

Amy Shaver Interview:

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

Most people unfamiliar with Educational Leadership would assume that I am studying to become a principal, but this degree program actually prepares one to be anything from an Instructional Coach to assist teachers improve their classroom practices to an assistant principal all the way up to the central office staff short of being the Superintendent. The program prepares students to influence the education of students in many different roles.

What is your primary motivation for persevering through graduate school?

Although I absolutely love teaching and feel at home interacting with my students, ultimately as a teacher I have a limited influence on the students that are in my own classroom. By pursuing a degree in Educational Leadership, I can further my career by stepping outside of the classroom into the realm of influencing policies and practices that ultimately will affect a greater number of students.

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

Since I am in the business of preparing students for the workplace and community, it is my duty to network with others in non-education related fields. There is a wealth of knowledge available by interacting with other graduate students.

What is your favorite stress-reduction technique?

Reading is my favorite stress-reduction technique. Reading helps carry my mind from its current location to a different place and time. It is like a mini-vacation for your brain.

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

I read *The God Delusion* by Richard Dawkins and reread *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe* by Douglas Adams. I just finished those last week since it is summer vacation.

Please describe your most meaningful academic relationship.

My most meaningful academic relationship has been with Dr. Brad Bizzell who is an assistant professor and the program area coordinator for the Educational Leadership program. Aside from the educational leaders within my own district who have worked with me through my graduate program, he has been the most influential in my pursuit of my degree. He understands how tough it can be to juggle working full-time while pursuing a degree and has always been available to offer guidance to me during my time at Radford.

What surprised you the most about graduate school?

I was most surprised by the flexibility of learning in a mostly online environment. Although I do not meet in a room on campus with my professors and fellow students, the technology allows us to talk, interact and work collaboratively on projects. I feel I have really made some lasting friendships and connections through this program.

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 absolutely travel to Mars and I would bring my kids along to make sure that there would be someone young enough to drive us all back home! Although I might not be the smartest or most knowledgeable scientist, I would bring a continual thirst for knowledge and a sense of adventure. I am truly a life-long learner and there would be so much to learn and share in a mission to Mars.

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

Homemade macaroni and cheese is my favorite comfort food. I believe that cheese is its own food group, and I have it a few times per month. There is something so comforting about a bowl of warm pasta that was handmade by someone who cares.

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

I would still be in the classroom teaching chemistry. It would not be the worst thing in the world as I do truly love teaching. However, I have become so much more aware of the workings of the school system, policy making, budget and laws, that I believe I have become a better classroom teacher because of my pursuit of this degree.

When do you expect to complete your degree?

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