

Destination on the Left: **The Road to my Master's Degree**

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When I think about my goals at the start of my Master's degree at Michigan State, I realize that my mindset has turned from how this program can help only me to how can this program help myself and those that are a part of my teaching career. At the start of this program I recall my goals being "I" statements. I do not feel that my goals were selfish by any means but they did not go really deep into what this time in my life could really bring to the table. My first goal was to graduate from this program with a 3.5 grade point average. I chose this grade point average because when starting my program I was working full time as a seventh grade teacher, married and starting a family, coaching and doing many other after school activities. I felt that with so much on my plate that I was more likely to obtain this goal than a perfect 4.0 grade point. My second goal was to complete my program in the five years that is allowed by Michigan State. This was a really important goal because at the time when I started this program my husband joined too. When you have two people going to college at the same time that really puts a dent into the bank account and because of that we could only take one class a piece for the first two years. That is why this goal was so important to me at this point in my master's program. My final goal was to take my knowledge in the area of Math and use it to better myself as an instructor of math. This goal to me was important because that was the only subject that I taught as a seventh grade teacher. At this point in my teaching career I was teaching math concepts that students that I taught were not grasping and I was hoping that what I was learning could be used for their growth.

As my time at Michigan State developed so did my goals. I started to see my goals becoming things that I could achieve. My first goal was to receive a 3.5, but as time passed I gained more confidence in myself and strived to get the best grade point average that I could receive. I will be graduating this April with a 3.9; I am glad this goal changed for myself. My second goal was to complete my master's program in five years. This goal was one that I was nervous about because my husband lost his job during my second year in the program and I was afraid that we would not have the money to take classes. God provided a miracle for our family because my husband found a new job; a better one actually that allowed him to teach in a public school, which was his dream. My third goal was to use my new skills in mathematics to help teach my seventh graders. This goal changed for me, three years ago when my husband

received his new job. When my husband got hired into his new public school teaching position the district opened up a new class and had to hire another teacher. Luckily for me, I also found a new job that allowed me to teach in the public schools; and better than that, my new teaching job was in the district that I grew up in. My goal was forced to change because I no longer taught Middle School Math, but now taught first grade; a big change. My goal then changed to use technology more in my classroom to help my students in their understanding of the objectives that I was teaching. That is my biggest goal right now; infuse technology in my student's learning and also to help other teachers become more familiar with technology so they as well can use it more in their classrooms to help better the students.

As you can see my goals have changed over time. One of my goals changed because of me and how I became more confident, but the other changed because my life changed. Goals are funny sometimes because we create them with this specific outcome in mind. They are like a road map that we plan a journey on. There is a starting location and a final destination. When planning this journey we never really think about bumps that might alter our courses, but bumps do occur and make us change our routes in some ways. But just like any journey the final destination can always be obtained if you never stop driving. I never stopped driving and even though my course was changed I made it to my destination; graduation! I am so excited for May and finally being able to say that I made it! I am glad I created my goals and am even more proud of myself because I obtained them. Never stop driving and keeping your destination in the windshield even when your course changes on you!