What's Next?
By Sarah Kramer

Starting my Master of Arts in Educational Technology (MAET) program, I had a variety of goals: improving my teaching craft, better understanding how to use and integrate technology, and to seek a position in instructional or technology leadership. Those goals largely remained the same throughout my two years in the MAET program. I've now reached the end of my time in this chapter, and I am finding myself looking ahead at my career with a master's degree in hand. Where do I go from here? Much of that question I am still answering as I recently took an instructional leadership position which I'm still wrapping my head around. As I consider where I want to steer my career from here, a few things come to mind: a return to an in person classroom, continuing down the path of educational leadership, and moving further into the curriculum field. While those paths may seem like different branches to unique end goals rather than stops along the way to a single objective, I think that there is space to be held for each of them at once. Teachers should be lifelong learners, and there are so many options for what that can look like.

My current job is a fully remote position, which has been a blessing due to the coronavirus pandemic. It has also made me miss interacting with my elementary students in person greatly. Throughout my time in the MAET program, I have explored a body of research for improving pedagogy, student learning outcomes, and integrating technology. Inherently with a virtual Zoom classroom, I must integrate technology, but finding meaningful ways to integrate technology while working face to face with students is a unique challenge I would love to take on. I am a Google Certified educator already, and I want to continue mastering powerful educational technology platforms. Two that I am currently interested in as I think they would transform my teaching and student learning are Adobe and Canva. Canva has this "Design School" which is full of courses. I am particularly interested in Graphic Design Basics and Canva for The Classroom first!

As I look ahead, I've always had an itch, a small voice in the back of my head, that has me curious about educational leadership / administration. I've spoken to a variety of people in the educational world and done some research on my own, and I know there are many pros and cons to leaving the classroom to become part of a leadership team. I'm in a unique role right now as I teach online and lead a team of curriculum developers simultaneously. The position is one I am enjoying and growing in; I have had an interest in an instructional or technology coaching position since I had a great role model my first year of teaching. But, I have not lost my curiosity for working in a traditional assistant principal or principal role. I found this website, The Modern Principal, through their Instagram page and they have served as a practical, educational, and inspirational resource for me since discovering them. Michigan State University and the Michigan Department of Education both have resources on administration certification pathways that are helpful resources, as well.

The last avenue I've considered as a future goal is to work fully in the curriculum space, or supplements to a curriculum. Companies such as Mystery Science, PBLWorks, Scratch's Creative Computing Curriculum would be an honor to work for, or I'd even love to work with educational

programs at a place like the Grand Rapids Children's Museum. Education is an exciting field to me because amazing things happen in schools every day, but that's not the only place that children learn nor is it the only place to have a positive impact on a child's future. I currently work on creating and updating project-based learning curriculum for the company Centric Learning, and I would be very happy to stay and grow with this company in the future, as well. (The bonus is that it's fully remote, so I can take this job anywhere!) I plan to attend one of these workshops this fall through PBLWorks, along with some of my colleagues, to refine our PBL knowledge and practice. The notion that I am creating things that possibly hundreds of students could be learning and benefitting from is thrilling and incredibly powerful to me.

The goals outlined above may seem a bit disjointed, but I think that that's natural for being young in my career and having so many exciting paths to consider. Some educators want to work in a classroom for their whole career, and they are fantastic teachers who have so much to offer their students and colleagues. Other "educators" may never set foot in the classroom, but educate through coaching, parenting, counseling, mentoring, and more. Finding my way and my niche in this space is a bit daunting, but mostly exciting. I look forward to continuing to learn and grow in my instructional leadership role, as well as continuing to set and meet future goals in this field.