

Experience-based Goals: Inspiring Students and Teachers

Sitting at my alma mater, the University of Michigan (U-M), football game during my first year of teaching, I met fellow Wolverines who worked for the Michigan Education Association (MEA). Enthused to meet a fellow educator, they were happy to share their experience and advice with me. In their opinion, teachers start their master's degree too soon, as they "don't know what knowledge they are missing yet". Fast-forward to the end of that year. One of my math department colleagues asked if I would chaperone and help cook at their cross country camp. With my lack of coaching experience, I was surprised that he asked. However, the opportunity suited my interests: running and working with high school students. Sooner than later, I became a volunteer assistant coach. Observing my fellow coaches, I was intrigued with their decision-making. How did they plan workouts, prevent common running injuries, and motivate runners, to list a few questions. There it was, the knowledge that I needed.

In researching programs, I came across the Master of Arts in Education (MAED) program at Michigan State University (MSU), which offered my first [concentration](#), Sport Leadership and Coaching. I could learn about the physical, psychological, and legal aspects of coaching, as well as have a preview of the responsibilities of an athletic director. I was thrilled at the chance to learn about coaching and directly apply this understanding to the cross country program.

Where my first concentration choice was for my current career, I intended my second selection to open possibilities for my career as it blossomed. Thus, I selected P-12 School and Postsecondary Leadership. I was curious to explore my interests in being a school administrator, professional development facilitator, or post-secondary educator. Even educational research still attracted me from my research assistant experience for a professor at the [School of Education](#) at U-M. Earning a master's degree would be a step in any of these directions as well as give me a feel for learning coupled with my teaching experience.

As I approach the end of my master's degree program, I find that some of my goals have stayed the same while others have changed. I still love coaching. Working with the runners, collaborating with the coaches, cheering at races with our runner's families brings me indescribable joy. Before, I could only share my running experience, and now I can utilize specific coaching knowledge with my team.

Moreover, my teaching experiences have shaped my current goals for my second concentration. I have facilitated some professional development at my high school for [Illuminate](#), a web-based data and assessment tool. Additionally, I have had the wonderful opportunity to mentor two new teachers to our district. Even the setups of the MAED courses, which develop a community of learners differently, inspire me to

cultivate similar atmospheres for my team and mathematics students. However, while I enjoy leading and learning about adult education, I did not feel the same spark in learning about being an administrator. At this point in my career, I do not feel that I have enough teaching experience or desire to pursue a career in administration.

My education and life experience lends itself to my goals of inspiring both students and teachers.