

Stephanie Skinner  
Goals Statement Reflection

It's hard to believe that I am at the end of the Michigan State University's Masters in the Art of Education (MAED) program. Looking back at my goal statement that I wrote with the hope of becoming a second-time student at the best university I can think of, I feel mostly satisfied with where I am in terms of my goals after years of studies. Thinking back to the troubles of being a second-year teacher when I applied for this program to the level of confidence I feel as a fourth-year teacher, I know I have grown as an individual and an educator. I know, as well as many other educators, that being a teacher is a lifelong process of learning from each experience that I encounter. The courses I took in the MAED program were no exception!

The first goal that I wrote about in my original goal statement was that I wanted to be well versed in the curriculum I am responsible for conveying to my students. At the time of writing the goal statement, I was halfway through my second year of teaching, already in a second grade level since the beginning of my career. My first year of teaching was spent educating third grade students, meanwhile learning the different ins and outs of third grade curriculum. When I applied to the MAED program, I was in a new building in my district, trying to keep up with fourth grade curriculum and make sure my students were learning while I navigated another set of new material. Obviously, now in my third year of fourth grade, I have more confidence in my abilities and have a better handle of what I should be teaching my students. However, I feel that I will absolutely continue to improve my knowledge of the things I should teach my students so that they gain the most knowledge possible through my instruction. The new Common Core State Standards also mandate new curriculum that I will have to learn and create units and lessons in order to deliver the material effectively.

The second goal I made for myself in the beginning of the MAED program was to become a better reading and writing teacher for my students. The subjects of reading and writing are so incredibly important for young children to gain experience and growth in, and I had felt that I was weak in the areas of teaching reading and writing. My hope was that the graduate courses I would be taking in the MAED program, as well as the professional development and mentoring provided by my district, would help me to improve my abilities. Now, looking back at the journey I've taken, I do feel that I have become a better reading and writing teacher. I was not able to take any writing courses in my program, but several courses have touched on best practices of teaching both reading and writing. One course in particular, Accommodating Differences in Literacy Learners, was very helpful in helping me understand the various aspects that go into literacy learning. Experience in my classroom has also taught me more lessons in best practices than I can count!

The last goal I had set out to achieve was to become a more confident teacher. At the time of applying to the MAED program, I had been dealt a rough year of parents doubting my abilities because of my inexperience and young age as a second-year teacher. Because of the lack of experience I had, I doubted myself, which directly influenced my abilities to maintain a positive educational environment. I definitely feel that the amount of knowledge I have gained through the courses I've taken, mixed with the experiences I have had since the time I applied to MSU for graduate studies, have boosted my confidence and helped me become more assertive in my classroom practice, both with students and families.

As a result of the time and effort I have put forth into furthering my education through the MAED program, I feel that I have achieved my goals of being a continuing learner, a better reading and writing teacher, and a more confident teacher. I hope to continue my educational journey for the duration of my career!