

Looking to the Future

Written By: Danielle Couture

I feel so **proud and accomplished** to be able to say, “I have now finished my Masters,” but my journey as a learner is far from over; I am just ready to start the next part of it. As we learn and grow, “who we are” is shaped by the many things we experience. The people we meet, the things we learn, the views we form, all become a part of who we are and how we live our lives. As I look to my future now and consider how my education has contributed to who I have become as a person, an educator, and a lifelong learner, I find there are a few **new dreams and aspirations** that I have formed.

In September of 2007 I graduated with my Bachelors degree in elementary education with a double major in language arts and social studies. At that time I had but one goal for the future: **Be an Amazing Teacher**... in whatever grade level or subject area I might be fortunate enough to be offered a position in.

I began my journey as a 2nd grade reading support teacher. My goal then shifted to being the best reading teacher I could be by helping my students grow and improve as readers. I have a passion for literacy, and at that time considered pursuing a Masters degree in reading, but I was still unsure. After a year in that position I was offered a full-time, contracted position teaching reading support at the middle level... and theater/drama... and introduction to computers... at the same time. This was definitely a switch, but I welcomed the **new challenges and great experiences**. Unfortunately, after two years my theater position was cut, and so I began a new adventure: 6th grade social studies.

With all of these changes and challenges, it was difficult to decide what areas I should focus on for the future. Where should I look to improve? What should my personal learning goals be? What would be the **best for my current and future students**? What would be applicable and beneficial to multiple grade levels and subject areas should my position change again? Ultimately, I chose the MAED program at **Michigan State University** because I felt it held most of the answers to these puzzling questions about my future. Now, in 2014, my future seems clearer and with the completion of the MAED came some new goals for the future!

As I look to the future now, one thing I'd like to continue to grow is my knowledge and application of technology both in and out of the classroom. Before participating in the online MAED program I considered myself to be somewhat “computer illiterate” (for lack of a better word). I tended to shy away from projects with colleagues or students that were technology based, and I was very nervous as to whether or not I had the technological skills to be successful in a Masters program that was offered completely online. Now that I have completed the program, my **confidence in my technological abilities has grown exponentially**. I am eager to share my new classroom website with my students and parents, implement new interactive technologies in my classroom, and I have even offered to help my colleagues create classroom

websites and online web-portfolios of their own. I can't wait to attend more technology-based professional development trainings on build on my newly developed skills (something I never thought I would say).

Another new goal that I have for the future is to continue my quest for knowledge by continuing to take classes. **Teachers are role models**, and one thing that I'd like my students to see in me is that I am a lifelong learner. For my next journey, I think I'd like to pursue an SE/LD (Special Education/Learning Disabilities) endorsement. Participating in multiple literacy classes throughout the MAED program allowed me to see in depth that many students, both special ed. and general ed., face difficult challenges on a daily basis that may drastically hinder their learning in all subject areas, especially in the areas of literacy. While my Masters classes did much to draw attention to these challenges and offer strategies to help students overcome them, I still feel **there is much more I could learn** here. Having a special education or a learning disabilities endorsement does not mean that I have to teach special education. To me it simply means that I will have the skills to better **help all of my students** in need of additional support.

We can never know for sure what the future will bring, but we do know that it's coming whether we're ready or not. My ultimate goal since first graduating with my Bachelors degree in education has not changed: **Be an Amazing Teacher**. I just feel much more confident now in which paths I need to take to get there...