

*“ You can have it all. Just not all at once.” ~Oprah Winfrey*

I began my time with Michigan State with this quote weighing heavy on my mind and I actually used it to begin the personal goal statement that I submitted when I applied to the master’s program. Now as I am ending my time with Michigan State, I realize that this quote still applies to my life.

Three years ago I began my quest for a Master of Arts in Educational Technology. If one were to ask me four years ago if that was my plan, I would have said no. Being a stay-at-home, homeschooling mom for 22 years, I had no idea that I would end up here. I started out at the young age of 19 leaving home and eventually becoming a waitress to pay my way through college. Because I like reading and children, I became a teacher. After graduation from college, I began teaching at a high school in Missouri. My next journey was starting a family and although I was still a teacher, I spent my time raising and homeschooling my four daughters. During that time, when my daughters began taking online classes, I discovered the world of online education. Fortunately, this discovery, my love of teaching and computers led me to seek an online teaching job. Thankfully, I landed an online teaching job pretty easily and after a couple of years of teaching

online I realized I really liked technology and I wanted to learn more about it and how to use it with my online students. This is what led me to Michigan State. In the personal goal statement I submitted when I applied, I wrote, “My excitement, love of technology, and working with children are the reasons I want to pursue higher education. I would like to earn a Master’s in Educational Technology so that I can further my knowledge of the use of technology in the classroom.” One of my main goals while in the Master’s program was to learn new pedagogical tools that I, as an online teacher could use to stimulate my students desire to want to learn and succeed in their courses. Many students struggle with online learning, so teachers are always looking for ways to motivate them. I knew the technology to set up my classrooms and manage them, but I really had no ideal what kind of technology I could use with my students. Actually, even though I loved technology, I was a little afraid of it and leery about trying new things. I felt I was becoming static and not meeting my students’ needs. By making the choice to learn new technologies, I feel I had made the important first step I needed to complete.

So how does the quote apply to me today, you may ask? Well, I believe I have accomplished my personal, career, and educational goals, just not all at the same time and some have taken longer than

others. Through my time at Michigan State, I have created and learned about many technology tools, and teaching strategies to use with my students that I believe will help stimulate their learning environment and make them better learners. It has taken me three years, but I now feel a new sense of confidence that I made the correct choice when joining the Master's program. I am no longer afraid to try new things and I actually go out and search for new tools to use with my students. Also, I understand the importance of knowing how and when to use technology with my students.

Having reached my goals, I now love technology and teaching with it even more. I feel ready and prepared to use technology in my classrooms to engage and inspire my students in a more exciting and educational way. I know that I am a better online teacher for it. The last three years have prepared me to teach 21 Century students and I am ready to go!