

One Step in my Journey of Lifelong Learning

by: Nicole Cinader

Looking back, I really wrote two goal statements. In my application goal statement, written September 2012, I talked about how I always challenge myself and how I meet my goals, no matter if the “how” changes along the way. In my CEP 810 Personal Growth Plan (PGP), written in January 2013, I wrote about my grandmother and how she inspired me to be a forever learner. Both of these have played a role in the last 15 months as I’ve pursued my MAET program.

As someone who constantly sets challenges for herself and follows through, I knew that I would meet this goal as well, I just didn’t know how my life would change during this process. As an educator, it makes me look at my work in a new light. For the last 15 months, I have treated this program as a masters in Education, since I believe that technology should be incorporated into all classrooms. With that view in mind, I have been reviewing and revamping current units and lessons with new focus and new objectives, making it clear to myself and to my students what those goals/objectives are. I have also been more creative with my units. As a fourth year teacher at the IA, I have been changing around the projects that I assign, and the students have been giving me more feedback. In the past, I would make this feedback very informal, but now my students put their thoughts into writing, whether it’s a reflection piece or a self-assessment. In my opinion, this program has allowed me to re-focus my educational life.

My grandmother taught me that if you are not constantly learning new things, then you are not moving forward, and thus, must be moving backwards. During this program, I feel as though I’ve grown so much in my professional life that my personal life pales in comparison. But, change has still occurred personally. Not only have I met new people and reconnected with others, but I have added those relationships to my PLN; reaching out for advice, and answering questions for them, too. Another personal change has been my time management. In the beginning, I was done with all of my grad school work by that Monday or Tuesday. Now that I’m pregnant and have signed-up as one of the MYP Teacher Leaders as well as a Data Team Leader at my school, I’m not getting my work done until the weekends, when free time is a little easier to come by. But, personally, I feel as though I can handle large tasks when they are thrown at me. Creating a website or re-doing a unit does not seem as daunting to me, so I don’t worry about it as much before starting; instead, I focus all of my attention on the task, ensuring that my end product has clear goals and steps to reach those goals.

Overall, my participation in this program has helped me to better see and communicate the goals in each of my units; it has inspired me to become more of a leader in my school; it has expanded my PLN; and it has taught me to be more focused during my lesson planning so my time management doesn’t suffer. Looking back, I am extremely happy with my personal and professional growth during these last 15 months. It’s been a whirlwind, but it’s been an informative and inspiring one.