

Masters of ECE Career E-Portfolio Narrative

Masters of Early Childhood Education

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## **Introduction**

As the Master's Program comes to an end, I am able to reflect on everything I have learned at Kennesaw State University. As I take a moment to reflect on my accomplishments, I am truly grateful for all the professors who shared a wealth of knowledge on best teaching practices for early education. This Master's Program has impacted my life professionally, intellectually, and personally. Not only has this Master's Program impacted my teaching career, but it has helped me to become a leader that supports my fellow co-workers and provided new and innovative ideas that will improve the overall education students receive at my school.

I have faced many challenges this year with teaching full time, attending graduate school, and being a first time mommy. Even with all the challenges, I am glad I made the decision to pursue my Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education. This experience has given me a wealth of knowledge and an experience that has impacted my current and future teaching. The completion of the action research project was an amazing experience, one I'll never forget. The experience not only showed me the importance of continued research, but the benefit it has on student learning. I now have a deep understanding of educational action research and the impact it has on student growth. Not only did the action research impact my teaching, but the assignments and readings were very interesting. The various projects and assigned readings inspired me to be a better teacher for my students. Everything I read was either implemented in my classroom or book marked for use later. I have become a better teacher for achieving a Master's Degree, but I honestly believe my students are reaping the benefits. The knowledge I have learned during this year has provided my students with innovated teaching practices that are reflective of a 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom. My students are more engaged with the use of technology and it has impacted student learning and motivation.

As an educator, I believe it is my responsibility to provide my students with the best education possible. In order to provide my students with a quality education I believe it is necessary for teachers to support their students by staying current on the new educational trends and best practices. Education is constantly changing, and it is our duty to ensure our students learn despite the advancements in education. As educational trends and best practices change, teachers need to reflect and adjust their teaching practice in order to meet the needs of their learners.

The completion of the Master's Program has enhanced my understanding of best practices. I have become confident in my ability to meet the needs of students learning in a 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom. With everything I have learned through this year, I am extremely eager to share the knowledge I have learned with my peers, become more of a leader within my school community, and bring technology into my classroom. Kennesaw State University has provided me an experience that has helped me become a more proficient teacher. I look forward to sharing my new found knowledge with my co-workers and welcome the opportunity to use my knowledge to provide a quality education to all my students.

### **Subject Matter Experts**

I have had the enjoyment of teaching multiple grades over the course of my five years teaching in a public school system. With the experience of teaching multiple grade levels, I feel that I possess broad, current, and specialized knowledge of subject matter. Through this Master's Program, my teaching has been taken to the next level. Kennesaw State University has provided me with the knowledge and skills to be a better teacher for my students. This Master's Program has shown me the importance of keeping parents up-to-date on current educational topics within the classroom. Parents are just as important as the students. They need to feel connection to their

child's education, which is why I send home [weekly newsletters](#). By sending home newsletters, parents are aware of weekly spelling words, topics to be covered, and important events coming up. It allows teachers and parents to communicate about the learning involved within the class. With technology becoming so prominent in classroom, my weekly newsletter gets emailed to all my parents. This allows for quick delivery and parents can send a quick response back to me, if needed. The weekly newsletter promotes open communication between parents and teachers.

Through KSU Master's Program, I have been able to examine science standards to gain a deeper understanding of the content my students are required to know by the end of the year. [Unpacking the science standards](#) gives me full knowledge and understanding of what the standards means. This is extremely helpful when explaining content specified information to parents. Standards can be confusing, but by unpacking them they become easier to understand for teachers, parents, and students.

Standards are an important component to education. After all the standards are what we teach our students, but the creativity in presenting the content is left up to the teacher. When exploring the second grade standard on historical figures, I created a [PowerPoint](#) to detail the important contributions of Martin Luther King Jr. The PowerPoint provides students with an opportunity to explore Martin Luther King Jr's life and the many important contributions to America. It also provides recordings of some of MLK's famous speeches for students to listen and reflect on. In the PowerPoint, students are also assessed on the knowledge learned from the presentation.

