

## **Future Learning Goals** **By Woei Wang**

*Who dares to teach, must never cease to learn - John Cotton Dana*

When my family immigrated from South Korea to the US I didn't know any English and I was the only Asian kid in school. It was difficult trying to get people to understand what I was trying to say when I didn't have a good grasp of the English language. Remembering what it was like as a child who had limited understanding of English prompted me to focus on Literacy for my Masters in Education (MAED). Yet, even after I'd become proficient in English many people still couldn't fully understand my perspective because I saw things through a different cultural lense. I still think it is important to continue to learn more about literacy so that I can better help my English Language Learners but I also think that I need to learn to be a culturally responsive teacher, to reach out to others in the community as well as my colleagues, and to learn ways to incorporate social justice into my teaching.

I have always loved reading and discovering new worlds through books. I want to instill in my students the same joy of reading that I had when I was younger. And at the same time I want my students to improve their writing skills so that they will be able to express their thoughts through words. I've learned some great ways to help my students with Literacy while in the MAED program but my journey to help my students understand and express their thoughts in English won't end upon the completion of my program. I need to continue to learn how to diagnose and learn of new strategies that can help my students to understand English while also helping them to be able to effectively express themselves. In order to facilitate my learning, I plan to get my endorsement for English as a Second Language (ESL) so I can specialize in teaching English Language Learners (ELLs). I also plan to become a member of the association of National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) to stay up-to-date on new strategies and practices in the ELL field.

I've always been fascinated by other people's cultures seeing as I am a member of a minority group and have also had the chance to be a mentor at an urban school during my undergraduate years at Michigan State University. I had a chance to experience and see the effect that race and culture have on a person's ability to learn. While I've only begun to grasp what it means to be a culturally responsive teacher, I want to learn more so that I can maximize my students' abilities to learn by being able to take into account my students' culture and race. I know I can't possibly do this alone because my understanding of other cultures is limited but I plan to attend the Culturally Responsive Teachers (CRT) Conference to further enhance my awareness, add to my knowledge of others, and strengthen my skills to interact effectively as a teacher. I can also increase my learning by helping to form a multicultural club at school so that my students and I can all learn about cultures that are different from our own.

And although I can learn a great deal through professional networks, I think it's also important to be interconnected with those around me. Becoming actively involved in the community will allow me to gain valuable insight on the the value system that is in place and learn of any concerns the community may have. I also intend to seek out teachers within my school because they can be valuable resources who can aid me in my quest to better understand the community in which I teach.

Ultimately, my goal of learning about the community will inform me of how I can incorporate the teaching of social justice into my classroom. As a teacher with a background in social studies I believe it's imperative to connect events in history with what is currently occurring in the world the students live. I understand many students find the subject of social studies to be boring but by bridging the gap of how events in the past affect the present I can help my students see how social studies is relevant to their lives. Then my students can take this knowledge and apply it to their lives by becoming better citizens. In order for me to a teacher of social justice I intend to get involved in my community and attend workshops that will aid me in creating more engaging lessons.