

Future as a Learner

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Contemplating my educational future is exciting. I remember starting the MAED program just two short years ago. I was thinking that it was going to be an extremely long haul. Now that it is nearing completion, I can honestly say that I do not know where the time has gone. Over the past two years. I put in countless hours of work and dedication. All of the hard work came so naturally that I feel like the time flew by. I am graduating from the program with a broader outlook, more confidence as an educator and a student, and a greater understanding of how to address the changing needs of my students.

When I look forward to my future as a learner, there is a lot in store for me. I am already contemplating my second Masters Degree. I have looked into several programs and I am thinking about going on to pursue a Masters in Educational Leadership. My MAED experiences have made me much more confident in my abilities not only as an educator, but as a student. I have been 'forced' to confront so many new technologies that I initially had a great deal of anxiety about (creating a web-page, blogging, and Skype video conferences, online literacy tools). The majority of them I have already used, or could see myself using in the future. The MAED program has given me the confidence to try new things, not only within my own classroom, but building-wide. I won't hesitate to volunteer to pilot new technologies or strategies in the building I work in. With that being said, I do feel that it needs to be done in moderation. Sometimes introducing too many new things can be overwhelming for the teachers and the students.

Completing a Masters program completely online has broadened my understanding of what teaching can look like. With the ever changing technological society that we live in, I have to be open to new routes of not only acquiring knowledge, but also distributing knowledge and information to my students. This program has made me not only more open to these avenues, but in some cases and advocate for them. I understand how powerful online learning can be. Programs like Woordle, ToonDoo, and Natural Readers are things that I can use and share with my colleagues. I can honestly say that this program has made me an advocate of the benefits of online learning.

When thinking about how I will continue to stay up on the technological advances, I don't see a lack of exposure in my future. The building that I work in has a great community of learners and we have a lot of technology exposure. We are currently setting up an informal seminar to explore the worlds of Edmodo, Prezi, and Glogster. These are new programs to me, and I look forward to learning and being able to directly apply what I have learned. Participating in forums like these will expose me to what is out there new in educational technology.

So, when thinking about my continuing education, a few things come to mind. As I mentioned previously, earning another Masters is something that I am seriously considering. I am really interested in doing it online if at all possible. But, when thinking about continuing my education in a more informal sense, I really think about learning with and from my peers. I want to stay part of an educational community where we learn from each other. I know that technology changes rapidly in a short period

of time. Just thinking that I was able to complete a Masters degree completely online, I can't imagine all of the other opportunities that will become available. I just need to put myself out there and be willing to try them. This class has helped prepare me for that. I have much more confidence in my ability to actually learn, and apply what I have learned, in various forums. Also, there is always an opportunity for learning right at my finger tips. There is a wealth of knowledge on the internet if I just take the time to do some research and find what reliable. Going forward, I am excited to continue to learn and grow with my students, and I feel prepared and ready to do so!