

Passion Quotient

I am continuously learning -- as a teacher, as a student, and in life -- and I have learned that passion is the driving force behind any goal worth pursuing. Passion must be purposefully re-energized. It is cyclical; I rekindle my passion for education as I continue to learn and as I reflect on my goals for graduate school. January of 2014 was my starting point in the Master's in Educational Technology (MAET) program at Michigan State University (MSU), and December of 2015 is where I complete this part of my learning path. I move forward with greater passion -- for teaching, for learning, for life.

As I began the MAET program, my goals were considerably more open-ended. I gave myself an invitation to explore the world of educational technology because I had reached a fork in the road. I was attempting to decide which path I was going to follow -- Was my purpose to teach students about technology? teachers about technology? or maybe to develop educational technology? I felt confident that I would just *know* once I was finished. However, within my first few courses, I built an appreciation for the MAET framework, and this caught my attention. The MAET framework supports the inclusion of Technological, Pedagogical, and Content Knowledge ([TPACK](#)). Responsible educators apply their knowledge of technology, pedagogy, and content to repurpose and innovate learning opportunities, in turn, inspiring their students' and one another's love of learning. And I realized that technology was not a "course" to be taught in isolation. I began to realize just how "connected" continuing education really is. Responsible educators are "connected" -- establishing personalized learning networks (PLN) and are in constant pursuit of fueling the (educational) fire.



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RANDY PAUSCH

My goals have become more focused since my fork-in-the-road-paths have converged. My current goal is to redefine my teaching practices using a TPACK lens. One example is that I developed a blended learning curriculum for my math students, which allows classroom learning to be "[flipped](#)." I believe I will reach my students, as well as give back to the education community, when I apply my learning within my own classroom and make a point to then share out.

When I realized that I did not have to choose a single path, my goals shifted. I could see opportunity for overlap -- that I am able to inspire learners, connect with teachers, **and** repurpose technology all within the setting of my current homeroom teaching position. This seems so obvious looking backwards, but in reflecting upon my views entering the program, my thought-process was that I would be stepping *out* of the classroom. Fortunately, this process has reinvigorated my passion and appreciation for the present. Instead of waiting until I found the right path, I have identified my goal as a right here, right now pursuit. As Randy Pausch, author of [The Last Lecture](#), so wisely advises, "*Your passion must come from the things that fuel you from the inside.*" My intention as a teacher has always been, and will continue to be, inspiring young minds to dream -- to discover their passions -- all

while fueling my own.