

The Future is Up to Us

By Jessica Cutler

Throughout my undergraduate and graduate programs I have had the opportunity to take courses which challenge my learning and help me to become more knowledgeable in various educational topics. I have taken various science, math, social studies, and literacy courses that have affected how I teach students. Those classes have also improved the effectiveness of the instruction I provide. I have always enjoyed being a student as it provides a safety net of knowing that I will always have something to challenge me. When I enrolled to complete my Master of Arts in Education, I knew I would have access to new tools and materials that would aid in becoming a more effective and efficient teacher. Now that I am coming to the end of my program, I think about all of the tools and strategies I will be taking away and implementing into my teaching. I also wonder what the future will hold for my education. Education is constantly changing and adapting with new standards and expectations for students. As these changes continue to occur, educators need to learn new tools to be the best they can for their students.

I would like to focus on a few future goals that will continue to be relevant in the classroom and will aid in the ever changing world of education. First, I would like to become better at implementing technology into instruction in more effective ways. Second, I would like to become a better leader in amongst coworkers in ways to improve instruction. Finally, I would like to implement small group instruction more effectively. These three goals will aid in becoming an overall well rounded educator.

Technology is a part of education that is ever changing. The district I work in has really pushed for Digital Blended Learning (DBL) and has provided laptops for most middle schools and high schools to have one-to-one technology. The elementary schools also have access to desktop computers and mobile lab carts. I have had the opportunity to use laptops with my students a few times a week to implement math, science, social studies, and literacy lessons. The laptops provided for our students are difficult to log into. The issue of using passwords brings its own challenge. I would like to find a way to use this form of technology in an easier format or make quick links for students to have easy access to materials without frustration. I have implemented Moby Max (this website teaches students various lessons on all core subjects), Brain Pop (video lessons and quizzes on various subjects for all core subjects), as well as a math and literacy website students can practice their math facts and reading on. I would like to be able to implement these resources into instruction with an ease that makes it more of a learning experience than a task to complete through trying to log into a computer.

The more experience I have had in the classroom, the more confident I become in my teaching practices and my knowledge of instructional content. I would like to make more choices in how we teach and implement standards with our students. We typically work as a grade-level to plan for all subjects, then adjust plans and resources based upon the needs of our individual classrooms. I would like to bring more ideas to the collaboration of lessons and tools to provide our students with. Tools to help with this goal will be the district's scope and sequence, state standards, and the constant reflection of what has worked in the classroom.

Small group instruction is a great opportunity to differentiate and provide interventions for students who are lacking certain skills or have a gap in certain skills. I have learned many great tools to aid students in making progress in phonics, fluency, comprehension, etc. but there are always new and improved ways to aid a student's progress. I would like to be more effective with every student. There are always a few students that need more interventions than others and there is not always time to provide these students with this time. "Words Their Way" is a great tool I will be implementing to make small groups more effective so these lower students still make a great amount of progress.

The future of education lies within the educational goals of teachers. Our obligation to students is to provide them with the tools to be successful inside and outside of a classroom, in their academics. In order to fulfill this obligation we must constantly make and adjust goals in our own education in order to benefit their education. For now, I have laid out three goals that I would like to grow and improve on, but as education constantly changes and adjusts, so will my goals.