

The Evolution of Me

Out of all of my experiences, the greatest lesson I have learned so far in education came from a group of 1st graders at Bryant Elementary School, located in Flint, Michigan.

I started my teacher internship at Michigan State University with visions of quickly moving through the program. “No sweat...I am great with students,” I would often say to friends and family. After all, I believed I had prepared myself for any and all situations that could arise.

My naivety was only matched by my arrogance at the time. I was not ready to deal with the social and economic issues I faced with my students. I was not prepared to effectively convey the academic skills necessary to help them become life-long learners. Most importantly, I did not prepare myself for the realization that *teaching is a challenging and meaningful profession*. From my trials and difficulties during this year came two realizations: That I honestly enjoyed being a teacher (even through the hardships), and that I would never feel as hopeless, lost, and unprepared as I was at the time.

A desire to continually push myself towards becoming an outstanding educator has been fostered since then. During my years of teaching, I worked hard to truly understand best practices within education. This extended from literacy and math instruction to classroom management techniques. I became knowledgeable on how to adapt lessons and activities to meet the diverse needs of my students, while maintaining empathy and compassion. Combined with placing high expectations towards each student in my class, I began to notice personal growth as an educator.

However, I knew it would not be enough. I had to continue to evolve. With that in mind, my goal to enter the MSU MAED program was to pursue a degree in K-12 Administration; this was something that I had been privy to as a fill-in for my vice principal from time to time. I wanted to advance from working exclusively within a homeroom. My aim was to have an effect on students, faculty, and parents on a school wide level.

A funny thing about growing as a professional learner: you never quite know how things will play out. As a result of my work in the MAED program with educational leadership and literacy analysis, I was able to procure a job as a K-8 Literacy Specialist. This has caused me to examine and reflect upon my previous goals. I have found enormous satisfaction with the requirements and expectations of my new job, to the point that I am currently reevaluating my desire to become an administrator.

I often wish – 6 long and exciting years later – that I could find each and every one of those 1st graders at Bryant Elementary. Sadly enough, the school closed down this past year. Even if the actual building is no longer functional, the lesson I learned within its’ borders remains. Like all things in life, the lesson is always evolving as well.