

Masters of Early Childhood Education  
Career E-Portfolio Narrative

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### **Introduction**

Receiving my Master's Degree is drawing near, and it is amazing to think that a year has gone by. Having a fulltime teaching career on top of working on graduate school work was overwhelming at first, but I soon found a routine that worked for me that balanced both work and school. Since my undergraduate degree was in special education, my knowledge of early childhood education has expanded probably more than others. Prior, I had experience in differentiation, IEP's, and behavior support systems, but I lacked competence in the core subject areas. My content knowledge in all areas of elementary teaching has grown, as well as my skills in working collaboratively with others in group settings, taking leadership roles, and incorporating technology for my own use as well as for my students' use.

The action research project provided the most growth for me, as I was able to reflect on my own teaching. Though I have only been teaching for three years, the action research project gave me the opportunity to reflect on my short amount of time in this profession and better my teaching. This is something that I recommend for all teachers—veteran and first year teachers and all that fall in between.

The Master's Program at Kennesaw State University has provided me with information and skills that I will continue to share with my colleagues and administrators, in order to benefit the students at our school. I will also use the action research project, as a means to reflect on my own teaching practices in other areas in the future.

### **Subject Matter Expert**

Through the Master's Program at Kennesaw State University, I have become an expert at possessing knowledge of the subject matter and communicating this to colleagues, parents, and students. The science course I took this summer was a way to expand my content knowledge in this area. I was able to really dive into the standards and unpack them. I organized and showed this through the [Unpacking the Standards Concept Map](#). This helped me to really understand what I need to be teaching and what I expect the students to be able to do. One way I learned to relay information to students in an interactive way was through creating a [Prezi Presentation](#). This was a site that allowed me to link pictures, videos, and information about Benjamin Franklin, a first grade historical figure standard in social studies. I was able to use my knowledge of this content to create a presentation to share with students. The students really enjoyed how interactive the Prezi was. They were able to watch videos and view pictures. They love seeing visuals as a way to learn. Not only has my knowledge been communicated to my students, but it has also allowed me to communicate information to my parents. Each month, my team and I send home a [newsletter](#) to parents updating them on information going on at school and in our classroom. This newsletter also informs parents of what the students are currently learning, as well as allows opportunities for parents to review the curriculum already learned by the students.

Through my Master's, I was also able to understand interdisciplinary curriculum and was able to show my understanding through multiple strategies. I have learned how to use various sites and programs to share information to students and parents. One way that was helpful in sharing information to parents was through the [blog](#) that I created for the first grade team. Blogger was a website that I became familiar with through my first reading course last summer. Once I saw the user-friendliness of the site, I developed a class blog for parents. Websites and

resources were shared on the site as well as upcoming events at school and in our classrooms. For my students, I created a [Turbo Quest](#) project, on the historical figures studies in social studies. This was a great way to incorporate technology with my students. Lastly, as another means of sharing information to my students, I created a video on [Lewis and Clark](#). This was a video that shared pictures and information about Lewis and Clark.

While going through the Master's Program, I was able to gain knowledge about the content and then reflect on how to create approaches to challenges I may face while teaching. One way I learned to overcome challenges when teaching is to differentiate my [lesson plans](#). This enables me to reach all students at their level. I have found differentiation is one of the best ways to reach every student in my class and help set them up for success. The [ISLA](#), Impact of Student Learning Analysis, also was a way to differentiate a lesson, but this also taught me how to create and use data from a lesson that I implemented. I was able to break the data down, analyze it, and reflect on how I will use this to guide my instruction. The ISLA enabled me to dive into the data to see what challenges my students were experiencing and how I would alter my teaching for the next lesson. Finally, through the [Learning Analysis](#), I reflected on the knowledge that I gained through one of the reading courses I took for my Reading Endorsement. This assignment allowed me to reflect on the reading content knowledge, as well as how to identify a struggling reader and what strategies to use to help students who are having these difficulties in reading.

Integration was one of the concepts that many of my classes focused on. I learned how to design instruction that was integrated, flexible, elaborate, and deep. One way that I applied this was through having my students work in different settings. My students were not always learning on the carpet or at their desks. This [picture](#) shows how my students were allowed to move freely

through the classroom and in other settings, such as the computer lab, the media center, and the science lab. Through my Master's I learned how to integrate all subject areas around one theme. For example, I created a [thematic unit](#) on China that integrated reading, writing, listening, speaking, grammar, comprehension, science, social studies, and math. After creating the thematic unit, I chose five activities to create a [Strategy Toolkit](#). This PowerPoint presentation dives into deeper detail of the integrated activities involved in the thematic unit.

### **Facilitator of Learning**

As an educator, I am a facilitator of learning for all my students. I treat students equitably, respect their individual differences, and adjust my practices accordingly. It is important as a teacher to account for the diversity in one's classroom and work to respect the differences that might exist. One way that I accomplished this was through learning about different cultures. During my Master's, I created a [Prezi](#) presentation on the Latino culture. Through this presentation, I was able to develop a deep understanding of Latino's views on education, family values, discipline, work ethic, and religion. When faced with differences in my classroom, one way that I accommodate for my students' individual learning styles is through a [modified spelling list](#). Students were given one of the three lists in order to support their learning needs. Spelling lists were divided into support, on, and advanced. In other areas of learning, students were placed in [heterogeneous groups](#) in order to adjust to their individual needs.

By gathering information on my students and understanding their learning, I was able to use this knowledge to drive my lessons. During my Master's, opportunities were given in which I completed various activities to collect data on my students and then use this to adapt my teaching. One way I did this was in the [Cognitively Guided Instruction Anticipatory Framework](#). I anticipated how a student may solve a problem based on what level of understanding they had.

