

Looking Ahead and Opening New Doors

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I started teaching in August of 2009 and have enthusiastically looked towards the future since the very beginning; whether it's updating math lessons during summer vacation, planning volleyball enrichments that I hope to one day fit into my schedule or even just thinking about new technology that I plan on using in my classroom this upcoming school year. I push myself to learn and strive to do my best on a daily basis, but most importantly I make it my goal to have fun while doing it all. My ultimate goals for the future are to keep having fun all while learning new technologies, incorporating those technologies into my classroom, returning to coaching volleyball, and of course to remain a life-long learner while being the best teacher I can be.

I am extremely proud to be almost done with my master's degree. Two years ago, starting an online degree program seemed very intimidating. It had been three years since I had taken any classes and I only had taken two online classes during my undergrad. I loved the program that Michigan State had to offer and decided to embark on the challenge. I am so pleased to have made that decision, not only have I learned about sports leadership and coaching, using technology in the mathematics classroom, and adding creativity to my teaching and learning, but I've learned about all of them while using new technologies. Taking online classes created new challenges that I embraced and it is extremely important to me to keep up on any new technologies. From technology conferences and professional development opportunities to Twitter chats, Pinterest pages, and other educators' blogs, I will keep expanding my repertoire of technologies to use in both my personal and professional life.

I cannot wait to continue pushing both myself and my students in the classroom. I have been inspired to continue introducing new and useful technologies to enhance my students' learning. One of my goals for the next school year is to have each of my students start their own blog. I envision them posting on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. Some possible topics include a summary of our in-class lesson or an article, a process journal about an internal assessment (IB math exploration paper), a journal about a Desmos.com math art activity, or even a summary of an exciting event at school. This activity is two-fold, I want them to be comfortable trying out new technology, to be able to learn how to navigate through something different than what they're used to and secondly to get more comfortable writing about math. I'm sure that both my students and I will keep discovering new ways to integrate technology into the classroom; I'm always excited about the endless possibilities.

One of my other goals is to return to coaching volleyball. I had the privilege of coaching middle and high school volleyball for 5 years before I started teaching. I knew I wanted to be a volleyball coach before I knew that I wanted to be a teacher. Volleyball has been a passion of mine since I was in 1st grade and started playing in 4th. I never saw the connection between the volleyball court and the classroom until I started my sports leadership and coaching classes, specifically Psychosocial Bases of Coaching Athletes. I was able to make numerous connections between being a teacher and being a coach. I cannot wait to return to coaching to be able to utilize everything that I've learned. I would love to coach either a freshman or junior varsity volleyball team and eventually work my way up to coaching varsity volleyball. Until I can return to coaching, I want to keep introducing my students to the sport. I've started a boy's powder-puff volleyball game at my high school and play regularly with a group of students after school. I also plan on starting a volleyball enrichment where I will be able to spend a couple of weeks teaching students how to play volleyball, many of whom have never played before.

From technology in the classroom to volleyball in the gym, I am excited to see what my future holds. I know that I will keep striving to achieve my goals and continue to remain a lifelong learner. I owe it to myself, my students, and my future students.