

Mary Dickerson Interview:

How would you describe your area of study to a novice?

I am studying to become a secondary (6-12) Social Science teacher, which may include teaching World History, Virginia and United States history, geography, political science, and sociology/anthropology.

What is your primary motivation for persevering through graduate school?

I am passionate about education and learning. By persevering through grad school, I have the opportunity to learn how to better share my knowledge and help future generations receive the educations they deserve.

Do you think there is any value in social networking with other graduate students in non-related fields?

I most certainly do! By networking, you are given the opportunity to meet new people that open up new and exciting doors! You not only gain new perspectives and knowledge, but have the opportunity to share your existing knowledge with others as well. As a future teacher, I have dedicated myself to a life of learning, and what better way to do that than to learn from people in fields different from my own!

What is your favorite stress-reduction technique?

Listening to music or baking something always does the trick for me!

What is the last book you read strictly for pleasure and how long ago was it?

I am currently working on *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien.

Please describe your most meaningful academic relationship.

I have had many meaningful academic relationships with some wonderful teachers that I have been blessed to know and learn from so it is hard to narrow it down! One that really stands out is my academic relationship with Dr. Melinda Wagner of Radford University. We first met outside of my alma mater, Floyd County High School, during my sophomore year of college. I didn't know who she was from Adam, but she came up to my car, said she had seen me around RU, knew that I was a sociology major, and told me I needed to take her class. I did and two years later, we are still working together. She has become more than just one of my professors—she is a mentor, a role model, and a friend.

What surprised you the most about graduate school?

What surprised me most is the difference in teaching and structure. Most of my grad classes have been discussion based. Yes, there was discussion in undergrad, but everyone in my grad classes are interested and passionate about the same area of study, so the discussions have much more to offer and learn from. It is wonderful to be surrounded by people who share your interests and passions!

If travel to Mars happens in your lifetime, would you want to be one of the scientists on board? If yes, what would you contribute to the mission?

When I was younger, the answer would have been a resounding yes. Now, it is a definite no! I think my only contribution to Mars space travel will be teaching my students that it actually happened!

What is your favorite comfort food and why? How often do you consume it?

My favorite comfort food is spaghetti (or any pasta)! I could eat it every day for all three meals and still love it.

If you hadn't been admitted to graduate school, what do you think you would be doing right now?

I probably would pursue a career related to Sociology and/or Social Science. Most likely I would become a 4-H Youth Development Agent or something of that nature.

When do you expect to complete your degree?

I will complete my degree May 2014!