Content and Methodology Reflection

During the time I spent at Manchester College I was enrolled and participated in numerous classes. I took several liberal arts classes, but I mostly took classes that were a part of my content area. These content area and methods classes taught me some general information I needed to know for teaching, but they also taught me about education and how to truly teach children. During my career at Manchester College, I gained many things from my content and methodology classes and my views, knowledge, and attitude have changed as a result.

The content area classes I have taken have assisted me in being more knowledgeable in many subjects. There was a vast amount of classes I learned a great deal from and I will carry that information I learned with me in the future. For example, in the Foundations of Exceptional Learners class, I learned about thirteen different areas of exceptionalities and the characteristics, treatments, and implications used in education. Because of these things, I realized I wanted to specialize in special education. For me this class was the foundation for the other special education classes I was about to take. It gave insight into what to look for and what to expect as a teacher of special education students. However, if I was not preparing to go into special education, this class would have made me aware of exceptional students I may have in my general education class.

Another content area class that I learned a great deal from was my Literacy Block. Literacy Block set the basis for reading in the classroom and this is where I learned how good readers read. I feel that I am confident in knowing the steps students take to
become good readers. There were many assignments and tasks that I had to complete in this course. I feel most of them were relevant in preparing me to understand the ability for students to become good readers. Even though some of them were time consuming, such as the trade books and creating activities to go along with them, in the future I can use these activities in my classroom.

Currently I am enrolled in a methods block, taking classes that are geared to prepare me for teaching children. At this point in my education, I know I have more to learn to be a successful teacher and I realize a lot of this knowledge will come from experience in the classroom. I have gotten a great deal of information from these classes, but this information has not been brought together as a whole. I have bits and pieces of what it is going to be like and feel like when I enter the field, but I do not have the whole picture. I sense that this may be due to the fact that, on occasion, time is not being used appropriately in class. Quite often discussions get off track and students begin speaking about other topics. In turn, this results in the subject not being covered sufficiently. When the off-task discussion has finished, class is over and I often feel like the subject for the day was not covered adequately. Yet, another way class time is not being used appropriately is when presentations are assigned by professors. I think presentations are a valuable learning experience and teaching tool in some circumstances, but at times it feels like it is an effortless way of planning and preparing materials for class. I believe that class time can be better used by professors which in turn can benefit students in a greater way.

There are classes in which I have gained valuable information to help me effectively teach students. One of these classes is the Natural Science and Social Studies
Method course because it has prepared me by requiring pertinent assignments and by providing applicable class discussions. I have gained new ideas for teaching social studies and science in the classroom besides just using the textbook. Most of the ideas combine the textbook and other outside resources to help students understand these two subjects fully. I learned it is acceptable to try new things other than just using the textbook in the classroom. The time I have spent in this course and the knowledge I have gained has prepared me to become a better teacher when teaching social studies and science.

Another class that I feel has helped prepare me to become a successful teacher is Classroom Behavioral Management. In this course, I learned how to prepare my classroom so it will be well managed. The class consisted of student presentations on theorists and their ideas supporting their theories. In turn, I was able to apply the theories when creating a discipline plan to help organize my future classroom. Ultimately, the theories helped come up with a plan for a well managed classroom.

Furthermore, in helping me prepare to become a successful teacher, there were other significant assignments. For example, the “time filler bank” that I had to create for the Classroom Behavioral Management class was very beneficial to me. I was able to learn ideas and activities which I can carry with me in the future. Having the knowledge of these activities will allow me to use the ideas from the “time filler bank” during unstructured time in my classroom. This will allow for a better managed classroom, in turn making me a more successful teacher. I believe I have gained valuable information from this course which I will take with me into the field of education.

After spending a great amount of time in education courses at Manchester
College, I feel that my views of teaching have changed vastly. I came to Manchester not knowing why I wanted to educate children. I knew that I wanted to make a difference and be a part of giving students opportunities that they might not otherwise have. After looking back at everything that I have learned, I realize that there is more in education that what I thought. I have learned that education is teaching children, but it is also having the power to reach out to children and find ways to challenge and engage them. I have also learned that not everyone learns the same way and it is my job as a teacher to take the time to engage those individual learning styles. In addition, I realize that by pursing a degree in education there is a great deal of responsibility placed on my shoulders. I have come to conclude that I am going to put in a countless amount of hours and more often than not, those hours will go unnoticed. If I can teach students and make a difference in one child’s life, then the numerous hours will be well spent.