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Goal Reflection Essay
MAED 2019

Finding My Voice

“I do not only teach, I am a teacher. The difference is found in the commitment to embody the example we aim to set for our students within each moment.” (Adams, 2017)

Since this moment of my original goal statement for my time in the MAED program, many paths have opened, some chapters closed, but new possibilities unfolded. When I applied to the MAED program, I was training to become a professional ballet dancer and teaching ballet at Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre (PBT). During my time at MSU, my career paths have been through changes that have influenced my main goals, shifting towards clarity. My original career goal was to go into elementary school teaching after a dance career. However, after experiencing an injury half way through this program, I found the end of my dancing career, pushing towards more in depth involvement in my faculty position at PBT. I began a push towards leadership positions, influencing my shift in focus to leadership studies. This was reflected when I changed my concentration to P-12 and postsecondary school leadership. I also began a pursuit of the sports coaching and leadership classes available through this program. Throughout my time in the MAED program, I also expanded my teaching horizons to include teaching at an early childhood development center (ECDC), primarily situated in the infant room. In looking back on my original goal reflection, I am reminded of my overarching goal, divided into two tangible aspects. My overarching goal remains generally the same, to become a stronger teacher in more focused areas through a program matched to my educational needs and to expand my horizons further for the students of ballet, academics, and special education, become more for their sake, to expose them to new methods and understandings. Through my work in this program, I have found a new pathway to achieving this goal thorough the study of leadership. In becoming more involved in my faculty position with PBT, I have joined several transition teams and have developed new ideas for teaching student teachers. I conclude my work in the MAED program feel confident that I have met my underlying goal in becoming a stronger teacher and exposing my students to new methods and understandings, only not in the way I originally had envisioned. My school went through a curriculum change, and a major adjustment in desired body image for our dancers. Through this program, I have found a way to advocate for my students, to adapt my coaching techniques to their unique needs. I have developed the beginnings for a new method of coaching to the individual athlete within the rigorous setting of ballet. In meeting this goal, I have also identified new goals for my academic and professional future. Through my work at the early childhood development center, I have taken great interest in early childhood development. I have found a voice in standing up for what I believe in as a teacher, for my students, and avocation for young children. My time in this program has been one of self-discovery and unexpected personal changes. In my completion of the MSU MAED program, I find myself with secure footing and a confident voice, knowing what I will look for in future teaching environments. I also leave with a newly developed interest in early childhood development. I see a future where I can voice for my students, teach with the freedom of full passion, and continue my education with a quest into doctoral child development programs.