Technology is a growing "hot topic" in education. Teachers and students are using more technology to provide instruction and express learning. As a teacher it is important to keep up with society's advancement on technological trends. As a teacher, I embrace technology in my

classroom, and try to give my students daily exposure to it. My class has a [class website](#) which is visited daily during literacy centers. Students use the website to respond to weekly blog questions about content they have learned in previous weeks or content they are currently learning. My students also practice literacy activities during this time. Since it is a website, my student's parents are able to access it from home. This also provides a way for them to stay connected in their child's learning. Another way I utilize technology into my classroom is through the presentation of second grade content. I created a [Turbo Quest](#) in which my students were to explore different historical figures and complete the task of creating a historical play detailing the important events and contributions in their life. Another technology project was creating a [YouTube video](#) as a way to introduce water pollution to my students for Earth Day. I usually present new information through the use of a picture book. However, the use of the video really engaged my students while providing them with important information about water pollution. Technology has its pros and cons, but in my classroom students only see the use of technology as a benefit to my teaching and their learning.

Teaching is filled many "ah-ah" moments for both teachers and students, but challenges are also present in the teaching field. Every school year is faced with challenges. The only difference is the challenges are different from year to year. This year I was faced with the challenge of teaching many students who have different learning styles and academic abilities. A classroom is not filled with "cookie cutter" students. It is expected that each student should learn on their level and in their own way. As a teacher, it is my responsibility to meet the needs of all my students no matter what their ability level is. This year I had a student who was struggling in reading. His struggles became a challenge of mine, because my teaching method just wasn't working for him. He needed more from me, and it was my duty to make sure he received the

education he needed. I began tutoring him before and after school. I created many [individualized lesson plans](#) that were geared toward his academic level. The lesson plans focused on skills that we previously taught, however they were presented to him in a different format. The outside tutoring helped to get this below level student on grade level.

This past year has been a very challenging, but rewarding year. During the school year I had the opportunity to work with an English Language Learner (ELL) who had limited English. I worked with this second grade student by creating an [ELL lesson plan](#) that showed my proficient pedagogical knowledge in planning a lesson that was appropriate for the students' academic level, but also challenged the student without reaching the point of frustration. Working with this ELL student allowed me to implement academic interventions that were beneficial to ELL students. Working with the student allowed to take a close look at his academic level and reflect on the work I did with him and analyze the testing results. My reflections and analysis of my findings were written in a formal report to show my understanding of the student's academic progress.

Another challenge I overcame was assessing students in reading instruction. Through the Master's Program I have learned how to implement and analyze reading assessments, both formal and informal. This is extremely helpful in determine why the student is struggling in reading. [The Learning Analysis](#) details the knowledge I have learned throughout this program and how to use assessment to drive my instruction. Assessments are the key to student success because they help teachers determine where to begin the instruction.

Kennesaw State University has shown me the importance of integrating curriculum. Through integration, I am able to provide my students with in depth knowledge that is centered on one concept. During this Master's Program I created a [social studies thematic web](#) focusing

on “Our Community” and “Pollution.” This thematic web was designed to integrate all major content areas, as well as art, music, drama, and global education. This unit shows how integration can encompass instruction that is meaningful to the student and the learning outcomes. I also had the opportunity to create another [thematic web centered on reading and China](#). This unit also integrates all the major content areas and includes activities for all the multiple intelligences. This thematic web shows my proficiency in creating units of instructions that are integrated with activities that are meaningful to the overall objectives of the unit. Integration is an important aspect in education. As a teacher, I understand the importance of integrating curriculum and have provide my students with many learning opportunities where content has been integrated. I have included [pictures](#) of my students working on activities where multiple content areas have been integrated. This is beneficial to their learning as it shows how different content areas relate to one another.

### **Facilitator of Learning**

As a teacher, I strive to be the best facilitator of learning for my students. I treat my students equitably while being respectful of their individual different, and adjust my teaching practice to fit with the learning needs of my students. Every classroom has an unique make-up of cultures, and it is my job to respect the differences that are present in my classroom. As a teacher, I make it a priority to learn about the different cultures in my classroom. During my Masters, I was able to learn about different cultures and create a [Prezi Presentation](#) on the Latino culture. This presentation helped me to develop an understanding of the Latino’s beliefs on family, religion, discipline, and education. By truly understanding students’ culture, I am able to connect to them as individuals and provide a quality education while embracing them cultural differences. Differences are present in every classroom. As an educator, I try to provide activities

that will help my student to be successful in school. One way I help students be successful in the classroom is by providing [modified spelling list](#) on their learning level. Students in my classroom working on spelling words that support their learning needs within the classroom. In my classroom, students take a pre-test to determine which spelling level they are on, support/on or advanced. Another way I meet the needs of my students needs is by planning learning activities for my students in which they are grouped into [heterogeneous learning groups](#).

