

## Never Stop Learning

The willingness to grow and learn was instilled in me at a young age. Wanting to gain new information should be a goal of all of ours. Whether this be inside of school, outside of school, or as we grow older, we should always be seeking out information and willing to learn with open minds. I try to model this growth mindset in the classroom where we talk about taking chances, making mistakes, and understanding that learning takes risk. I want my students to see that learning is hard but it is very rewarding in the end. Last year, my second grade students and I created goals and wrote them down; I shared one of my goals with the class and it was to complete my master's degree. At the time, I made this goal I did not know I would be completing it in one year. I had to complete my program in one year due to credits that I earned during my yearlong internship and these credits would be expiring. I met with an advisor and a plan was drawn up that would allow me to complete the program on time. I have to admit at the onset of this program I had my doubts if I could complete it in one year. On the other hand, I also knew that with hard work, a growth mindset, and a positive attitude I would be successful. I had a lot of people that held me accountable and supported me along the way and I thank them for that.

Talking with my students about pursuing a master's degree and continuing my learning is a way to show them I value learning and growth. For some students, a bachelor's degree will be in their future, for some a master's, for some a PhD. Whatever is along their future paths, college or not, I want them to know the value of learning something new with an open mind. What better way than to model it daily? I tell my students I learn something new from them every day, I say this because it often stops them in their tracks and they question it, which is fun, but I also say it because it is true. I never imagined I would be learning so much about myself as a person and educator from 25 seven to eight year olds. I also learned a lot about myself from the courses I took during my time in the Master of Arts in Educational Technology (MAET) program.

A course that was beneficial to my thinking as an educator and person was CEP 812 (Applying Educational Technology to Issues of Practice) this course challenged me as I was exploring issues that often are hard to answer in the education field. One of these issues a group of colleagues and I attempted to answer was how to use failure as a learning mode? Failure often has a negative connotation attached to it and we wanted to see what is failures role in schools? And how can we make parents, administrators, students and teachers view failure differently? Our group asked a lot of questions in our pursuit of the answers and we created this website to explain our thinking and offer some possible solutions. One of the possible solutions listed is that students need to feel comfortable and safe in the classroom to take chances and risks. Teachers who aim to promote this type of growth mindset learning environment in the classroom will have more success using failure as a learning mode in their classrooms. I have made changes to my classroom and how I deliver content and interact with students during classroom time in hopes to create this type of environment. Teachers can only do some much to dispel

this wicked problem of failure and how it is perceived in the education world. Parents, coaches, students, teachers and administrators need to work together to align their ideals and change the way failure is perceived in the classroom. I am still working on how I am viewing failure in the classroom as well as how I look a failure in my personal life. This course however has me thinking on ways to do this which is a great start.

This course also drew attention to my own information diet (info diet). I never really thought about the information I was taking in, I knew I was taking information in and processing it for facts and validity however this course pushed me to think about where the information I am receiving is coming from? How diverse is this information? And is it from viewpoints that are only similar to mine? I needed to be more cognizant of my information diet and seek out viewpoints that might not always align to my thinking, this has pushed me to grow as a person and educator. This is something I think we all need reminding of from time to time as it is easy to surround ourselves with people and viewpoints similar to ours. This is very easy to do now with social media as we can be selective with our information diet as many people are seek out information that confirms their biases rather than challenges them. My students are young and not on social media and are not seeking out news as regularly older students would for their information diet. However I promote different viewpoints and ways of thinking in my classroom by reading diverse literature and talking about how the characters might be different than some of us however just because they talk different, look different, think different and are from a different part of the world does not mean their way of doing something is wrong and our way is right. This course was a great reminder that we should always seek out different viewpoints; this is something hope to foster in my classroom as I am hoping to help my students become better critical thinkers and lifelong learners.

Another course that allowed me to grow immensely was CEP 820 (Teaching Students Online). The main project for this course was to build an online course for my current second grade students. I built a hybrid math website using the Learning Management System (LMS), Weebly. The learning in the classroom was blended with use of this online course outside of the classroom for students/families to take ownership of their learning. The concepts taught in the classroom were reviewed and reinforced on the math website.

Prior to CEP 820 I did not know how to organize and create an online course. When creating this course, I used an outline from the Universal Design for Learning guidelines. This aided in my thinking and organization for my online course. Designing the course was challenging as I had to think about my lesson objectives, prompting questions, explore/create time, and assessment/reflection pieces. These are all ideas that I keep in the forefront of my mind when I am teaching inside the classroom however putting these in an online format for my students outside the classroom was a lot more difficult than I imagined. I had to be aware of my students' online experiences as they varied as well as creating this course "second grader friendly". Syllabus and important information had to made visible on the course website if students and parents had issues when working on the course at home. Because of CEP 820 I now am more comfortable creating screencasts and how to videos for my students to view and review at home

if they are having trouble grasping concepts taught in class. I plan to apply my knowledge I learned in CEP 820 about online website design to other content areas in my teaching, because of this course I have the tools and confidence to do so.

CEP 807 ([Capstone Seminar](#)) Capstone Portfolio course was one of the most insightful and beneficial courses throughout my time in the graduate program at Michigan State University. Throughout this course, I was been given time to organize all that I had done throughout my time in the MAET program. I also was able to make sense of all that I learned and display it in the format of an online portfolio website. Being able to take the much-needed time to look back through the courses I took and the work I created allowed me to remember what I was feeling at the time I created each specific piece. I say this because sometimes, not always, how we view something in the present is different than how we viewed something in the past. I try to do this with my second grade students, in a much simpler way where they review work they did at the beginning of the year. They are often amazed at their growth.

This course also changed the way I look at teaching. I had overlooked an important part of the learning process for my students and this is the reflection piece. I had often been so focused on the delivery of the content then making sure my students were learning the important concepts and moving on. I now understand the importance of self-reflection and displaying their knowledge to others. Thinking back on all I learned from the program cemented a lot of my learning as well as allowed me to see my personal growth in education. I think this would be both beneficial and rewarding for my students and now is something I want to incorporate more into my classroom. While it might look different for my second graders the fact remains that reflection is an important part of the learning process. I plan to have my students compile their work throughout the year in a folder and present their folder portfolio at the end of the year to their parents and families. Students will be able to see their hard work and progress they have made over the course of the year. I hope that this will be a way for students to look back on their achievements and process it all. I hope that this portfolio will allow them to see that learning is difficult, fun, and most importantly, it is rewarding.

This program has forced me to be a consumer of information. I have been able to process this information in many different ways due to the online format. It has allowed me time to reflect, work on projects with colleagues via technology such as message boards and online meetings through Zoom. The program has also allowed me to expand my professional learning network (PLN) with social media sites such as Twitter. Finding ways to connect to other educators around the world and learn from them has been a valuable learning experience for me. Using social media to expand my PLN and use my PLN to better my craft through technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge. I have grown as an educator because of this program and the courses I took which shifted my views on teaching and learning as a whole. The skills I learned and 'tools' will help me along the way as new challenges arise in my future. The experiences and knowledge gained throughout this program have equipped me to take these challenges head on as I know these challenges will lead to a valuable learning experience which I have come to embrace and welcome.

