

An Education in Education: A Goal Reflection

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I applied for the Michigan State University's Masters of Arts in Education program in September of 2012 with the intention of going into academia as my ultimate professional goal. I chose my concentration areas, post-secondary education leadership and sport leadership and coaching respectively, to further support my goal. I came across my goal rather organically through my professional experiences. Here is an excerpt from my original Personal Statement which was submitted with my graduate school application regarding how my goal came to be, *"In the few years since I have graduated with a Bachelors of Science degree, I've worked in a variety of settings. While each setting has its rewards, I've come to really enjoy those when I've had the opportunity to take students of athletic training under my wing. I find it gratifying to teach a student a new clinical skill or introduce them to an idea and then see them succeed in these skills or broaden their way of thinking. I look forward to being able to stimulate the students' minds and encourage learning by asking critical thinking questions."*

There is, of course, a smaller subset of goals I have set for myself which lead up to my primary professional goal. I identified these within my original application as:

- 1.) To excel as an instructor given the knowledge I will acquire about education
- 2.) Better understand program planning, evaluation and organizational development
- 3.) Gain an understanding of the perspectives of school administration and the athletic department in which I could potentially work in

Now, after completing most of Michigan State's Master's program, my ultimate professional goal has remained the same. I have geared many assignments specifically towards athletic training education which I feel has very much helped me grasp what I will be doing in the future. Taking on athletic training students and having presented a guest lecture, not only as part of my academic work, but also as courtesy to the institution in which I graduated from, only further solidified the decision I made and the goal I had set forth for myself.

I believe the better I understand the development and organizational aspects of education and educational programs, the more I will be able to provide educated, insightful opinions and guidance when the time comes. Having had to create a program through my professional experiences has helped me realize how important having a sound knowledge base of this type of information can be.

In addition, understanding the responsibilities and being able to relate to the perspectives of others I will be working with has its advantages. I fully believe in understanding another's reasoning behind their opinions and opening the lines of communication to make educated decisions and resolve issues as they arise. Having background knowledge on what specifically some of these responsibilities are will be invaluable down the road.