I then observed the student complete the problem, and reflected on the next steps for the student. Completing a [case study](#) in the diversity course I took during the fall enabled me to develop an understanding of a student in my classroom. I was able to gain knowledge in his culture and how this affected the child's academics. I then used this to drive my instruction. In another [case study](#), I was able to identify the needs of a struggling reader, establish interventions, and monitor the progress of the interventions. This type of practice helped me to create an enriching learning environment for my students.

Another part of being a master teacher is creating a safe, well managed, supportive, inclusive, and challenging environment. At the beginning of the year, a [Parent Curriculum Night PowerPoint](#) is shared with parents to communicate the expectations of their students. Curriculum is discussed as well as behavior plans, homework policies, and classroom procedures. To monitor classroom behavior, I use a [clip chart](#) with seven colors. Students have the opportunity to move up and down the clip chart based upon their behavior. This is a great way to manage a structured classroom throughout the day. When this chart does not work for some students, I develop an individual behavior chart based on the behavior the child is exhibiting. In the [smiley chart](#), a student could earn a smiley in each subject for the behaviors he is working on.

To meet the needs and goals of all students, I used multiple-methods, technologies, resources and organizational arrangements. Technology is one way to meet the needs of my students. In the historical figures [Turbo Quest](#), I created an interactive PowerPoint that taught students about the various historical figures in first grade. Not only did I use multiple means of resources to teach my students, but I placed them in a variety of [groupings](#). These included working in pairs, individually, and in larger groups. Another way to meet the needs of my

students is through a differentiated lesson plan. In my [guided reading plans](#), I group the students based on their reading level and have them read book on their levels.

In order to create ways to meet the needs of my students, I have to monitor student progress with formal and informal evaluations to improve student learning. One way that I accomplish this is through the use of [rubrics](#). In writing, my students are evaluated in the areas of ideas, organization, style, and conventions. Along with rubrics, I also try to use other methods of assessing students versus a paper/pencil test. One way I do this through a [think-tac-toe assessment](#). This is a cumulative unit assessment that allows students to choose their assessment task. During the Master's Program, I completed a [case study](#) to focus on a child in reading and applied strategies learned in class to meet the needs of this student. Assessments were used to monitor the progress of the student.

A part of being a facilitator of learning is the ability to be accountable to multiple audiences, accurately interpret data, and communicate results. Parent communication is very important to me. When meetings and conferences are held, I create a [Parent Meeting Notes](#) page for the parent to look at during the meeting. This gives a summary of how the child is performing both academically and behaviorally. During the case study completed in the reading course, I was required to create a [parent report](#) that listed information about the student and how the student was specifically doing in reading. [Parent reports](#) are also sent home to inform how students are performing in reading based upon the STAR Assessment. This is a computer test that tests students on early literacy skills. The parent report is given to parents during parent-teacher conferences.

### **Collaborative Professional**

A part of being a Master teacher is becoming a collaborative professional by collaborating and leading to strengthen the school, advance knowledge, and influence policy and practice. One way that I collaborate with my colleagues is through [lesson planning](#). My team and I share ideas and best practices for our students. This past year, I was the captain of a committee that worked to support the school in math. At the meetings, [minutes](#) were taken to document our ideas and plans for the school. This committee also was in charge of planning math staff developments. I created a [Prezi presentation](#) that included math resources to share with the staff for one of the staff developments.

Being a professional also requires a teacher to reflect on his or her teaching experiences. As a Master teacher, I reflected and used my experiences and professional literature to design and conduct research. In the Master's Program, I read many research articles. One way that I reflected on this literature was [analyzing the research articles](#). During my action research project, I specifically read articles on mobile technology, such as iPads. Through writing a [literature review](#), I was able to reflect on other researchers experiences with mobile technology. Reading literature on past and present authors, research, and theorists was helpful in further my professionalism. I researched the reading theorist Vivian Vasquez and reflected on her theories through the [Research Theorist Paper](#).

Collaboration as a professional includes collaborating with teachers and staff and also with parents. I worked to proactively involve and lead parents and the community in the support of education. For the social studies unit on Lewis, Clark, Sacajawea, and Thomas Jefferson, the first graders created a play to present to the parents on what they learned in this unit. Parents were encouraged to attend in the [invitation](#) sent home. In my second year of teaching, I was asked to present a [flipchart](#) on how to find teacher resources on Pinterest. This was helpful for



many teachers, as they did not use this site for ideas. One of my biggest accomplishments as a teacher so far was being nominated for [Teacher of the Year](#). This was an honor, as I felt that others saw me as a leader of the school and a strong supporter in education.

Being a professional requires a teacher to continue to receive professional development. One way to stay up-to-date is through being a member of the [Professional Association of Georgia Educators](#). This organization provides educational information and resources to teachers. I also have attended several trainings, such as the [STEM Curriculum Training](#), that have continued my educational knowledge. Hosting a [college student](#) to observe my guided reading lessons also allowed me to receive professional development through sharing best practices with another educator.

Through the Master's Program at Kennesaw State University, I learned to conduct and publish research. This was a great learning experience that enriched my educational knowledge. Receiving [IRB approval](#) was the first step in conducting my research. I then provided students and parents with an [assent](#) and [consent](#) form respectively to educate them on the research process. All of this in combination with the remaining factors of the action research project enabled me to become a collaborative professional that conducted and shared the research in this project.

### **Conclusion**

Receiving my Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education is a major accomplishment. I am confident in the knowledge of have received from Kennesaw State University. I am looking forward to the new school year, and I am awaiting the opportunity to apply the knowledge, skills, and experiences I have gained in the Master's Program. Not only has receiving an advanced

degree helped me, but I know that the results of what I have learned will also positively affect my students.