

The Never-Ending Cycle

As a teacher, I set countless goals on a daily, weekly, monthly, and even yearly basis. Every year begins with the submission of professional goals to my principal which are reviewed and discussed. I assess what my students are capable of upon meeting them and set goals with the high hopes that we will reach them by the end of the year. Week-to-week I actively plan what I want to accomplish in the classroom. Even day-to-day I write lists of what I need to complete before I leave the school building. It's a seemingly never-ending process that I continue to cycle through because it yields results. Naturally, I continued with this process when I began my master's program.

When I began my Master of Arts in Education (MAED) program, I had three main goals in mind:

1. To learn effective literacy intervention strategies
2. To learn how to build a strong foundation for reading and writing with younger students
3. To continue to be a lifelong learner

It's interesting to look back at these goals and remember what my focus was when I began this program. At the time, I was in the middle of my second year of teaching English Language Arts to sixth graders. For that reason, my goals were centered around subject matter more than anything else. While I do still value these three original goals and see the ways that I have grown in these areas, my goals have definitely changed over the course of this program.

Over the past two years, my goals have changed significantly for several reasons, the first being that this past year I was moved from teaching sixth grade English to teaching fifth grade math. Beyond that though, with all that I have learned through my MAED program, I think that my goals had to change. The courses that I have taken over the past few years have helped to broaden my view of what will make me a better teacher and it will take more than being a master of my subject. I mentioned that goal setting feels almost like a never-ending cycle and I found that to be particularly true as I continued my education. With each new class under my belt, a new set of goals came along with it. One of these new goals includes making learning meaningful and relatable to my students. This has always been something that has mattered to me, but the classes that I have taken reminded me how intentional I need to be about this particular goal. I am constantly striving to create lessons that are reflective of my student's lives, but to mix those in with lessons that show my students the diverse lives of others. Another goal that has come to the forefront for me is to constantly improve my classroom management. I know how important classroom management is, but I've learned so much more about it from my MAED program, that I've made it my goal to try and incorporate at least one new piece of classroom management each year.

I think that overall, my goals have become less about subject matter and more about the experiences that children have in my classroom. My goals are centered around making my classroom a great place to live in and a great place to learn. I know that moving forward, these goals will remain, but others will come into focus as well. The never-ending cycle will continue and my hope is that my teaching practices will continue to improve.