

## *A Life-Long Learner, Teacher, and Collaborator*

One aspect of being an educator that I pride myself on the most is being a life-long learner. I am constantly looking for fresh ideas to bring to my classroom and peers. There is a saying that is quite common in the teaching community that says that “great teachers steal.” I have taken this quote to mean that when an educator has found something that has proven to be successful, it might be worth giving it a try. I feel fortunate that my school is full of teachers that feel comfortable sharing both their successes and failures in the classroom. Our community is a wealth of knowledge that gives and takes to ensure that both teachers and students are supported. In an effort to bridge my school’s culture on teaching and learning as a community and to bring my own teaching philosophy to my community I have three goals to consider: expanding my professional networks through conferences and professional development, bringing technology resources to my classroom and colleagues, and to learn how to bring restorative practices into my classroom.

Part of being a life-long learner is finding ways to expand my knowledge through conferences and professional development. I want to make sure that I never find myself just going through the motions of teachings. The inspiration behind this goal came from my mentor teacher who always seemed to have a professional development or conference lined up during my year with her. I was impressed with her passion to learn and find new ways to teach and bring new learning to her students. As a science teacher, I think a great place to find ideas and schedule time to attend conferences and professional developments is to join the [Michigan Science Teachers Association](#). There is an annual conference that is filled with sessions, keynote speakers, and workshops to learn more about science education. Outside of science education, I will also want to look into an [online professional development](#) resource that offers a broader scope to expanding my wealth of knowledge.

Technology plays an important role in my classroom and I believe I have many resources that can be useful to my colleagues as well. In a community that feels comfortable sharing both the highs and lows of what happens inside our classrooms, I always love being able to help or bring something new to my teaching partners. My class has come to love tools like google classroom and feel comfortable navigating through their google drives and gmail accounts. In order to build my confidence in sharing resources, I want to become a [Google Certified Educator](#). This will help me build confidence and perspective on using technology in the classroom that I can then share with others. This will hopefully lead to more conversations at my school around technology. The motivation for this goal comes from my belief that technology in the classroom has become a need in the 21st century. I want to inspire “tech talks” amongst the staff at my school.

My teaching philosophy includes the idea that students should feel safe and respected when they enter my room. With all the things students have to juggle in life and in school, their safety should not be something that they have to actively think about. It is always my goal to work on the best way to build a classroom community where everyone feels like their voices are being

heard but to also know that I will be there to support them through anything. One practice that I have been continuously working on is [restorative justice](#). The idea behind the theory is to find ways to work through behavior problems by building relationships, encouraging ownership of responsibility, providing an open dialogue between victims and culprits, and addressing harms and needs. This approach is the opposite of a zero tolerance policy where students are punished without learning from their mistakes. Our school is currently looking at a book called *Better Than Carrots or Sticks: Restorative Practices for Positive Classroom Management*.

My future goals encourage me to continue my passion for life-long learning. Through various conferences, professional development, classroom resources, and collaboration with other teachers, I hope to expand my abilities to teach and to learn. Not only will these goals be beneficial to the way I teach within my classroom, they will give me a richer perspective in how to collaborate with others. Great teachers steal, but they also share their knowledge in order to ensure the success all students and teachers.