

Teacher Transformation

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As I look back at my graduate application goals I recognize the same woman who strives to educate to the best of her ability. My initial goals were to learn more about the special education process, programs, practices, and strategies to implement in a classroom so that I could better support students with all needs. I craved the knowledge of how to read and understand an IEP along with strategies for classroom management practices that will allow all students to feel prosperous.

Originally, as I applied for admission into the Master's program, I aspired to study the characteristics of the Autism Spectrum and learn more about Autism in general. Although I am still very interested in learning about Autism, as I reflected professionally during my first year of teaching I realized that I needed more assistance learning best practices with literacy instruction. My first year teaching I worked with a few students who were diagnosed as having learning disabilities, however, I felt under qualified. This feeling of being under qualified and the desire for assisting and supporting my students led me to change my initial plans for my masters and begin to focus specifically on special education protocols and courses that inform graduate students how to implement accommodations for students with special needs. After acceptance into the program I chose to take courses that revolved around literacy instruction rather than taking courses on ASD, which really did pay off in the end- as it helped me feel more confident when working with students in regards to literacy instruction, one of which I worked diligently to get special education services toward the end of last year.

Currently, my goals as an educator still have to do with using best practices where all students feel supported, valued, and appreciated. However, I feel I no longer need the large amounts of support in understanding how to read, understand, and implement the accommodations and modifications in an IEP on a daily basis. One thing I wrote in my admission essay was that I wanted to work on clarity in lessons and in my classroom, and this continues to be a professional goal of mine. Regardless of the students' needs, it is my goal to ensure that my instruction is clear, consistent, and concise, and by taking courses throughout my Master's career, I have learned new strategies that can help me implement clear lessons. Another current goal of mine is to make myself more marketable as a teacher and mentor to students as well as continue to learn new strategies and skills to maximize my potential as an educator. I plan to continue to take courses even after my Master's program is finalized, to ensure that I am using current and best practices that allow me to reach all students.

When comparing my past and current goals I see that I have grown as a teacher and have learned to incorporate many new best practice strategies and techniques that support young learners. I continue to strive to be a learner in this 21st century, and overall strive to continue to learn along with my students. I feel like my goals differ slightly because I have had more experience working with students with disabilities since applying for admittance into the graduate program. Although I have more experience working with students with disabilities, my goals have not changed drastically because there has not been much time passing since I applied and now (I began the Master's program in the fall of 2013 and will finish this fall, 2016).