

## **ABC is not always as easy as 1,2,3**

Janine Widzinski

Goal Reflection Essay

Starting my master's degree at the beginning of my second year of teaching was a no-brainer for me. I told myself, "Don't take too much time off, you'll lose momentum." There was also the tiny voice in my head reminding me, "You'll get a pay raise soon if you get going with that next degree!" While wrapping up my first year of teaching in June, I was also accepted into the Masters of Arts in Education (MAED) program. I began setting myself up for a busy 18 months ahead of me, planning to finish my program as soon as possible. In my Initial Goal Statement, I initiated the idea of focusing my masters in literacy to help my kindergartners be as successful as possible in the short year they were with me. I did not research enough, and did not know that I could get a specific literacy endorsement along with my masters. My goal at the beginning of my program was simple: complete my masters quickly, focus many of my classes on literacy to gain more knowledge in that subject area, and for the bigger picture, just further my own education.

I had this vision in my head that if I ever wanted to step down from being a classroom teacher, I may do something along the lines of a Reading Recovery Specialist, or a Literacy Curriculum Coordinator. After about a year into my master's program, I realized that there were literacy endorsements that I could have added onto my masters degree to help me achieve these future goals. For my personal degree, although I "specialized" in literacy, I simply chose to take my literacy based courses, rather than a full endorsement. In many ways, I feel that I achieved my initial goal of focusing on literacy based classes to gain more knowledge in all aspects of literacy in a young classroom, even without obtaining an endorsement.

I am happy with my master's degree, and feel stronger in the literacy area, which was my initial goal. I have new tips, tricks, and beliefs about literacy in a young classroom, and I am implementing these on a daily basis. After becoming more educated with the types of masters available, and the endorsements that go with them, in the future, I would like to add a literacy endorsement to my degree. I believe having an endorsement would make me more marketable and knowledgeable should I choose to change my career path.

On another note, I was able to try out a technology course as an elective during my master's program. I loved the technology course, learning new tools for the classroom for not only my students to use, but to assist me in the planning, assessing and preparing side of my job. I took this course during the first semester of my masters, and it has still stayed with me as being my favorite course. Admitting that this course was my favorite speaks volumes. It made me second guess myself part way through my degree and wonder if I should have pursued a Master's in Educational Technology (MAET). I realized

that so many of my peers from Michigan State were obtaining their MAET, and from talking to them, they enjoyed their program, and found it very useful in their classroom. This has made me set another goal aside from a future literacy endorsement, to one day obtain a second masters in technology. I feel that this would be extremely useful with all the new technology that is being pushed into the classrooms.

Although it sounds like I have set many future goals for myself, I believe it is a positive thing. I have (almost) achieved my first masters for the initial reason I wanted: to gain a better knowledge of literacy for my young students. In less than 18 months, I will finish the MAED program, which was another goal of mine, to finish quickly. With my initial goal of wanting to further my education, I did just that with the variety of classes I took. Knowing that as a teacher I am a lifelong learner, setting new goals for myself and my own education is something I hope to instill in my students. It is never too late to keep learning!