

The Road Ahead By Andrea Hunt

As I finish my master's work I begin to picture my further as a life-long learner. Although the coursework, essays and grades are coming to an end, my knowledge of education continues to grow. I have learned about many new technologies, management skills and special education skills that I have just begun dabbling into. I can now begin my journey as a "post master's student" which involves trying new things, reading more books (educational resources and some just for fun), exploring new lessons, styles and techniques. The road ahead is exciting.

My first goal on this new journey is to **incorporate technology** into my classroom. I have started this process while in the master's program and to some degree before that, however, now that I have practiced with different ideas and gained confidence using certain devices I am prepared to incorporate them into the work that occurs in my classroom on a daily basis. I have experienced the difference technology has made in my life, which I hope I can bring to the lives of my students. As a student I found technology to be engaging. There was and is always something new to learn or relearn in a new way, since it is ever evolving. I hope to bring the same joys into the hands of my students. I have already started planning for next year. There are many units that I can tweak and restructure to incorporate technology. Besides engagement, I strongly believe my students need to strengthen their knowledge of technology. Many of my students do not have computers at home; therefore, school is the only place they are exposed to computer-based technology. I feel a large responsibility to provide them with the computer skills they will need to succeed in their future.

My second goal, to find a new job, will hopefully allow me to utilize my special education learning disabilities endorsement. Although I absolutely love my job as a second grade teacher, I am looking and ready to work in a **special education setting**. This year I came to the realization that my true passion for education lies in special education. I love working with students in a small group setting, setting personal goals with students and celebrating the big and small accomplishments. I feel my general education experience has better prepared me for this new opportunity. I will be able to relate to the needs and wants of the general education teachers I work with. I will also be able to make meaningful, clear, and appropriate accommodations for my caseload students within their general education classroom. I have the knowledge of the works within the general education setting and the education of a special education teacher. I feel this wide mix will allow me to have a successful career as a special education teacher.

Third on my list of post grad learning is to continue involvement in **professional development**. Through my three years of teaching I have already gained skills by attending professional development workshops, I plan to continue this aspect of learning. Depending on where I end up, special education or general education, I want to always be open to professional development opportunities that better my students and me as a teacher. For example, I plan to be involved in the district learning labs. This is a great experience that enables teachers to directly learn from one another and discuss best practices to meet our students needs. Another way I can continue learning, somewhat related to professional development, is continue reading professional books. My master's has interested me in a variety of different authors that I would like to continue to learn from.

My last goal involves my work with others. As my master's journey comes to an end I feel obligated to **share** my new findings with others. I have shared certain aspects of my program with colleagues within my grade level and have seen the power in that, now I believe it is time to seek leadership opportunities. I am one of the only teachers in my current building that has a degree involving technology; therefore, I assume the opportunity to share amongst colleagues is high. Just as I tell my students, we can learn from one another and at times we are each other's greatest resource.

As the journey to my master's comes to a close, I know there is still a busy road ahead full of learning and new opportunities. I am excited to see what the future has in store. I have always had a love for learning, one of the reasons I became a teacher, therefore, I am confident that my learning is far from done.