

Creating Measurable Objectives In A Neverending Quest For Self-Improvement

by Bill Arnot

I applied to the Michigan State University Master's in Educational Technology (MAET) program with two goals in mind. I wanted to improve my own instruction through the knowledge and experience that I would gain in the program and I wanted to become certified to be an Educational Technologist in a Department of Defense Dependent School (DoDDS). I submitted these goals on March 27th, 2013 nearly one and a half years ago when applying to the MAET program. In that time I have work hard through the program encountering experiences I did not expect. These experiences tempered my goals for this program and forged several ways that I could measure growth in these objectives.

I sought out this program to become qualified to be an Educational Technologist in a DoDDS school and that still remains exactly the same as when I started out. The tools and skills that I have acquired in the MAET program has well prepared me for taking this position when one becomes available. Although there are few opportunities to transfer or change positions in DoDDS, I feel the MAET program has given me the edge over other possible candidates with a well rounded exploration of research, theory, leadership, and practice.

When I started this program I stated generically that I wanted to improve my own instruction, but I did not know what would entail. Going through the MAET program has shown me some deficits in my own instruction. Particularly in assessment. My time in courses like *Learning in School & Other Settings* and *Electronic Portfolios* has shown me that I can do better, that I need to do better. I have read seemingly endless articles on assessment giving me insight and new perspectives on my own assessment design. This has not only made me cognisant of my deficiencies, but also empowered to improve them.

I have also gained a lot more experience with design of lessons using technology, tempered in learning theory and research. Using techniques such as Understanding by Design I can also focus more of attention in designing lessons with formative assessment as central component of the design process. I can then take that formative assessment and use it not only to inform me of student understanding, but of my own lesson weaknesses. This allows for me to better adapt my instruction to advance student understanding.

My goal of improving my instruction remains the same, however the means of improvement is much more specific and focused on design and assessment. I now have objectives to work towards in order to realistically reach this goal. Though, perhaps the journey will be unending as I should always seek to improve my instruction.