

## Looking Back and Ahead...

Teresa Seely

When I began the Masters Degree program at Michigan State University, my professional goal was to earn a degree that would help me to **better meet the needs** of all students in my classroom. In 2009 when I wrote this goal statement, I had been a classroom teacher for 14 years and had 3 children of my own who were in elementary and middle school. I thought that I knew a lot about elementary education and had seen the academic pendulum swing several times. During the course of my degree program, my MSU professors challenged me to **think beyond** what my previous teaching experiences had taught me.

Looking back, I wrote that I wanted to learn more about how to effectively meet **individual learning styles**. I also planned to explore how **special education students** could function in a regular classroom through inclusion programs. My professional goal stated that often times, my students were attending school for the first time and their parents were just becoming aware that their child may have special needs. I needed to learn more about **working with families** to prevent roadblocks that may interfere with a child's academic and social success. During the course of my education at MSU, I have learned how to better accommodate these students and how the law applies to educating special needs students. This has helped me relate to these families better because I can truly help their child become successful.

As I write this reflection paper, I can see that I have met my professional goals. I started MSU and was exposed to many interesting viewpoints and theories on education that I was able to immediately apply to my classroom teaching. I have become more aware of the variety of different learning styles and behavioral differences in the children I teach. With this knowledge, I know that a **one size fits all approach to teaching** will not work in today's classrooms. I also developed a collection of new educational resources, including how to **incorporate technology** into my curriculum each day to meet individual student needs. I have found great success with the use of technology in all of the content areas that I teach.

This is my last course before I graduate in May and I know that I have become a **better educator** because of my coursework at MSU. I have grown as a teacher and believe that all of my experiences have helped me better meet the needs of all students in my classroom. The knowledge I have gained during my studies will remain with me and impact my students for the course of my teaching career.