It is important for teachers to understand how their students learn and acquire information. As a teacher, I work towards understanding each students learning needs as a way to help plan my instructional activities. This year I have had many opportunities to learn about my students learning needs. I completed many assignments in which I had to observe my students learning and apply this to my teaching. During my math course, I completed the [Cognitively Guided Instruction Anticipatory Framework](#). This assignment allowed me to anticipate how my students might solve a math word problem based on their level of understanding. I then observed the students solving the problem and provided a reflection indicating what the next steps in their learning might be. This activity allowed me to see the thought process that occurs when students solve problems. [The Diversity Case Study](#) was another assignment that allowed me to learn about one particular student in my class. This case study provided me with informational about the students' culture and his learning needs. By learning about this student I was able to provide instructional activities that met his learning needs. Another [case study](#) I learned about a students' reading difficulties, provided interventions to support his learning, and assessed him to determine if the inventions were successful.

As a teacher, it is expected that I create a safe, well managed, supportive, inclusive, and challenging environment. The beginning of the year is a time to communicate to the parents how

safe and inviting the classroom is, and to present them with the learning goals for the year. Each school year, I present a [Parent Curriculum Night PowerPoint](#) which provides parent with information about the expectations their students. It also discusses the curriculum, and behavior management plans. [Classroom management](#) is an important aspect to teaching elementary school. In my classroom I use a clip system to monitor my students' behavior. Each day, the students will start on GREEN (Ready to Learn). Depending on their choices throughout the day, they can either move up with good choices or down with bad choices. Some students require an [individualized learning plan](#) to meet their needs. As a teacher, I recognize that some students need to be on a different behavioral plan to help keep them on task during learning opportunities.

Teaching is about meeting the needs of all your students. In order for me to meet the needs of my students, I use multiple-methods, technologies, resources and organizational arrangements. Technology is just one way I can meet the learning needs of my students. In the technology class, I was able to create a historical figures [Turbo Quest](#) that provided students with a learning opportunity about the different historical figures first graders are expected to know and understand. Through the many interactive, hands-on learning experiences in my classroom, students are also exposed to different learning environments. In my classroom, learning is conducted in many different [groupings](#). This is seen through the slide show of pictures. Learning takes place in whole group, partners, learning pods, and independent time. Meeting the needs of my students learning ability is clearly evident in my [guided reading lesson plans](#). For reading instruction, I group my students based on their reading level and then provide reading instruction based on their learning level. This way of teaching ensures that I am teaching to the student academic level.

As an educator it is important to monitor student progress with formal and informal evaluations as a way to improve student learning. Assessing students is part of my daily job descriptions. It allows me to truly know if my students have met the learning goals. One way I monitor my students learning is through authentic assessments. During my Master's, I created an [authentic assessment](#) to assess my students' learning and understanding of the Problem Based Learning activity I created. Another [rubric](#) I created assess students' understanding of plant needs. This Master's program has taught me multiple ways of monitoring student learning. During this program, I completed a [reading case study](#) which focused on a students' reading struggles and inventions to improve his reading. Throughout this case study, I used a variety of assessments to monitor this students' learning.

A facilitator of learning must be accountable to multiple audiences, accurately interpret data, and communicate results. As a facilitator of learning is it important to effectively communicate with parents. Parent communication is very important to me and the success of my students. One way I communicate to parents is through monthly [parent reports](#). These reports are sent home to provide parents with information on how their child is performing in reading based upon the county's STAR assessment. The STAR assessment is a computer assessment that assesses students' literacy skills. Another way I provide communication is through parent teacher conferences. During conferences I provide parents with a [reading report](#) detailing assessments completed on their child and how they are performing academically in reading. To communicate results in other academic areas I share their child's [Student Success Profile](#). This profile details how the student is doing academically in each content area, and whether they are performing below grade level, on grade level, or above grade level.

