

Onward to the Path of New Discoveries

By: Sarah Everett

It is surreal to me that it has already been two years since I began my master's program; it is even more surreal that I am at the final stage of obtaining my master's degree. I know that the teaching and learning that was provided to me in this program has only made me a stronger educator and also has reaffirmed the importance of maintaining the role of a *life-long learner*. Especially as an educator, learning never stops, but merely evolves as time and experiences occur. I plan to do just that. As a life-long learner, I plan to continue to master my teacher's craft and to set goals for myself so my teaching philosophies and teaching itself continuously evolve; these goals are both short-term and long-term which will benefit me greatly. I also plan to continue to play a vital asset in my school's learning community and to also find new ways of making myself more reliable to my colleagues, my students' parents, and most importantly, my students.

Regarding my short-term goals, I plan to continue to attend and lead workshops both for my colleagues, my students, and their parents. These workshops will focus on a range of skills including: extra assistance with specific content and strategies/ methods to authentically teach it, best testing practices, ways to effectively infuse technology into the classroom daily, providing ways for parents to become more involved with their students' education, and professional development for staff. As I moved through the Master of Arts in Education program, I learned a plethora of knowledge, knowledge that must be shared with my school community.

In terms of the content that I learned during my two years in the Master of Arts in Education Program *concentration in math and science*, a huge focus was not only understanding the content, but also understanding how the content's teaching and learning has changed and also how students' thinking has shifted. A major emphasis is for students to not only being able to answer a math question or perform a scientific investigation, but more importantly, to have a clear understanding of how they came to that conclusion. This goes into having a strong background knowledge and mastery of the concepts that they were presented with. With the Common Core Curriculum being fully implemented in the fall, it is essential to have a strong understanding of what this curriculum is and how it differs from the way we have been teaching. I am happy that the courses that I took provided me with a strong understanding of how teaching will look with the Common Core curriculum. This again will benefit me greatly as educator once August comes.

Along with my math and science concentration, I was also presented with many opportunities to learn about and practice different types of technology to utilize into the classroom. Especially in TE831 – Teaching Subject Matter with Technology, I was provided with a strong understanding of the TPACK Theory, the

theory of how technology, content, and pedagogy should be evenly dispersed into teaching to make it authentic and meaningful. This understanding will continue to make my teaching strong. In this course, I learned about a surplus of technologies. These included: Prezi, Weebly, Edmodo, Glogster, Popplet, Wikispaces, InstaGrok, Glify, Google Hangout, and much much more. Though I have already used many of these technologies into the classroom, I plan to continue to infuse them to equip my students for 21st century learning and achievement. These short-term goals will continue to enhance both my teaching craft as I enter my fifth year of teaching and also my abilities as a member of a learning community.

In terms of long-term goals, though I plan to stay in the classroom for a long time, eventually I would like to go back to school, possibly get another master's or take the great leap and get my Doctorate. What my concentration and focus entails though has not yet been decided. A part of me has always wanted to become a school counselor, since the 5th grade. Just like with teaching though, the roles of the school counselor has shifted so whether I decide to go on that path will depend on whether my life experiences lead me to it. Another role that I have taken on in the last two years has been leading workshops for my colleagues, both in Common Core understanding among other essential areas of continuous growth needed as an educator. Being in this leadership role has also inspired me to possibly take a position as an instructional lead teacher or possibly one day becoming an administrator; a role that still requires much teaching experience and knowledge but allows opportunities to assist other educators with mastering their teaching craft. While all of these ideas have been circulating my mind, I have plenty of time to make the best decision.

I am ecstatic knowing that I am at the final stretch of receiving my Master of Arts in Education through Michigan State University. A lot of time and effort has been put forth to make this achievement possible. Though my learning is far from over, I will take the knowledge that I received at MSU to enhance my teaching and learning in both my school and classroom. I plan to continue to challenge myself with new goals and obstacles to accomplish. I am eager for what life has in store for me and know that the paths that I choose to take will be most beneficial in creating the best *me*.