

# Lifelong Learning

*What's Next After the Master's Degree?*

Written by: Julie Terry

So what exactly happens when I complete that final paper? Submit that final project? Finish this website? To be honest, I don't know. Only time will tell, but I do know that I have learned a great deal throughout this journey and definitely have plans and goals to accomplish now that I am finished with the MAED program.

First and foremost, I want to continue to develop my skills in becoming a master teacher. This begins with continuing to find opportunities to learn. Throughout this master's program, I had discussed my love of learning with several classmates. This remains true today and the term "life-long learner" has never made more sense to me. I believe that every person should strive to be a life-long learner. The constant striving to become better in your work, whether it be teaching or a different career path, is a necessary quality in today's fast-paced and ever changing world. I am confident that after my masters program is completed I will begin to seek out other opportunities for professional development in both the areas of literacy as well as others.

Being an elementary teacher, literacy is always something that I will be passionate about. The majority of my master's level work was centered on literacy, but having taken TE 831, a class focused on technology use in the classroom, I have a new passion for increasing the use of technology in my classroom. I plan on attending professional development opportunities that focus on technology use. I am really interested in getting the students involved in creative uses of technology. In order to accomplish my goals for technology, I plan on increasing my knowledge of the different types of tech tools that are available to me.

Along with increasing my use of technology in my classroom, I want to make a stronger effort to engage in a professional learning community with my colleagues. The structure of Michigan State's online program allowed me to engage in dynamic conversations with other teachers about subjects we were passionate about even though we didn't set foot in a classroom. I believe that the innovative use of technology and the effective structure of peer discussions have given me a unique experience and allowed me to learn a tremendous amount from my peers. I do not believe that this type of learning can only happen in a formal classroom/school setting and it is one of my future goals to do this more frequently.

Perhaps the things I am most excited about doing are my plans for the upcoming year. I am anxious to get back into my classroom and test out all my new knowledge. The fast-paced life of a grad student and full time 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher makes it difficult to truly reflect and incorporate my newly learned skills into daily teaching. I can't wait to put what I learned into action. I also plan on continuing to be an active member of our

school improvement team and perhaps taking on a few more leadership roles in our school.

Another, thing I am excited to be able to do is I having more time to fulfill my personal interests. I am looking forward to doing more baking, reading for fun, biking, and spending more quality time with my family.

It will be a fun experience “rediscovering” who I am when I am not a full time student! However, as I mentioned previously, learning is never really done. If I can sum up my master’s program in just a few words it would be: The more time you spend learning, the more you realize how much more there is to know. I am excited to see where my journey takes me down the road, both in my teaching career and personal life.