

Matt Goodman Found His Passion for Math Education—And a Program That Made It Possible

How Montclair's Teaching Middle Grades Mathematics (MA) Online is Helping One Teacher Transform Math Class.



For Matt, the decision to pursue an online graduate degree was driven by a need for flexibility. “I didn’t want to go to an in-person lecture hall after teaching all day,” he explains. “The online format allowed me to learn from home, hop on quickly, and meet people in similar circumstances.” Montclair’s program, with its blend of synchronous and asynchronous coursework, gave him the tools he needed to balance a demanding teaching schedule with his graduate studies.

But it wasn’t just the convenience that drew Matt to Montclair. “I wanted a program that wasn’t just about teaching methods or just about math—it had to be both,” he says. “Montclair’s courses, like Measurement and Algebra, taught me how to teach math effectively while deepening my understanding of the subject. It stood out as the perfect combination.”

Through Montclair’s program, Matt discovered new ways to lead, both in and outside the classroom. “The leadership development class was a game-changer,” he says. “It helped me become more confident as a teacher and a professional. I’ve since led professional development sessions and introduced new technology tools to my department.”

The supportive faculty played a big role in his growth. “The professors are incredibly understanding,” he says. “When I went on a study abroad trip with my students, they encouraged me to focus on my job first. They really care about you as a person and want to see you succeed.”

While Matt initially assumed the online format would be isolating, he quickly found a close-knit community among his classmates. “I didn’t expect to make friends,” he admits. “But in my first semester, I met people who were going through the same challenges as me—teachers balancing work and family.” The group bonded over projects, both online and in person, including a memorable field trip project in New York City.

“Having that support system made all the difference,” he says. “It made the experience more fun and less stressful. We weren’t just logging in and out of a lecture—we were building relationships.”

Matt’s time at Montclair has already had a significant impact on his teaching. “Math is a widely disliked subject,” he acknowledges. “It’s complex, and students often feel discouraged. Through this program, I’m learning how to combat that by using effective pedagogy and making math more accessible.”

He credits the program with helping him refine his approach to teaching and inspiring him to advocate for his subject. “Math education is so specific, and I wanted to specialize in what I do every day, not something far removed from my classroom.”

As Matt continues to grow in his role as an educator, he remains focused on his mission to make math more approachable and enjoyable for his students. “I love teaching because it’s always changing—it’s never mundane,” he says. “This program has given me the tools to adapt and thrive, no matter what challenges come my way.”

For those considering Montclair’s Teaching Middle Grades Mathematics (MA) online program, Matt offers this advice: “It’s flexible, supportive, and focused on what really matters—helping you become the best teacher you can be. If you’re passionate about your subject and ready to grow, you won’t regret it.”