

The Road Ahead Looks Bright

Completing my Master of Arts in Education from Michigan State University is not only the end of a program but the beginning of many professional opportunities. Overall, this MAED program has reminded me of why I became a teacher – to help students enjoy learning and grow into the individual thinkers they will become. My job is to be the best educator I can be for my students and my MAED has influenced me to be so. To do this, I have set goals for the future to keep me in a cycle of continuous learning and growth; I know that I can't just obtain a masters degree and call it quits. These goals have been developed based on my classes and professors at MSU and on the resources I have around me to achieve them. These goals include developing curriculum, thoughtful assessments, and continued education.

One goal of mine is to get involved in curriculum development. Since my course of study has been literacy, I'm interested in implementing literacy development strategies into curriculum for classes outside of English. Often times, it seems as though English and Language Arts teachers are responsible for teaching reading, writing, and other literacy development strategies; this is problematic because kids don't read, acquire, and interpret information in the same way for all subjects. I am involved in a multi district, cross-disciplinary cohort that meets monthly to share strategies, ideas, and techniques to use in our classes. This program has inspired me to think out of the box with how I help kids to develop academic skill. This degree opens up possibilities for me to be involved in things like curriculum development that serve the interests of an entire district's worth of students, instead of just my own.

Additionally, I'm going to take time to develop inquiry-based assessments. In summer 2017, I took a Writing Instruction and Assessment (TE 848) class that helped me think deeply about the assessments I offer to my students. This assessment project was assigned to us as a way to experiment with different ways of assessing student writing. It challenged us to assess students' writing in multiple ways and helped me to look at one piece of writing in various lenses. This project helped me to look at one piece of writing through multiple lenses, and helped me in assessing writing based on the individual student and his or her areas of strength and weakness. This project requirement can act as a guide for me as I am creating assessments, and I'll use it as reference when designing and implementing writing projects for my students. As per Ann Arbor Public schools, I'm required to administer specific common assessments through the year; my goal is to do all I can to meet district requirements while allowing students exploration and discovery.

Finally, it's my goal to continue educating myself for my students' benefit. This master's program has really reminded me of how much I love learning, especially when the content helps me improve my craft as an educator. It is imperative that teachers are lifelong learners, especially as education is an ever-changing profession. Fortunately, I live in an area surrounded by universities and learning centers that offer extended learning opportunities. For example, I can (and have)

use Eastern Michigan University's many learning opportunities for teachers. This MAED experience has reminded me how important teacher learning is for student learning.

Completing this degree has been a goal of mine for three years now. Now that I'm approaching the end, I am reminded that I need to keep going with what I have learned and continue to improve my craft. By involving myself in things like curriculum development and assessment practices, I can help students succeed in authentic, challenging ways. Continuing my own education benefits students because I will always be up to date on new teaching techniques and student engagement strategies. Today's students are far different from the students of previous generations, which means their learning needs have changed with time, too. I'm looking forward to the road ahead and all the opportunities and challenges this degree offers me.