

All That, And More

By Benjamin Oberdick

I started the MSU MAED program in the September 2009 a little less than a year after beginning my job as an Instruction and Reference Librarian for the MSU Libraries. I was very excited to be coming to work at MSU after more than five years living in North Carolina and I was also excited to be able to work on another degree after having recently completed the Master of Library and Information Studies (MLIS) program at UNC-Greensboro in May 2007. I have always loved being a student and I was looking forward to continuing my education and earning a second graduate degree, but I was also a bit nervous about completing the coursework for this program while also working full time in a position that would require a lot out of me, including having to go through our version of a tenure review at the same time I would be completing my last class in the program. I had never had the challenge of working full-time while also being in school and I felt not an inconsiderable amount of trepidation about being able to give both of these important things my full attention.

As I look back on an essay I wrote for admittance to MSU, my goals for completing this program came down to a desire for me to:

- improve my teaching and knowledge of education
- gain some expertise and skills in the use of technology in education
- gain experience and familiarity with online instruction
- better understand how students learn online so I could use it when I was creating online modules, guides and tutorials for students for their information literacy needs.

I believe the courses I took, the readings and discussions I had, the activities and projects I completed, have all helped me to make progress in all four of these areas. I am by no means an expert in any of them, and I will continue to learn and strive in my knowledge and skills in teaching and learning areas, but I believe that the past five years of taking classes in the MAED program have made me a better teacher, allowed me to play with, and learn about, many new and different technologies that I have been able to incorporate into my teaching in a pedagogically efficient and effective manner, and also to relate and apply a lot of what I learned through my coursework directly to my teaching and work as an Information Literacy Librarian at MSU. I didn't state this in my original goal statement, but I think it has been a huge additional benefit for me. To be able to use what I learned in this program to improve my work as a librarian and teacher, and to also be able to use it to make presentations at national and international conferences related to my profession, has been incredibly helpful to me as a teacher, librarian, and on my road toward my tenure review this coming summer.

I have greatly enjoyed these past five years of taking classes in the MSU MAED program and I have learned a lot. It was a challenge at times as I tried to balance my coursework, job, personal life, and everything else, but even when I was traveling around the country (and internationally as well) to make presentation and attend conferences, I was also able to make the time for my

coursework because it was something I wanted to do, as well as something that I had to do. Overall, I think I made a lot of progress toward reaching each of the goals I named when applying to the MAED program, and while I am not at the finish line for any of the individual goals, have gotten a little closer to each of them by being in this program.