

Lessons Learned: The importance of staying the course

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When I began my journey into education it was met with a lot of pushback from educators, friends, and even my family. Most wondered what the future would hold in regards to how teachers were going to embrace new technologies encouraged in the classroom, as well as a overcoming a seemingly large number of students struggling with literacy issues. It wasn't until I poured over the findings from my beginning of the year assessment that I began to understand the concerns of others. Looking at my results and thinking about my students that year I remember sitting at my desk thinking, "What more can I do?"

This question almost haunted me as I looked out into the eyes of my classroom after that day. How could I better help students with such a wide-range of skill sets grow as a class and individuals? How could I aid in bringing them a variety of lessons that would not only grow them as learners, but prepare them for the future? Understanding that differentiated learning processes incorporate all of these concepts, I knew that I would need to begin building my own "toolbox" to better serve all my students. It was with this that I began my journey into the world of education and entered the MAED program at Michigan State.

Overall, my goal in entering the program was to learn more regarding literacy practices, teaching students online, and post-secondary education. I knew with these three powerhouses as my main focus, I could help students that were struggling in their reading and writing, as well aid them in becoming a 21st Century student.

Keeping to my original goals, I began seeking out courses within each of these fields of study in search of those that would be most suitable for my student base. In doing this I began to employ varying concepts in literacy that exposed my students to new ways of thinking about texts. I began a "Flipped Classroom" movement and using technology in ways that hadn't been used at the middle school level. I felt like I was doing "more", not just in my lesson planning and instructional delivery, but in building students that would be well-rounded and ready for the future of education. I was achieving my goal and giving my students the type of experiences that would help them further their own education. I felt alive in the classroom! This feeling solidified the need to stay on my intended path.

When I think of the beginning of my journey until now I am so glad that I stayed the course and used both the concerns of others and my own guide me through this process and give me the ability to see how I could better use continuing education to help my students. Through working towards my goal I have been able to find new and useful concepts that have heightened my teaching skill sets, as well as aid my students in growing their knowledge base.