

Andrew Nielsen enjoys the **'a ha moments'** in his classroom

By Renae Gould

Andrew Nielsen is an advanced manufacturing and welding technologies instructor at Montcalm Community College.

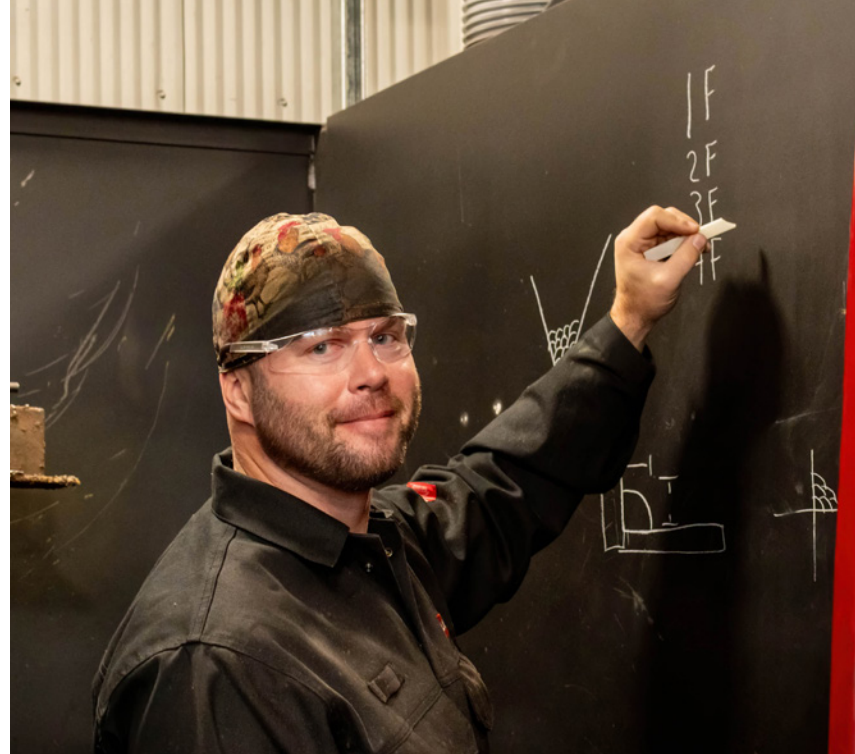
"I am a huge believer in see one, do one, and teach one," Nielsen said. "I like to teach the theory of what we are going to accomplish in the lab, head to the lab, show the students how to accomplish the task and then let them try it, let them fail, but fail forward. I believe you learn more from failure than success."

Nielsen graduated from Belding High School in 2003. He then attended Olivet College where he played football and baseball and earned his Bachelor of Arts in Management in 2008. After that, he spent five years in the North Dakota oil fields. He decided he wanted to return home and study metal fabrication.

Through an apprenticeship with Greenville Tool and Die, he started his journeyman certification courses at MCC in 2017. Nielsen earned an Apprenticeship Training Certificate in welding from MCC in 2020, with high honors, and now teaches welding, machining and automation classes on MCC's Greenville campus. He is also an AWS Certified Welding Inspector.

"I really enjoy the 'a ha' moments that you see in students as they are practicing through the modules, and suddenly, something clicks, and they are creating desired results," Nielsen said.

Aside from his work at MCC and the North Dakota oil fields, he also worked in grounds maintenance at Candlestone Inn & Golf in Belding and at the Double R Ranch in Smyrna doing



horse trail guides, campground maintenance, canoe running and golf course maintenance.

He and his wife, Bridget, have been married for almost seven years and reside in Rockford. They have two sons, Lincoln and Roman. He likes to travel around Michigan and the United States, mostly hiking trails through mountain ranges. He can't wait until his children are old enough to ride motorcycles and ATVs around Michigan's awesome trails.

Jason Becker and Jody Collier are two people he admires. Both gentlemen have worked hard in their trade and are now valuable resources of information on YouTube and podcasts. They are both lifelong learners and give back to the welding community by freely sharing their knowledge.

If he hadn't gone into teaching, Nielsen said he was close to becoming a heavy machine operator. He said it would be awesome to drive bulldozers, front end loaders and cranes.

Nielsen feels that his work ethic and integrity are the best skills he brings to his job.

"I show up, do what I say I'm going to do, (or at least give it my best shot) and try to learn something from the task," he said.

Visiting Alaska and driving a monster truck are two things on his bucket list, and he said doing both at the same time would be ideal.

His personal motto is "Stuff happens. Deal with it and try to find the best way to overcome it." ■