a master's program. Those have all been checked off the to-do list. So again, now what? My development as an educator is now in my own hands. I reflected on what was most important to me and what I eventually wanted to accomplish. I came up with three things – collaboration, integration, and leadership. To me, these three build on top of each other. By collaborating with other educators that are utilizing technology in their classrooms, I can continue to improve my own skills. This could include exposure to new ideas, brainstorming solutions with others, or even receiving feedback. By continuously improving my own practices, I can better integrate technology in the classroom to support student learning. The confidence and knowledge gained from collaborating and implementing technology will allow me to be a better leader to fellow staff members. Here is how I plan to accomplish each of my goals:

Collaboration – In my own building, there is plenty of collaboration regarding instruction and improvement to student learning, but there is not much collaboration about technology usage. In order to improve my own use of technology in the classroom and to share what I know with others, collaboration is crucial to me as an educator. I plan to use Twitter to continue to network with former classmates and other educators to fulfill my need of collaboration in the digital space. The use of Twitter in this way is manageable to maintain, but can also be a very powerful resource and tool for feedback and brainstorming.

Integrate – As I was working through the Master of Arts in Educational Technology (MAET) program, I felt that I was creating powerful ideas for the classroom, but most of these were not actually implemented at the time. I continued to see other classmates post about incorporating technology in their classroom in such interesting ways – Project Based Learning, Maker Movement projects, among others. I kept thinking to myself, *"How do they have time to add these things?"* At the time, I was either a first or second year teacher in survival mode. As I enter my third year and also my third year in 5th grade, I see the possibility of implementing more opportunities for students to create. This is not to replace, but enhance the curriculum I am required to teach. I plan to use tools such as Google Drive (Docs, Slides, Sheets, Forms, Sites, etc.) or Microsoft Office 365 initially. This will allow students more options to create, more choice in how they demonstrate understanding, and allow them more opportunities to collaborate with their peers – all of which are important aspects I would like to see in my classroom.

Leadership – I am working to become more involved in my school as someone that

other teachers can turn to for help with technology or how to successfully implement it in their classrooms. Not now, but eventually I would like to work as either a building or district specialist for technology integration into curriculum. My MAET courses and coursework has provided me with the confidence and skill set to do so. I hope to continue my education through professional development – through my own school district, through the nearby University of Washington, or perhaps online training resources. I want to stay up to date on current practices and focus on what is best for student learning so that I can support my own students, my school's students, or perhaps all students in a district.

The three goals I discussed above allow me to work toward reaching both short-term and long-term goals. Now that there are no longer Sunday night deadlines to improve myself as an educator, I wanted to be realistic of what is manageable to accomplish. By focusing on what is most important to me and what I ultimately want to accomplish, I have a clear focus on where I want to grow as a professional. I chose the MAET program to follow my own passions and to also allow myself more career opportunities in the field of education. So, now what? Now I focus on collaboration, integration of technology in the classroom, and my skills as a leader to continue to pursue my goals as an educator.