

Seeing the Big Picture

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"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." Maya Angelou.

When I started my Masters of Arts in Education (MAED) in August of 2012, I had been teaching for three years and truly loved my job. However, I never completely agreed with the outlook of the quote above. I agreed with the "made them feel" part, however, I was convinced that students would graduate, go to college, and still remember some of the awesome math lessons we learned in class or the words of wisdom I tried to instill on them. Now that I am in my fifth year of teaching and have completed two years of my Master's program, I can honestly say that Maya Angelou had it right.

I always knew that I wanted to go back to school to further my education; I considered myself a lifelong learner (and still do) and I wanted to instill in my students, the same passion for learning that I possessed. After figuring out the right time to go back to school, I tried to focus on my passions to help guide me towards the right Masters program. Now that I am starting my third and final year of the MAED program at Michigan State I know that I made the right decision.

My goals when starting the program were simple: I wanted to stay current on all of the technologies that are available to teachers, I wanted to motivate students, to support their efforts, and to consistently set high expectations for them in the math classroom, and I wanted to continue to pursue my love of volleyball and coaching. I wanted to be as proficient and confident on the volleyball court as I was in the classroom. Coaching was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.

While I am happy to say that I still have the same goals as when I started, my philosophy about them has changed. I thought about teaching as a day-to-day job; I wanted to make sure each day was fun, interactive, and thought provoking. While I still strive to have engaging lessons, I have been learning more about the process of both teaching and learning. Whether it's in the classroom, on the volleyball court, or in the real-world, I want to show my students how to not only learn, but to appreciate the life they have been given. I am focusing more on the big picture, learning how to encourage my students to become life-long learners themselves. I want my students to remember not only how I made them feel, but that I know they are capable of whatever they put their minds to and to keep striving to be their best. All of these are qualities that I will continue to work on myself, both in my personal and professional life.