

A Glimpse of the Past

It was enlightening to have the opportunity to read my professional goals I wrote in the fall of 2012 when originally applying to the Master of Arts in Education Program at Michigan State University. I found my goals to be very general, lacking any sort of emotion or passion. It is also evident from the abundant amount of goals I included in my statement that I had a difficult time narrowing in on exactly what I hoped to get out of the MAED Program. To summarize my essay, I included the following professional goal and short term goals:

Overall Professional Goal:

- 1) To become a highly accomplished special education teacher who will ensure students with special needs achieve their utmost potential.

Short Term Goals:

- 1) Improve my ability to meet my students' academic and behavioral needs.
- 2) Acquire new methods to increase students' decoding and comprehension skills, and learn new ways to teach the writing process and strengthen overall writing abilities
- 3) Strengthen my technological knowledge and skills as applied to teaching.
- 4) Enhance my ability to be a collaborative member and asset to my school.

Needless to say, I anticipated getting a lot out of the MAED Program from the beginning! Upon applying to the program, I had recently finished my first year of teaching special education in North Carolina which was undoubtedly a learning experience. After an overall successful first year, I reflected on my strengths and weaknesses as an educator and felt I

needed more of a solid foundation of ways to meet the needs of my struggling literacy learners as well as ways to address behavior concerns within the classroom. As a result, I decided to focus on a literacy education concentration with a secondary concentration in special education.

Being in my first few years of teaching in North Carolina, I had to create Professional Goals which were monitored and assessed by my principal throughout the past three years (2011-2014). I was pleasantly surprised my goals aligned closely with the goals I created for the MAED Program. While they were more concise and specific targeting specific skills, my overall goals as an educator stayed generally the same.

After reflecting upon my essay, I am proud to announce I have achieved my professional goals I set out on mastering when applying to the program. The courses I took during my completion of Michigan State University's Master of Arts in Education program have granted me with a wide range of literacy and special education knowledge. Through the literacy education courses, I have strengthened my ability to differentiate my instruction, meet the needs of my diverse literacy learners through research based interventions, and assess their growth. The special education courses have granted me with more in depth knowledge meeting students' needs in the inclusion setting through co-teaching and addressing behavior concerns through interventions and behavior plans.

Although I am coming to an end of the MAED program, I believe this program has not only benefited me as an educator but prepared me to take on more of a leadership role as well within my school district. Overall, I am extremely grateful for the knowledge and learning experiences I have gained throughout the MAED program!