From Learning to Creating: Future Goals for Educational Technology

My friends at work call me "Supplemental." During a professional development session, a speaker showed a clip from the film *Mona Lisa Smile* in which one of the characters had read all of the required readings before the course began as well as the "supplemental materials." Knowing my proclivity for finding new materials, researching new topics, and generally being an education research nerd, the nickname stuck. Now, I seek to live up to my nickname by continuing to grow my own pedagogy, exploring and incorporating new strategies and tools in my classroom, and, above all, sharing this knowledge and information with my fellow teachers. As I shift toward a model in which I can be of help to other educators (either in my own classroom or through teacher-training models), my primary goal to to gain a deeper understanding of the creation aspect of educational technology tools. In other words, I want to move from being a user of educational technology to a creator of resources, tools, and strategies.

When I began my work in the Master of Educational Technology (MAET) program, as mentioned in my previous essay post, my goals were largely personal. Centered around improving my own practice, I began the program seeking small changes that could be made to my classroom to better integrate technology. Now, however, I am viewing educational technology through a broader lens and considering the impact that my understand of and passion for educational technology can have on my own future and the continued education of others.

Following the completion of this program, I aim to implement my new technology plans right away. This includes establishing professional development opportunities for my colleagues and designing ways to best support their technology needs and goals. As I am lucky enough to teach in a bring your own device (BYOD) school, technology has become part of the daily vernacular of our classrooms; yet, some teachers lack the resources, time, our background knowledge to comfortably integrate technology into their classrooms. My

goal is to move into a position within my school that will allow me to support these teachers in their efforts and continue researching the best practices for technology integration.

Beyond this, my ultimate goal is to continue learning and growing as a user and teacher of technology. I hope to expand my understanding of instructional design and blend my knowledge of pedagogy with the resources I have access to in the educational technology realm. Additionally, one of my large goals in the next year is to explore the world of coding. Now that I have a solid foundation in technology use and building websites using simplistic website builders, I would like to have a better grasp on coding and the creation of digital materials. Within this space, I also hope to build my own repertoire when it comes to creating scripts or add-ons for Google. I find that understanding how add-ons support learning is an important first step, but in order to fully commit to learning and growing in educational technology I want to be able to contribute to the ed-tech world in addition to benefiting from it.

Over the past few years, I have struggled with the feeling that I exist in a sort of in-between generation. I am part of the generation that grew up using computers, but did not benefit from personal technology until high school or college. Similarly, I grew up in a time when schools were not yet teaching or offering programs for technology (beyond word processing) or coding. I feel, therefore, that I am at a disadvantage when it comes to the creation of technology. While I feel very well-versed in the use of and application of technology, I struggle when asked to achieve tasks beyond the surface level. For example, I can create a website in Weebly confidently, and can even embed information if an embed code is provided to me, but understanding the inner workings of the code is currently beyond my ken. Despite these challenges, I aim to continue my pursuit of knowledge and understanding in this area and hope to add this to my bag of tricks in the near future.

Eventually, I am confident that my learning goals will lead me to continued education in technology and continued exploration of the benefits to integrating technology fully into my classroom. As the nature of education shifts, I also look forward to opportunities to facilitate lessons or full courses online or in a blended manner. Continuing to add to my "supplemental" bank of knowledge in this space and continuing to contribute to the learning and growth of other teachers are two goals that I hope to pursue beyond the completion of my Master's degree.