

## **Never Cease to Grow** **by Laura Piper**

I submitted my application to Michigan State University's Master of Arts in Education Degree (MAED) program not knowing the whirlwind of changes my life both professionally and personally was about to take. Over the past 18 months I have left the school where I began my teaching career. I moved to a different state, but quickly became disappointed in being unable to find a full-time teaching position. Instead I substitute taught (which included familiarizing myself with numerous schools, teachers, staff, curriculums and students) and continued my coursework towards the completion of my Master of Arts degree. This list does not include the changes in my personal life (becoming engaged and then married four short months later, buying our first home, and my husband landing a new job). With these changes it is of no surprise that my original goals stated in my MAED program application no longer feel complete in encompassing my visions for myself as an educator.

My professional goal as I stated in my original application was – and still is – to be an outstanding classroom teacher. Throughout my undergraduate work I always loved the idea of being a classroom teacher, it wasn't until I was fully immersed in the experience of having my own classroom that I realized I had truly found where I belong. As a result my goals entering into the MAED program were to “reflect, grow, and enhance my teaching”. My graduate work has allowed me to evolve my thinking and define reflecting, growing, and enhancing my teaching as it pertains to my career.

I am strongly inspired to become a reflective teacher after reading [\*The Girl With the Brown Crayon\*](#), by Vivian Paley. Paley models what it means to truly reflect on lessons, students, and outcomes. The understanding she has of her students and the time dedicated to reflection of her classroom and students is inspiring. I aspire to be as reflective a teacher as her through journaling and dedicating time to consider the day's events, interactions, and student misconceptions.

Anthony D'Angelo described me when he said, “Develop a passion for learning. If you do, you will never cease to grow.” I will learn by embracing and adapting for all that progresses in the field of education because I have a passion to do so, and by learning this I will continue to grow as a teacher.

My time in the MAED program demonstrated the vast ways teacher instruction can be enhanced within my two focal areas of study: technology and literacy. I will strive to continue these areas of pursuit as well other subjects. Continuously enhancing instruction is imperative in finding ways to support all students.

My goals have not changed, but evolved. I have a clearer focus of what they mean to me. I am truly passionate about teaching children, and made the right choice in choosing to pursue a Master of Arts in Education. I have been able to refine my teaching, improve upon reflecting, and identify areas to grow. Looking ahead I know I will strive to continue with these advancements in my career. I no longer want to reflect, grow, and enhance my instruction throughout my graduate coursework at Michigan State University, I want to reflect, grow, and enhance my instruction throughout my life as a teacher.