

Me, as a Lifelong Learner

by: Nicole Cinader

Growing up, my grandmother always told me that if one wasn't learning then one wasn't moving forward. And if you are standing still in a world where everything around you is still moving forward, then it is like you are moving backward.

"And you don't want to go backwards all of the time, do you?"

"No, Gram. Walking backwards is hard. You can't see where you're going."

Nearing the end of my MAET program, it is only natural that I think about what is next. As a person who constantly sets challenges for myself, what is going to be the next one? How will I continue my education?

My first thought is that my education is going to take a side step, since I will be learning how to be a mother and a professional at the same time, starting this June. Then I realized that I've already spoken to my administration about going to a MACUL conference in the fall, and about continuing to attend MYP and IB conferences. This led me to remember that I have already started to take on more leadership roles at the IA this year, which will carry over for years to come; over the summer I started as a Data Wise Team member and then slowly turned into one of the leaders, then in August I was chosen as the MYP Teacher Leader for my campus. So, I won't really be taking a very lengthy side step, but I will be taking a short un-paid medical leave in the fall to focus on parenting first, before I go back to school and all that comes with it.

Other "classes" or experiences that I would like to be a part of would be the ITSE conference and Google Academy, which will keep me motivated to stay current in the technology field specifically related to teaching with technology. I plan on continuing to stay connected with my PLN and to follow my current feeds on Twitter. Of course, both of these will hopefully expand and will continue to influence how I teach.

Within my classroom, I know that change will continue as long as I am teaching. I am a firm believer in always making units and lessons better, year after year. My goal is to incorporate technology, but not so much so that it overruns the lesson. By following the TPACK model, I know that whatever technology I choose does guide my pedagogy, but it should be a purposeful choice and should make the entire experience better for the students and for me.

My next step professionally, after I get at least one year under my belt of juggling motherhood and work (especially with these new school leadership roles), would be to teach IB2 French. Currently, I teach IB1 French, which means that I do not give any real internal or external assessments during the year. As an IB teacher, I would like to have the experience of teaching both levels of the Diploma Programme.

Then I thought about my long-term goals. In college, I thought that I would always want to be a teacher, but I should've known that my competitive nature and driven spirit would push me to want even more. Now that I've been teaching for half a decade, I think about what I would like to do in another five or ten years.

My first thought is to become an IB coordinator, a position that I didn't even know existed until I started teaching at the International Academy. My second thought is to become a college professor, either teaching future teachers, teaching French, or teaching English. A side thought is that I will finish my sci-fi fantasy novel that I have started and will continue to expand my family either naturally or through adoption.

Obviously, I have a lot of goals in life, but I still have a lot of flexibility. Who knows, maybe I will retire from teaching at a public high school or maybe I will only have one child. Life likes to throw curveballs, let's see how fast my reaction time is and where it takes me.