

The end of my masters program at Michigan State University is fast approaching, and it seems like I had just begun this journey. I will not only be the first Perry to earn a degree in higher education, but will be the first to get a degree through Michigan State University, considering we are all Michigan supporters, including myself. However, as the program comes to a close, one question remains: "Now what?"

Looking back, the thought of being a teacher never crossed my mind. It was not until I had already graduated from Oakland University with a degree in psychology, did I even ponder the idea. I had always been interested in history, and that was pacified by courses taken as electives. As I returned to Baker College, it was then that the passion for teaching really began to flourish. With the end near, my passion for teaching is still intact, but the road I may choose to follow may be different. The knowledge gained in the program has really made me think, not only how to improve as an educator, but also personally. The more I learned the more questions that occurred, which only makes me strive to find the answers and grow as an educator.

The end of my masters program signifies an end to my learning in a traditional, college education setting, but my learning will continue through professional development and through other means. When I enrolled in the masters program, I had experienced other online courses, and had also come to the conclusion that online classes tend to be more difficult than face to face courses, in terms of readings and assignments. However, to take a complete program online made me a bit apprehensive. Since I had taken online classes and teach technology, I determined that this type of delivery would be a perfect fit for me. Even with no personal contact, I was able to communicate with the instructors and classmates, and was able to share a wealth of information. With technology ever changing, the program I believe has prepared me not only for online instruction, but for teaching and learning in different methods.

What's next? Although I am teaching full-time at the secondary level, and love social studies, I believe I need to get to the next level. This could mean teaching at the college level, which I will be in the spring as an adjunct faculty member. I want to take my technology and adult learning courses, and use them to enter the instructional design field, or some type of college level position dealing with technology. I also plan on learning more about new technologies that are being introduced, and how to incorporate them into my lessons. Again, this might be done through online courses, or face to face professional development. My experience at Michigan State University has led me to want to take any class or any type of training online.

Although my vision of what path to take has changed, no matter what road I decide upon, I will always be a student of U.S. History. It is important to know the past or where we come from in order to understand the present and the future and where we are going. To further my background in history, I would entertain ideas to take history classes at the graduate level. I know I will never be an expert on the History Channel, but would like to have the ability to have an intelligent conversation if I were to meet an expert.

The future of my career path is uncertain. The masters program has enlightened me to follow other possible paths, and has also sparked an interest in learning ways to incorporate new technologies in the classroom. No matter the path chosen, educators need to continually learn, not only to pass on the information to our students, but to also make teachers better educators, by learning new material, and new policies, procedures and philosophies. In other words, just because the program is over, does not mean that learning will not continue.