

Future as a Learner

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One of the reasons I became a teacher is because I possess a genuine love of learning. Each and every school year, I hold myself to a rigorously revising my curriculum to best meet the varied needs of my students. I wholeheartedly believe I will never achieve personal or professional perfection. This is not because I'm apathetic or incapable; it's simply because there is always room for improvement. While I'm a little sad to see my journey to attain a Master's degree come to an end, I know this will not be the end of my betterment process. All of the valuable resources and knowledge I've gleaned from this learning experience will only propel me further into my next learning opportunities.

Like many in the MAED program, I started my coursework with ED 800. Within this course, we explored the trajectory of education from past to present. Notably, we spent a substantial amount of time exploring the setbacks and merits of modern education. By far, one of the best attributes of modern education is a newfound appreciation of life-long learning. A large reason why life-long learning is so widely accepted and embraced today is that modern technology allows easy access to an abundance of resources on a multitude of topics. I feel fortunate that tools like television, cell phones, computers, public libraries, and the internet offer me such boundless amounts of information.

My experiences in MSU's fully online degree program have really opened my eyes to the different avenues for learning. At first, I was a little leery about receiving my degree through a completely online program. I questioned the depth of information I could absorb. I wondered what kind of relationship could be formed with colleagues and professors without face-to-face interaction. I even contemplated whether or not an online degree would be taken seriously. Nevertheless, I decided to give online learning a chance and I'm really glad I did. I've realized that online learning can be just as meaningful as class lectures and discussion if the appropriate diligence and expectations are maintained. In the future, I will be much more open to the possibility of more online learning courses.

The online Master's program has really opened my eyes to the abundance of resources and networks available through the internet. I know one of my biggest aids in continuing my education will come from organizations who post resources online like TED, Michigan World Language Association, Common Core Standards, Reading Rocket, and PBS. I'm grateful that colleagues throughout several of my courses have shared via online discussions their most useful online resources and I've kept a running tally which I expect to use in furthering my education. Not only will I be consulting a host of websites to stay current on "best practices," but I have also established a great network of peers who I feel able to tap into when I have a curiosity. Through several group projects, I've formed relationships with several other graduate students whom I know would be available and willing to answer questions or help me seek out further information.

I have always been passionate about promoting the literacy of my students. Here, at the completion of my Masters program, I find that I am just as committed, if not more so to the betterment of my students' literacy. My skills and abilities when it comes to diagnosing, supplementing, treating, and assessing student literacy are so much stronger; however, I feel like I still have a lot of work to do.

As multiple courses have suggested, new and improved “best practices” are released on a continual basis. There are countless studies being conducted on a yearly basis. I would be doing a disservice to my students if I did not keep tabs on the latest and greatest literacy strategies so I plan on maintaining a close eye on literacy developments. Luckily, TE 846 has armed me with some great means of doing this through online publications and textbooks.

Another goal I have for my future is incorporating more explicit instruction on the “new literacies.” Previous to my graduate coursework, I only had a basic understanding of what “new literacy” entailed. Now I have a much firmer understanding of what it is and what it means for the future of my students. I no longer always view cell phones and tablets as the enemy in my classroom. I have realized that, as an educator, I have a responsibility to embrace and use these avenues for “new literacy” to my advantage. Because these “new literacies” are developing so fast, in order for me to be effective, I have to stay current on the latest technological trends. So far, I have taken small steps to make technology an integrated part of my classroom by having my students design small websites, record conversations, create prezis, etc; however, I wish to make huge strides in the implementation of technology and explicit teaching of “new literacy” within the coming years.

While all of these informal learning experiences will certainly bolster my knowledge base, I do still plan on continuing my education through formal means as well. Though I may not start this journey until next year, I have firm plans to attain a second master’s degree or doctorate degree. The concentration of this degree is still up for debate, however. I’ve learned to be flexible when it comes to career changes so I’m keeping an open mind. The top two choices at present are Higher, Adult and Lifelong Education or French. This choice depends heavily on whether I plan on remaining in the world of secondary French education or move to the sphere of adult education. Whichever concentration I decide upon, I plan on pursuing it with same diligence and determination as I’ve maintained throughout my undergraduate and graduate studies thus far.