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Diversity: Then and Now

Looking back to what inspired me to be an educator, and ultimately to pursue my graduate degree at Michigan State University, was my love for learning and my determination to instill in others the value of diversity. It seemed like it was written ages ago, yet somehow, still cuts right to the core of my values.

Diversity has been something near and dear to my heart and made me the person I am today. A few short years ago, that meant looking for those that were left behind, or “the troubled ones.” I truly felt like I had a niche with the kids who were not the ideal student and did not enjoy school. It was my goal to reach out to those students and help them find success and ultimately enjoy learning. Luckily for me, as the newest math teacher in my building, I was often given the students I was seeking, teaching many sections of courses with a full roster of students who have failed the course before.

In recent days, diversity has meant so much more to me than what it did before. Diversity is celebrating all differences! I felt initially it was my goal to reach out to a certain crowd that I thought might be left behind. All I was really doing was creating my own bias towards students, which is what fueled my ambitions in the first place. In any classroom, there is a diverse set of learners—their experiences, their knowledge, their feelings, their needs. I want to focus the diversity on the way I teach, the methods I use, the presentation style, our lessons, assessments, and what our day to day room looks like. I do not want to focus on any type of student, but all students.

My goals were clearly stated in my original essay:

- 1). Obtain a graduate degree from Michigan State University with concentration areas in Mathematics Education and Coaching Leadership
- 2). Become more masterful at my craft of teaching by learning new methods and integrating more technology
- 3). Learn more about adolescent psychology and development to help me become a more effective educator and coach

Happily, I can report that as of this May, these goals will be achieved. I have learned new methods of teaching mathematics and had many opportunities to integrate them into my mathematics classroom. Technology has become such an integral part of our everyday life and is also reflected in my classroom. I have used my new skills and knowledge to take on a brand new competitive cheer program and I am excited to grow.

Diversity is no longer something I want to fight against, but rather work to be a diverse and well-rounded person, and to reach out to my diverse and amazing students and athletes.