

I decided to begin my journey into graduate education during my third year of teaching. I was having a great year; I was teaching Spanish to eighth graders, and I finally felt like I knew what I was doing. I wanted to expand my knowledge so I could continue to enhance my teaching, and when I began the Master of Arts in Education (MAED) program, my goal was to do just that. I wanted to be the best teacher I could be, and I knew this would be possible by learning and applying effective teaching strategies. This goal was simple, and there was certainly more to my decision than just expanding my knowledge. I knew that a master's degree would look good on my resume, and that it would get me a much-needed pay raise. These two factors fueled the motivation for me to begin the program, and this motivation pushed me into the program that would ultimately help me achieve my goal of knowledge expansion.

Throughout my years as an educator and a student, I have been asked to create and reflect upon many different goals. Each time I am asked to create a goal, I find that my goals are ever changing. As I gain experience in the classroom (and as a coach), and take on more responsibilities at my school (being on the School Improvement Team and being in charge of Leadership, for example), my goals change. My goal of knowledge expansion has never gone away, although it has changed. Over my time in the MAED program, my goal has become more specific.

I want to be a more culturally responsive teacher. I am interested in and simultaneously perplexed by the ways the educational system in the United States seems to be continually failing its minority students. As I learned more about these failings, I realized that my goal of knowledge expansion was becoming more specific. Moving forward, I must change and adapt in order to better serve my current and future students.

My goal when I began the MAED program was to learn more about the best and most effective ways to teach and reach students. When my goal became more specific to diverse students and how to educate them in the most effective way, it also changed to include athletic knowledge. I have been coaching for four seasons now, and it has always been something that I did not feel that I knew enough about. When I realized that I could take Kinesiology courses that would help me understand the legal, physical, and mental side to being a coach, I was immediately interested. I knew that I needed to change my goal to include coaching knowledge, because there was so much to learn and apply to my coaching.

From the beginning of my program until now, I have been attempting to learn as much as possible about effective teaching and how to be a successful teacher. When I started, I thought of this goal very generally, and I simply wanted to learn more to become better. As I took more and more classes, I realized that my focus had narrowed to culturally responsive teaching and coaching. As I finish the program and continue my teaching career, I will continue to explore and expand my goals.