

## **Kacey Stern Interview:**

**How would you describe your area of study to a novice?** I am studying the ins and outs of literacy instruction—basically how to teach kids to become more proficient readers. My degree will lead to certification as a reading specialist.

**What is your primary motivation for persevering through graduate school?** Teachers need to always, always be learning. When we are stagnant, our kids are the ones that suffer. I will do whatever it takes to make sure my practice is where it needs to be, and that means working hard throughout grad school.

**What is your favorite stress-reduction technique?**

As much as I hate to work out, I love it at the same time. After spending all day working with kids and adults, quiet, alone time is very welcome!

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

Every summer my husband and I take a beach trip with friends. I think I read 4 books while I was there this year, but the one that stands out the most was *The Girl's Guide to Hunting and Fishing* by Melissa Bank.

**Please describe your most meaningful academic relationship.**

Jennifer Jones has served as a mentor, advisor and true role model. Her professionalism and extensive knowledge have helped shape who I am as a teacher as well as a learner. She is always there to listen to the struggles I am having as a teacher, and she offers incredible solutions and advice that always benefit kids. She has also helped to connect me to opportunities and networks that I wouldn't otherwise have access to.

**What surprised you the most about graduate school?**

I think I was most surprised at how applicable everything I learned was to what I was currently doing. The vast majority of what I read or discuss in class directly can be taken directly into the classroom or in my work with other teachers.

**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?**

I would want absolutely nothing to do with that mission! My contributions in life are almost all kid and teacher related- there is no good that would come from me in a high pressure situation traveling to another planet!

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

I've never met a potato I didn't like (unless they're sweet potatoes!). I particularly love French fries, and I consume entirely too many of them!

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

I'd be doing exactly the same thing I am right now- working in public schools full time, making sure kids get an excellent education. I may not have the same skill set that I do now, but I can't imagine myself anywhere else!

**When do you expect to complete your degree?**

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