It seems to soon to be reflecting back on four years of college. How quickly my time at Manchester College passed. I have had four great years of education, professors, and experience that I do no think I would have had if my major had not been elementary education. Education is what helps people succeed in life and I have only had teachers that want me to succeed in life as well. Throughout my four years at Manchester College I have gained insight, experience, and education through many content and methods classes. Though some classes are repetitive and hard to sit through, you must look for the beneficial part of them. I will discuss the influence that several classes had on me throughout my time at Manchester College.

Child Development, Math for Elementary Teachers I, II, and III, Literacy block, and Exceptional Learners are the classes that I have gained the most from. The three math classes were very beneficial to me because they worked in stages. Math for Elementary Teachers I and II reviewed and taught skills that I would need to teach math and be confident in my abilities. Intermixed with actually being taught, I was also learning ways to teach math to elementary students. Math for Elementary Teachers III made teaching math a reality. This class taught me many strategies and techniques for teaching elementary math to students. A lot of the stuff that I was being taught I wish I had learned as an elementary school student. Now that I have the knowledge of those strategies and techniques; I can teach them to my future students and watch them succeed.
Throughout the class Child Development, I learned a great deal about the different developmental stages of children physically, emotionally, and mentally. I benefited most from the case study that I had to do on a child. By actually observing a child and seeing all the characteristics that I read about, happen in front of my eyes was amazing. It was much easier to understand all the definitions in the textbook I was using when I experienced the changes from a child because I was there to witness it first hand. Throughout the semester we also discussed how to apply the developmental stages to a child in your class. Relating information to real life only makes me see things clearer then when it is just information about a made up situation that could not exist. Experience is very beneficial to me since I am a visual learner. Also, applying what I read to a real life situation is why I gained so much knowledge from this class.

I do not have mild interventions as a part of my major, but taking the class Exceptional Learners gave me a peek into what that would be like. During the course of this class I got to learn the many disabilities that students can have and ways to accommodate them. I found it very helpful to take this course because of all the information that was given to me the whole semester long. I feel that knowing all aspects of being a teacher, even the small finer details, is important to being well balanced. Although I do not want to primarily teach children with disabilities, I still think that I should have knowledge about their situation, for those just in-case scenarios. This class offered me a wide range of topics dealing with Exceptional Learners and I took a lot away from this experience.

As I have mentioned, I value learning through experience, and Literacy Block gave me that opportunity for an entire semester. In the course of the semester I had the
chance to work with a small group of preschoolers once to twice a week. I got to teach these young students, early literacy skills. I taught them color, number, and letter recognition through fun, creative activities. It was so inspiring to watch them learn more and more everyday I was there. Teaching preschool was great practice for my future career of an elementary teacher. Through the preschoolers and the experience in general, I learned ways to engage students through motion and art activities with literacy attached to it. This literacy class taught me the basic skills needed to teach emergent readers and I had to be imaginative and think of ways to apply what I learned to my group of preschoolers. Application of what I learned through this class made me come to grips with my future and realize that I can be one of those teachers that all the students love and want to see everyday.

Through the course Educational Psychology I learned about the theorists and how their theories play into a classroom situation. I also learned how to understand why certain students act the way they do. Although this class was beneficial to me, I do not feel that is was one of the most influential over my four years at Manchester College. There were many aspects of it nonetheless that I took away from it. There are many theories that a teacher can follow to aid in the successfullness of his/her classroom, and I think that it is important to know all the theories so you have options for ways to run your class. It was great to learn background information and have choices for aiding in classroom development. However, I do not believe that you should try and follow all the teachings of others. The fun part of being a teacher is being creative and inventive. I think that it appropriate to use the theorists as a resource but to run your class as you see fit.
My views, knowledge, and attitude have changed a great deal because of the content and methodology classes that I have taken throughout my time at Manchester. I did not realize all the fine details of being a teacher before taking any courses related to teaching. There are so many terms, procedures, and techniques I had to learn to become proficient at this major. The courses that were mentioned above were most beneficial to me. Though there are other courses that I benefited from, the ones mentioned above I benefited from every time I walked into the classroom. Those were the classes that I did not mind going to because I knew I was going to gain some sort of usable knowledge. Many classes had parts that were useful, but there were times that I was doing work that seemed unnecessary. My views did not change at all because of those classes. The courses that were not as knowledgeable made me think of being a teacher as an unhappy road to take in my life. My attitude, knowledge, and views changed because of the classes that I got experience from. The kind of experience that is not crammed into one semester having a whole list of other observation or tutoring experiences to do at the same time. During my earlier years at Manchester I was given time to work with students without being rushed or pressured to get so many hours in. I feel that, that was the time that the students and I gained the most knowledge and understanding.

As a future educator I feel that children need to be taught literacy at a young age. I know that many schools have guided reading groups and reading specialists, but I think that reading aloud and practice is so important to beginning readers. Starting children with early literacy is that way to get them interested in letters and sounds. It is amazing how reading to a child influences their ability to read. I can not even imagine how having a child read everyday influences their reading ability. I can
only guess that it is improved. Every school should have a program that allows children who do not necessarily get to read to at home, a chance to read to someone at school. I believe reading is most important because it is all around us everyday. Through many of my education classes, reading was emphasized and that is why I feel so strongly about it.

My time at Manchester College has been nothing but one great experience after another. I respect all the professors and realize that they want nothing but the best for all their students. Although some assignments may not seem worth your time, in the end they benefit you and that is what you must look for in every class and assignment. I am proud to have gained so much knowledge about being a future educator from such grand professors. Because of them I know that I am going to succeed in my future career of being and elementary school teacher.