

The more things change, the more the stay the same: Looking back on my learning goals

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In the spring of 2011 I began to make those initial steps that would lead me to pursue a MAED from Michigan State University. At that time I was a floating visual arts teacher at an affluent high school in the Midlands of South Carolina. Our student population numbered at around 3,300+. In the forthcoming school year (2013-14) our district will open a new high school that will cut the population of my school to roughly 1,700 students and with the newly available space I will be granted, for the first time in my educational career, my own permanent classroom.

When I first considered what I wanted to pursue for my masters I knew that my primary goal was to increase the presence of literature in my visual arts curriculum. At that time, and through today, I believe that there is a link between the way that our students encounter and comprehend material when written or read through traditional literacy and how they process the messages received from images received visually. As the 21st century continues to become digitally driven our students are being increasingly exposed to a visual culture by digital media. We, as educators, are going to have to address the student's need to be equipped with the tools necessary to navigate and succeed in a visual environment. Traditional literacy can be the key to connect with visual material with the communication of ideas in the same manner that visual literacy can aid in the understanding, and application of language.

Over the past two years Michigan State's MAED program, with a concentration in Literacy, has provided a diverse approach to addressing the instruction of literature adaptable to the secondary visual arts classroom. Admittedly, I was surprised by the number of methods that were presented that incorporated visual imagery making it very adaptable to my field. Upon reflection of my initial intent to enter into this program and the goal of incorporating literacy practices into the visual art curriculum I believe I have achieved what I had set out to accomplish and look forward strengthening the links between visual and traditional literacy.