

# **Unquenchable Thirst to Learn**

**By Andrew Blain**

Lifelong learning is something that should be a part of every educator's career and life. Thoroughly engaging themselves in academics, learning communities, and multiple other facets of education creates an unquenchable thirst for learning. This thirst for learning has propelled me through the Master's of Arts in Education Program at Michigan State University as well as my teaching and coaching career.

Education is an ever-changing metamorphosis. In a world where technology is constantly changing the way in which we learn and where teachers have to adapt the way in which they present information to the learner, the end goals remains the same...facilitate success for the learner. I believe traditional classes along with online learning is truly a unique way to make sure a wide variety of students are successful in the classroom and in the real working world. Personally, educational leadership classes have specifically taught me how to value, appreciate, and learn from certain learning communities. The power of knowledge through collaboration with others has impacted the way I will teach in the future. The school where I teach has blended teaching practices for its students. There is tremendous value in merging old traditional styles of teaching with the ever-changing technology of today's society. The online MAED program has taught me that discipline, self-management, and motivation are key factors in producing a successful student and ultimately lifelong learner. Technology has to be filtered both for me as a teacher to make sure valid sources are used in instruction and for students to ensure that there is meaning to their learning behind the digital screen. Through practice, collaboration, and individualized teaching strategies I plan to continue my journey of education taking into consideration the journey towards a much more digital world and learning styles.

While I've almost completed my Master's degree, it is only the starting point of my lifelong journey of learning. The knowledge, ideas, and strategies I've gained through the program provides a solid blueprint for my continued learning and teaching. Expanding upon furthered ideas, physically practicing them, and digitally immersing my students in various forms of technology is where I have to be able to find success. I have never thought that in physical education and health there would be such a wide breadth of coverage for my content from the MAED program. The Kinesiology classes have equipped me with further insight into the athletes I coach, the students I teach, and ways to teach those students about physical improvements by focusing on their mental and psychological capacities. These courses have provided me the framework for effective feedback, instructive techniques, as well as wonderful visual examples that my students can learn from through proper demonstration. Education courses geared towards literacy have been the most eye-opening classes throughout the program. In particular, understanding that certain students learn better through visual representations, verbal and

kinesthetic awareness are all vital for me as an educator because those particular learning styles can help me understand how each particular student learns in the most effective way. Having background information in literacy strategies and testing will help me as an educator become more well versed in my craft, but at the same time offer much needed assistance for those physical and health education students that need assistance due to a certain disability, language barrier, or other limiting factor. Remembering these helpful strategies as well as keeping an open mind to learn new ones will only help me on my lifelong learning journey.

The kinesiology, leadership, and literacy strategies and multiple other elements through the MAED program will prove to be a valuable asset in my future teaching. The next step is to build on those these particular skills through enriched professional development opportunities, further graduate classes, and simple collaborative engagements from professionals in their particular fields. Lifelong learner to me means the journey towards accomplishment of certain skills, expertise, and effective means to teach learned knowledge to others so they can begin their lifelong journey further than where I began mine. The challenge to make sure that every day is used to the best of my ability is to make sure that I am challenged, learn new things, and that I am motivated to do the best for the students and athletes that I coach on a regular basis.

Through the program and its experiences I feel I will be able to take a large amount of knowledge with me into my future teaching and coaching endeavors. Simple implementations of technology in the classroom, such as using heart rate monitors in my physical education class will be a great tool to use to get my students motivated to participate in physical activity as well as encourage them to improve themselves. I feel tracking student data using various technologies is something that will prove very valuable to me in order to teach effectively and learn. Challenging myself to use different technologies, teaching strategies, and to test theories are all examples of what I will need to do going forward in order to become a more effective lifelong learner. Establishing the drive and passion to challenge thinking and expand upon ideas will allow me to do the best that I can moving forward in the future.