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Crafting a “Major” Plan

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Crafting a “Major” Plan

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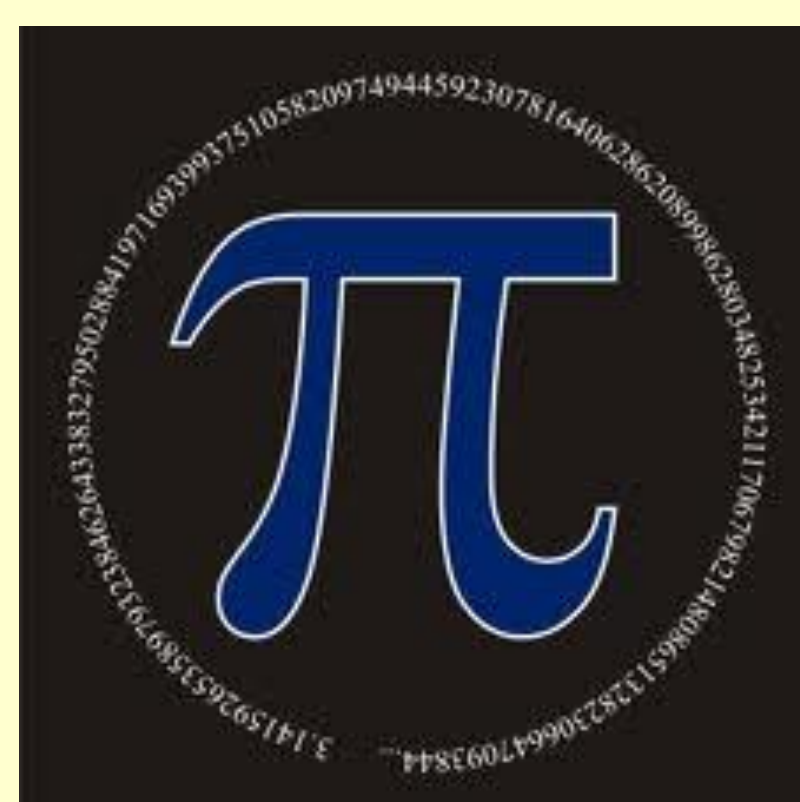
Taking the Lead

The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make these aspects of the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.

Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) Standard 4: Content Knowledge

It sounds reasonable that a teacher should have a solid background in the content knowledge they plan to teach. Undergraduates who are elementary preservice teachers (PSTs) interested in gaining endorsements to teach in the middle school need to further develop their content knowledge in the minor areas they choose. Currently, elementary PSTs need to choose two minor areas.

One of those minors could be mathematics.



However, the State of Michigan will require all teacher certification candidates graduating after winter 2013 to have a teaching **major** only.

Thus my leadership project was “born”. I agreed to take the lead on crafting a new Elementary/Middle School Teaching Major from our existing Elementary/Middle School Teaching Minor.



Making a Plan

Working with the Mathematics Education Faculty in the Department of Mathematics, goals were determined for the new major.

- Add coursework to attend to previously identified weaknesses in the current minor.
- Attend to state and national guidelines for elementary/middle school teachers.
- Design a major that would best utilize existing courses, and minimize the need for additional resources.

Along the Way...

In addition to creating the new major, an application for a new endorsement program had to be submitted to the Michigan Department of Education. This included a program overview along with program requirements. A bit of unexpected extra work.

What is shown below is the newly proposed major along with the current minor. The courses in blue are existing courses for the Secondary Mathematics Education Minors that have been renumbered for this new population of Elementary/Middle School minors. We tentatively plan to mix the two populations so that they can learn from each other as well as to help minimize additional resources to teach the new courses.

Acceptance of the Plan

On September 20, 2013, Terry Grant (Mathematics Educator, WMU) and I attended the College of Arts and Sciences College Curriculum Committee meeting and successfully presented the proposed Elementary/Middle School Teaching Major.

The work we had commenced in the Fall of 2012 had paid off.

Beginning Fall of 2014, elementary preservice teachers will choose from a set of optional majors.

Now, one of those majors could be mathematics.



Current Minor and Proposed Major

Current Elementary/Middle School Teaching Minor	Credit Hours	Proposed Elementary/Middle School Teaching Major	Credit Hours
Math 1500: Number Concepts for Elementary/Middle School Teachers	4	Math 1500: Number Concepts for Elementary/Middle School Teachers	4
Math 1510: Geometry for Elementary/Middle School Teachers	4	Math 1510: Geometry for Elementary/Middle School Teachers	4
Math 2650: Probability and Statistics for Elementary/Middle School Teachers	4	Math 2650: Probability and Statistics for Elementary/Middle School Teachers	4
Math 3520: Teaching of Elementary/Middle School Mathematics	Credit not counted in Minor	Math 3520: Teaching of Elementary/Middle School Mathematics	Credit not counted in Major
		NEW: Math 5530: Number Systems and Proportional Reasoning for Middle Grades Teachers	4
Math 5540: Algebra in the Elementary/Middle School Curriculum	4	REVISED: Math 5540: Functions and Modeling for Middle Grades Teachers	4
Math 5550: Mathematical Modeling and Problem Solving in the Elementary/Middle School Curriculum	4	REVISED: Math 5550: Concepts of Calculus for Middle Grades Teachers	4
		Math 3501*: Teaching of Middle School Mathematics	3
		Math 3511**: Computing Technology in the Middle Grades Mathematics	3
Total	20	Total	30

What was learned?

The Academic Leadership Academy provided me with some foundational skills for “taking the lead”.

I also learned that in taking the lead, you don’t have to go alone. I was fortunate to have a colleague, Dr. Terry Grant, willing to lead the way with me in “crafting” the new major. There were hours of completing forms, revising the work completed in the forms, asking for critiques from our colleagues on the revised work in the forms, re-revising the work, and so on. Further, members of the Mathematics Education group within the Department of Mathematics, were very helpful in the process to propose new courses, describe course content, and critique proposed plans.

After all of the hard work across the year, it was very satisfying on Friday, September 20th, to have the new major accepted.

Now the new challenge will be to create and revise the curriculum to meet the expectations of INTASC, the Michigan Department of Education, the national accrediting agencies, and the content standards developed by mathematics education organizations. I believe we are ready.