

Goals: Now vs. Then

By: Jessica Cutler

When I completed the Teacher Preparation Program through Michigan State in 2015 I knew I was not done with my education. My first year of teaching was challenging, rewarding, and successful. But as many teachers do, I began to ask myself how could I be better? How could I serve my students better and be the best teacher I can be for my students?

Reflecting on my application for graduate school I was eager to become more knowledgeable in the area of literacy. I was a math focus in my undergrad, and have always had a high confidence in teaching mathematics. Math always came natural for me and is evident in my teaching. English concepts have always taken more effort and reflection throughout my educational experiences. While teaching and reflecting on my teaching I wanted to be able to provide better resources and tools for my students to succeed in literacy. The push for literate and proficient students to both read and write is highly emphasized in the classroom, as it should be. With the experiences I had in the classroom I knew I needed more tools to serve my students more effectively.

As I have progressed through my graduate courses I have learned that my goals to teach literacy more effectively and efficiently have been constantly in the back of my mind. The courses I have taken have already served so many benefits to my instruction and have aided in continuing my goal of becoming a more efficient and effective literacy teacher. One of my courses helped me to evaluate the phonics level of a student and gave me tools to help them improve. All of the tools I have gained from my literacy courses have also helped to reassure me that I have been serving my students appropriately and areas I could improve. The school I work in has a very transient population with many students who are new to the United States, and have

limited English experiences. This influenced my decision to enroll in a course that focused on English as a second language. This course has influenced my instruction for not only the students who speak English as a second language, but for all of my students. English is a difficult language to learn. Students in early elementary school benefit from many tools to build their understanding of our language. Experiences with ELL students and students who struggle in areas of literacy have also aided in working towards my continual goal of being a more effective and efficient literacy teacher.

I continue my goal to become a better teacher-in all areas-for my students, especially in the area of literacy. I personally believe education is always changing and the content students are required to know is always becoming more challenging in the goal of higher education and becoming career and college ready. Students deserve great tools and resources to aid in their success. My current goal is to be an educated teacher who can provide resources and tools to succeed with a passion for learning is a key role in their success!