Reflection on the Liberal Arts

The liberal arts education is a significant part of this college’s philosophy and it is a significant part of my education. It has had many implications on my life. It is significant in teacher preparation, viewing other people, the world, and myself. The liberal arts education has become an important part of my development and my life here at Manchester College.

The first implication of the liberal arts education is in the preparation of teachers. It is essential, especially for elementary teachers, to know at least a little about every subject. This is why I was required to take courses in foreign language, history, science, religion, art, music and physical education in addition to those courses in education. One of my favorite required courses was the Experiencing the Arts course. I am one who loves the arts and this class challenged my knowledge base. I definitely learned a lot in that class and can still recall some of that knowledge. One thing that we did in that class was to look at slides of paintings and learn about the periods in which they were painted. In French class we went to the Chicago Institute of Art. While there I was able to identify and recognize the painting and the characteristics of the period in which they were painted. I also took Essential Skills of Music. I felt the class was below my ability level in most areas but I stuck it out. It gave me some good ideas on working on incorporating music into my classroom. I also gained some knowledge about how children develop physically in Fundamental Movements. I believe they helped me as a future elementary teacher in that I feel a little more confident in having to teach kids something about each of these areas. When I began pursuing this career I was not confident that I would be able
to teach every subject that needed to be taught. I am still not fully confident but I am much more prepared now than I was two and a half years ago.

The liberal arts education has also had an impact on my position to teach. I have always felt that teaching makes a difference. I now feel that it makes a difference in a larger sense than just to one person. Each year I will be influencing the minds of 20-40 children everyday. Each of these children will then grow up to influence other people. It is amazing how through just one child many people can be influenced. The liberal arts education has also reinforced my desire to become a teacher. It has reinforced my desire by making me aware of things that are happening in education as well as other areas of study.

It had influenced my thinking about myself, other people and the world. In thinking about myself it has allowed me to think more positively. It has given me more confidence in being able to teach children effectively and that has boosted my self-esteem. In thinking about others, it has made me appreciate those who major in other fields and those who have been in education for a long time. In thinking about the world, it has allowed me to think more broadly about what is happening around the world.

The liberal arts education has influenced how I view people of diversity. I view them with a more open mind and am more tolerant of people who are different than I am. I am more curious about their background and culture and their beliefs. I am more willing to associate with them than I was in the past. I have always been willing to talk to people of diversity but I feel that I am more willing now than I have been in the past.

I do not feel that there have been any really significant changes in my beliefs or attitudes. I know that they have changed but they have not been too significant. One
change that I have noticed in my time here at Manchester is that I am more sociable to an extent. I still value my personal alone time but I like to be around people more than I used to. I also am more willing to work with people whom I would normally not work with. One change in my beliefs is that I more firmly believe that all people need to be heard and given the opportunity to speak their opinion even if that opinion is different from mine. In the past many people that I knew had very similar beliefs to me. Here at Manchester I have met a great deal of people who are similar to me as well as people who are quite different from me.

The importance of broadening oneself to view life from a global perspective is that it allows the lines of communication to open wider. It also allows me to think about more of my actions in a broader sense than just me and a few people around me. It makes me think of how some actions could affect others that are outside of my close circle. It also allows me to think in ways of how events in other places of the world affect me and those closest to me.