

GOAL REFLECTION: Revisiting my 'Why'

As teachers, we are trained to become reflective practitioners. We are encouraged often to look back at the work we have done within the field of education and ask ourselves what our 'why' is. I began my master's program after a period of growth in my career- I had become very interested in learning about the best *scientifically* proven methods to teach readers and wanted to further my education through a graduate program. I was also hoping to grow as an inclusive and mindful educator knowing that the needs of my students have shifted since my first years of teaching. Finally, I was interested in exploring different leadership opportunities that a Master of Arts in Education (MAET) would empower me take on. Since entering the MAET program, my 'why' has grown and expanded in ways I was not expecting.

My passion project remains within the field of literacy education, specifically the methods and strategies of literacy education that are supported by the *Science of Reading*. Choosing to make my master's focus in literacy education helped to further my work in this area. When we create a goal, I think that a common thought is that the goal will be achieved, we can place a big check mark and look back at our success with a sense of pride. Though I have found my work within this program to have helped further my love of reading and excitement in helping my readers grow, I believe that this goal is one that will always be a work in progress, one that I want to continue to refine, learn more about and implement new learnings.

The area that I was excited to grow most in was that of inclusivity. Truthfully, I think that I feared all that inclusivity was- the vastness of it had me feeling overwhelmed. Thus, a goal of mine was to grow as an inclusive educator. To me, inclusivity is the sharing and learning of those who are different than you, working to practice empathy and understanding of the different abilities, cultures, beliefs, and world around you. This goal has been my greatest success as I near the end of my graduate program. I have learned about the importance of mindfulness and inclusivity- how they can work in tandem. I have grown in my ability to understand inclusivity and learned ways to best incorporate inclusive practices into my classroom. Moving forward, my goal is to reflect on how I am using inclusivity to empower my students.

When I applied to this program, I reflected on my experiences as a leader- within the professional setting and informal settings. I saw this master's program to learn more about how I can use this leadership to better myself, help my school community and lead my students within the classroom. Knowledge is power. Through the various courses I have taken throughout this program, I have learned how to best utilize and shape my leadership skills to best fit the needs of those I interact with. My goal of becoming a more informed leader has taken shape to consider the needs of those who are different than me, the power of empathy and understanding and the self-esteem to share what I am learning. I appreciate the ways that my leadership has shifted and grown throughout this program.

Though my goals have stayed relatively the same since the beginning of my program, I recognize that they have been shaped in ways to further my learning and understanding in literacy education, inclusive practices, and leadership opportunities. Each of these goals have provided clarity in understanding what is important and reminded me of my 'why'.