Learning and Leadership
By Jackie Fincher

Initial Goals

My decision to apply to the Master of Arts in Educational Technology program at Michigan State University came after only a year and a half in the teaching field. When teaching in a mathematics classroom, one must be able to work with all the differences each student brings to the classroom community. I became determined to find ways to incorporate technology into my classroom because I knew it is already motivating students.

The decision to further my education derived from my desire for deeper knowledge of the educational field and love for technology. I did not set very detailed goals at the onset of this program. I wanted to go back to school in order to support my students in the classroom and have the education to be a leader in my school community. I believed that completing this specific program would improve my overall teaching. I also desired to build up the resources and confidence to take on leadership roles in my career.

Current Goals

Although the big picture of my original goals remains the same, I find myself creating additional personal goals that relate to technology in some way. Instead of just wanting to incorporate technology into my lessons, I am extremely motivated to become a technology coordinator for a school district. By working on a team with our current technology coordinator, I am gaining perspective on what it takes to hold that position. I enjoy being able to give professional developments and share information with my co-workers. Presenting others with technology resources and teaching strategies is something I would like to come out of receiving this endorsement.

I have also developed a love for curriculum design and curriculum mapping somewhere along the way. I currently represent the mathematics department on our district's curriculum team and plan to share the numerous ideas and strategies I've learned during this program. My intentions are to continue this leadership by communicating best practices in the mathematics classroom as It relates to technology and mathematics curriculum.

Reflection

As I worked through this program, I learned a lot about myself as a professional and more specifically, as a teacher. I was fortunate enough

to take my dream job teaching in a high school mathematics classroom during my last year in the program. My overall teaching has improved each and every day. Every class I took gave me another teaching strategy, another technology resource to try out in my classroom, and another theory for why and how learning happens. This knowledge I gained gave me the confidence to experiment and implement successful methods to help my students find success, and that is exactly what has happened!

One can never be done learning. I do believe that I have successfully mastered what I set out to achieve. My overall technology and teaching skills have skyrocketed. My colleagues also turn to me for technology support and resources. I have been asked to take on leadership roles on the district's curriculum team and be involved in a Next Generation Classroom initiative. My learning will not end here. I will continue to educate myself on best teaching practices and use the newly available technology tools and resources to increase student engagement.