

Why I Became a Teacher

By Lauren Wohlfert

When I first came to Michigan State University, I hadn't thought too seriously about a career in teaching. Throughout my junior and senior year in high school, I was involved in tutoring younger students and co-taught a weekly youth ministry class to 80 eighth grade students at my hometown church. Although I loved working with the students, it wasn't until I spent a full week teaching science lessons to second grade students that I realized I wanted to fulfill a career in teaching science.

Throughout high school, I always had a great passion for my science courses. This passion to learn in my biology and chemistry classes soon grew to encompass much of my personal life. While my peers had Facebook or gmail.com as their computer's online homepage, my Internet always opened first to ScientificAmerican.com. I was amazed daily by the vast array of discoveries and inventions being made by the scientists showcased on this site. I became determined to fulfill a career in science in the hopes of someday making my own impact in the scientific world, one that would land me a spot in Scientific American. The summer after my first year at college, I had the opportunity to work on various projects in the Research and Development division at The Dow Chemical Company. Through this experience, I was able to witness the exciting but tedious process that goes into developing new scientific technologies and discoveries. Although these projects might never find their way to a cover page of Scientific American, the experience solidified my desire to continue an education in the scientific field.

During the next year at Michigan State, I began to re-evaluate the education path I was currently on. I knew I needed a career that would allow me to express my interest and general excitement for the sciences but couldn't see myself fulfilling a career in a lab similar to the one I had the chance to work in at Dow. My mother suggested I come teach a science lesson to her second grade students to see if perhaps teaching would prove to be a more appropriate fit for me. I went into the experience, focused on the science behind cloud formation, water cycles and various precipitation forms and encompassing each of these sub-units into exciting experiments for the students. I was blinded by my naïve approach, focused only on science, neglecting the fact that so much more goes into teaching than just providing facts and experiments to students. I was excited by the idea that through teaching, I could get to know students on a personal level and hopefully have an impact on helping them to become a well-rounded and educated person. Soon after this experience I changed my major to Biology for secondary education and have loved the valuable experiences I gained at Michigan State. I enjoy providing students a place where they can not only explore science, but also be apart of a community that inspires learning and goodwill towards others.