### **Collaborative Professional**

As an educator, it is important to collaborate with your co-workers. Collaborating with my peers makes me a better teacher, and it helps establish a strong learning foundation focused on student achievement. Through weekly collaboration, my second grade team works together to plan weekly [lesson plans](#). As a team, we brainstorm different activities, lessons, and assessments. We work as a team to ensure all our students are academically successful. As a member of the Instructional Leadership team, it is my job to monitor and lead grade level meetings. These meetings allow our second grade team to discuss teaching strategies, plan for upcoming units, reflect on assessments given to students, and discuss students in RTI. Our meetings are documented by our [grade level minutes](#). As an experienced literacy teacher, I assist other teachers in establishing literacy centers. During the 2013-2014 school, I conducted a [Wildcat Forum](#) on implementing literacy choice boards during center time. During this forum, I assisted teachers in creating choice boards in their classroom, as well as modeled the implementation of a successfully run choice board work time. With my collaborative efforts, teachers were able to implement literacy choice boards in their own classroom.

During this Master's program I have had many opportunities to conduct research on educational topics. Through my research, I read many articles that supported my action research topic. The articles I read contributed to development of my [literature review](#). The literature review helped narrow down the topic of my action research project. The purpose of my research project was to determine the effectiveness of iPads on reading comprehension and fluency. Once the project was implemented, I was able to collect data and complete a thorough analysis to include in my final research paper. As a master of education, I understand the important of researching and collecting data as a way to improve my teaching. As a teacher it is important to stay update on current education trends and important people in the educational field. During my

Master's program, I had the opportunity to research [Shelley Harwayne](#) and learn about her contributions to literacy. I think it is important for teachers to learn about past, present, and future educational teaching strategies in order to provide the best teaching approach for each individual student.

As an educator, I proactively lead parents in providing curriculum materials that is important for the success of their child. As a professional, I feel it is important for parents and teachers to collaboratively work together to ensure the success of the students. There is nothing more important than a parent-teacher relationship focused on student learning. One way I work with parents is by conducting [Math Night](#) where parents can learn and play interactive math games with their child. This allows parent to connect with their child and experience the type of learning activities their child completes while at school. [Wildcat Forum for Parents](#) is another way to introduce parents to activities their child is learning at school. This forum is very similar to the Wildcat Forum for teachers. Through the Wildcat Forum, parents are able to learn what their child is doing during literacy work stations as well as participate in the activity. Parent involvement is a must at any school, especially if a school is implementing a new program or initiative. This past year my school was starting a STEM program and needed the help of our wonderful parents. As a teacher, I created a [letter](#) to my students' parents' requesting their assistance with an upcoming STEM lesson. The response from the parents was outstanding. Parents are wanting to help out in the classroom, but they need the teacher to provide ways in which they can help.

As a collaborative professional it is important to engage in on-going professional development. It is important to engage in professional development to be the best teacher you can be. As a growing educator, I continue to engage in professional development or present

professional development courses for all educators. Each school year, I present a presentation to all new teachers and teachers wanting a refresher course on the [CISS process](#) for the identification of possible talented and gifted students. During my TAG endorsement, I created a Prezi to include information about how the CISS process works. I use this Prezi each year to present to teachers who are new to this process. As a member of the literacy team at my school, I attended a [RESA training on Literacy for All](#) during the 2013-2014 school year. This training provided valuable information on establishing a literacy plan and goals for the future. After attending, I provided an in service day at my school to present the information learned from this literacy training. The most recent professional development I attended was the Summer Summit through Fulton County Schools. This Summer Summit provided many courses from differentiation to text book adoptions. Through the [Summer Summit](#) I was able to learn about the different way of providing differentiation for students. I learned about choice boards, tic tac toe boards, dinner menus, and many other interactive ways to differentiate for student learning. Professional development is the key in becoming the best teacher you can be. Educational trends are constantly changing and it is up to the teacher to stay current on the new teaching strategies.

My action research project took three semesters to get to the final product. There were many important steps that I had to take to ensure my research project was in compliance with the IRB. Prior to the start of my research project I had to send home a [parent consent form](#) for my students' parent to fill. By signing the form, parents will allowing their child to participate in the research project. In addition to the parent consent form, I also created a [child consent form](#) that students had to complete in order for me to begin the research process with them. I wanted each student to decide if they wanted to be involved in the research project. This made them feel appreciated and felt included in decision process. Prior to sending home the parental consent, I

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had to go through the IRB to get approval to complete my research project in my classroom. I had to complete an [IRB application to request approval](#) before implementing my research project in the classroom. There are many steps that must be completed in order to conduct an action research project within the classroom. The steps are necessary as it helped me plan for ethical reporting, conducting, and publishing research.