

Upon beginning my masters program, I was really starting to feel confident in my teaching abilities. I had received a great undergraduate degree from Michigan State and had been teaching for 4 years in a great school district. However, as a first grade teacher there was a lot of focus on language arts, especially reading instruction. While I saw my students succeeding each year, I still felt that my reading instruction had room for improvement. I wanted to pursue my masters in hopes of keeping up to date on current research in reading development and gain new knowledge to make me a stronger teacher. Two years later, while reflecting back at my time in the Masters of Arts and Education at MSU, I realize that I not only achieved my goal, but also walked away with so much more.

My time at MSU has given me a greater sense of confidence in my reading instruction. I am walking away with a greater depth of knowledge of reading assessments and instruction. I now feel stronger in analyzing my students' assessments to personalize instruction to best meet my students' individual needs. Through my course work I have also discovered new approaches to instruction that I have not only utilized in my classroom, but have shared with many colleagues of mine. My increased confidence and abilities has helped me to be seen as a leader in the eyes of my administrators and colleagues.

While my goal was to gain knowledge in the area of Language Arts, I did not expect to walk away with a much greater understanding of effective classroom management and technology use in the classroom. Two of the courses I selected to take focused on classroom management. These courses gave me a lot of great techniques and resources to help me be more proactive in my

management approach as well as providing me with tools to help my students with behavior problems. In addition, all of the courses I took utilized different forms of technology to collaborate with my classmates and present information. These are all programs that I would have never heard about or even attempted had it not been for my course at MSU. I have already found myself incorporating them into the classroom much to the liking of my students and parents.

While my time at MSU is coming to an end, the desire for me to continue learning and bettering myself as a teacher has not. It has inspired me to continue researching and learning all I can to be more of a leader in my school and a more effective teacher to all of my students both now and in the future.