

My two initial goals were to gain a deep understanding of literacy to better my own instruction for my middle school students and to grow my strategies for sharing knowledge with fellow teachers. In other words, I wanted to understand what makes readers and writers tick and I wanted to know how to share that with my colleagues. These were my goals after working as a middle school language arts teacher for a fourteen years. I understood pieces of literacy, but I wanted to know best practices and the cutting edge of literacy instruction. I also loved the idea of sharing this knowledge with others. Since enrolling in Michigan State University's Masters of Education (MAED), I have revised my goals slightly.

Working with readers and writers remains a passion of mine, therefore the first of my goals remains similar what it was at the beginning of the MAED program. I still strive to be at the cutting edge of research in literacy instruction and instructional practices. I want my students to not only study vocabulary, but to work with words that are significant in their lives in a way that is most effective. Research has provided specific techniques for students to do this. I want my students to not only compare a book they've read with a movie, but to be able to closely analyze the film for nuanced camera work that contributes to story. These examples demonstrate that students are not merely learning words and story comparison, but instead they are understanding literacy at a more meaningful level. This goal to stay at the forefront of literacy instructional practices is an objective that I foresee staying a constant in my career.

My second goal is the one that has seen the most revision. At the outset of program, I had delivered some professional development to colleagues and had enjoyed the work. I found teaching teachers to be quite rewarding. Therefore, it made sense to grow my understanding of educating adults as part of my MAED program. This interest of working with adult learners has blossomed in me. Through the MAED, I have had the opportunity to interview professional adult literacy instructors, and I have had the chance to design and implement courses of instruction for adult learners and have found that work incredibly satisfying. The instructional approaches used with adults require more finesse than traditional students. Adult students have different and more challenging demands than traditional students and I find that fascinating.

Because of my coursework and application of the materials studied, this pursuit to work with adults to help them understand the cutting edge of literacy practices is a goal that has become more refined. Now, a goal of mine is to find ways to work with adult learners perhaps even instead of working with junior high students. Before the MAED program, this was a fleeting thought that was dismissed as something not really attainable, but now I see that this goal is something that is realistically within my grasp. The work of understanding literacy best practices and then helping teachers to implement those best practices is work I aspire to do.