

Every New Beginning Comes from Some Other Beginning's End

While my time at MSU is coming to an end, my educational journey is far from over. I went into education because of my thirst for knowledge. I view education as a gift, and I know that not everyone is fortunate to receive it. While I do not believe learning is confined to the four walls of a classroom, I am thankful for all of the wonderful opportunities I have had in my educational journey thus far that have given me the knowledge and tools to unlock the world around me. As John Dewey once said, "Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself." Every day we are learning new things by watching others, through discovery, and our own personal inquiries. Thus, I see myself as a life long learner and chose education as my profession in hopes of igniting that fire for knowledge in all of my students.

The past two years I have managed to work full time, pursue my masters, as well as take care of my brand new baby. Though the last couple of years have not always been easy, I can definitely say they were not wasted. I have not only learned a lot about teaching, but myself as both a student and a person as well. When I look forward, I am excited for more freedom both in how I spend my time and self selected inquiry. However, this does not mean I will stop pursuing knowledge, but instead the mode will be different. My goals for myself are to make sure that I am staying on top of the latest research in best practices so that I don't ever fall into a routine, and to become a leader in my school.

Writing my essay about looking back on my time in the MAED program, I realized that I have not taken enough time to reflect on my learning and application of this new knowledge inside the classroom. Taking one class at a time, I struggled to see the big picture. I plan on

taking the next year to bring everything together to figure out how I can change my teaching/classroom to incorporate it.

My goal for entering the MAED program is the same goal I have leaving the program; meeting the needs of all of my students. In order to be able to do this, it is important that I continue to challenge myself and stay current on research in best practices so that I can feel confident that I am doing what is best for my students. As the world around us is constantly evolving, so are our students. I need to keep up with them so I am not left behind. I am very fortunate to work in a school district that provides a lot of professional development to its teachers. I also have administrators that respect and set high expectation for me. They are encouraging me to be a leader and give me plenty of opportunities to further myself in hopes of helping my colleagues. By taking on the role of a leader, I am very motivated to make sure I am attending every opportunity given to me as well as talking to other teachers in the district to learn from them.

Integrating technology into my education, as well as my students, is a goal I will continue to pursue throughout the course of my career. Completing my masters online has not only provided me with a plethora of technology resources, but increased my confidence in using technology as well. I am now thinking of how I can incorporate technology into the curriculum to reach my 21st century learners. In addition, the rising popularity of social media networks and blogging in recent years has had a great impact on my instruction. It provides a way from teachers all over the world to collaborate and share great lessons and assessments. With the extra time I will have once I complete my masters, I plan on continuing to utilize these resources as a way to help motivate and create lessons to best meet my students' needs.

While this time in my life can be seen as an ending, I like to look at it as a new beginning. I have spent the past 25 years pursuing an education in a formal setting. I have learned a lot, but the greatest gifts I have received are the skills and the desire to make myself a better person and teacher through education. Give a man a fish and he eats for a day; teach a man to fish and he eats for a lifetime. I feel that my life thus far has been preparing me for this time in my life. I am excited for what my future holds and am confident that anything is possible.