Passion for Education

“If a child cannot learn the way we teach. Maybe we should teach the way they learn.”

This is a quote that I believe expresses my feelings toward the profession of teaching, and Manchester College has helped develop and shape this belief since I stepped foot on campus my freshman year. The colleges’ education courses it offered me in my undergraduate experience taught me a substantial amount of information about teaching, myself, and life in general. When I walked into introduction to teaching my freshman year, I was overwhelmed with the amount of requirements an education major was required to meet. Feeling uncomfortable and a little apprehensive about where my life was heading within the next few years made me rethink a few things, but my hard work ethic and passion for children got the best of me. Now I have successfully made it to my senior year of college. This is the impact that education courses here at Manchester College have had on me. With teachers who really care about the individual learner and go the extra mile to motivate their students has made a large difference. Also, courses offer you so many opportunities to go out into the community and get hands on experience with real students. If college classes have taught me one thing, it is that sitting and listening about situations that will occur within the classroom and what to do, as opposed to actually experiencing them, creates a huge learning difference. Manchester College gives you this experience. Education psychology allowed me to observe a physical education teacher for twenty hours, plus teach one lesson during my observation hours. Motor development provided an opportunity to participate in a high school physical education classroom for twenty hours, which involved co-teaching a majority of the experience. Adapted physical activity created a substantial amount of hands on experience with a special education class that I taught physical education to every Wednesday for an entire semester. These are just a few of the many courses that the college offers that allow you to connect with children.

However, the most crucial ingredient to my success as an educator comes from the courses that were involved with PEP. This is a physical education program that allows undergraduate physical education majors to teach home schooled children every Thursday
throughout our college careers. With this kind of experience, I went into my student teaching placement with confidence of knowing how to teach. Many colleges or universities do not create opportunities like this for their students, while Manchester College does. These courses have impacted me and put me one step ahead of my competitors when it comes to finding a teaching job. Without caring teachers and courses that provided hands on experiences, I would be identical to any other applicant. I am not anymore because of what Manchester College has offered. With becoming a professional, I plan to continue my education and become active in lifelong learning.

Being a lifelong learner and growing as a teacher and person is something that I plan to commit myself to. To me, lifelong learning involves reflection, participation, and relationships. This is not something that occurs only the first few years of teaching. It should occur up until the day you plan to retire because new ideas and theories make themselves present daily. I must first reflect upon myself as a teacher and critique the successes and weaknesses I have faced. I do not want to become a habitual mistake maker because I did not take the time to reflect upon my lessons or activities. When a mistake occurs or something does not work according to plan, I will document this so that in the future, I do not have to re-experience the same mistake. I will also document the experiences that succeed and helped me become an effective teacher. In my education portfolio, you will find in R4 and E7 that I reflect over what went well throughout a lesson I taught and what did not. This is evidence that I am already reflecting and plan to continue on doing so. Along with reflection comes participation.

I am an active member in IAHPERD (Indiana Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance) and plan to be for the rest of my career. Participation among associations, clubs, or small groups is something that is crucial to feed yourself as a lifelong learner. Lastly, relationships I create will impact me as an educator more than any other activity I can do. The mentors and co-workers will play an important role in guiding me through mistakes I make, and helping with new ideas. I hope I can return the favor by sharing my knowledge about specific contents as well. So far throughout my growth at becoming a teacher, I have relied on many relationships I have built with mentors to help direct me on the correct paths to success. With reflection, participation, and relationships, I plan on being a lifelong learner and grow as an educator in the world of teaching.
My goal with every student that walks into my classroom is to create a professional respectful relationship with them. Throughout my student teaching experience, I have learned that connecting with students and kindling those relationships helps my teaching effectiveness bloom. This is one aspect of teaching that has changed since my freshman year. It is not that I did not care about the needs of my students when I decided to enter this profession. Back then, I was more concerned with having all the students like me, and was willing to be the lenient teacher to do so. However, I have learned by connecting with students, showing them you are the superior, and allowing them to witness you are passionate about them and their learning; it eventually leads to the ultimate winner of being the greatest teacher. An example of becoming a persistent teacher involves a middle school child who was overweight, lower knowledge level, and from an unsupportive home. She thought since I was the student teacher, she could impress her peers by being rudely disrespectful towards me. At first, I was a little intimidated. Then I realized that to teach this student a life lesson, I needed to create an authoritative relationship with her. It was a battle that consisted of feelings of failure for the both of us, headaches, long talks, and deducted points from her overall grade. However, by my departure from the middle school, I was now this student’s favorite teacher. She was participating in class daily with a positive attitude all because I did not back down and kindled that relationship.

Another aspect that has changed or become clearer to me is the various types of learning styles. Bloom’s Taxonomy and Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences has been pounded into my head for four years straight, and I never comprehended its’ importance until I witnessed it throughout my student teaching experience. By interacting with the same students on a daily basis for nine weeks at a time, you become very familiar with how they learn and how they do not. During a speed cup stacking unit, I was normally able to demonstrate visually the correct technique on how to perform specific tasks and the students’ would be able to produce the same results. Except for one child in third grade, showing and explaining was not enough for this student. As I worked alongside him and coached him to understand the concepts and techniques, I realized the differences among the ways a child may learn and comprehend content. As I watched this child struggle, my heart ached for him, and for the first time I truly appreciated Bloom’s and Gardner’s advice when it came to different learning styles and how to reach all students. You will find in C3 and E1 ways that I have tried to incorporate all learning styles into one lesson so a larger spectrum of my students can be engaged during the lesson.
Mentors are something that I have come to realize make up a crucial part in how I grow as an educator. I never realized how vital of a role these people are to my overall growth and support. I truly look to these people for almost everything I do, especially within my student teaching placements. Throughout our courses at Manchester, I did not notice the amazing relationships I was building with professors, community teachers, and cooperating teachers. I would have never thought my freshman year that I would rely on so many people to guide me to accomplish things I never imagined doing. During my student teaching, I was blessed with two phenomenal cooperating teachers. They took me under their wings and taught me more in one semester than I have learned in four years of undergraduate schooling. This goes to show how true it is that experience is much more useful than sitting in class listening to a lecture. These relationships that I have built will last a lifetime, and they will always be individuals I look to for professional advice. Over my college career as starting as a student and graduating as a teacher, I have changed many outlooks on teaching and have become much more passionate about the future of education.

Manchester’s Education Departments CARE objectives have also assisted in my growth. At once seeming like an impossible challenge, I have now connected thoroughly with each objective. CARE stands for curriculum, assessment, relationships, and environments with goals underneath each aspect. Curriculum is mainly concerned with teaching students the P-12 Indiana academic standards from multiple points of view with effective questioning strategies. You will witness under C3 two interdisciplinary lessons that reach standards in multiple contents and provide an opportunity for the student to think critically. Under assessment, I have proven that I know how to create appropriate tools for assessing students’ knowledge and growth with an interest in future instruction. A2 provides the viewer with two standardized tests that show the student, parents, and teacher the progress made in locomotor and fitness aspects from the beginning of the semester to the end. These test results also provide me with feedback about what fitness concepts and locomotor movements need more focus. Relationships provide evidences of desire to become a lifelong learner, skills as an individual teacher, and collaboratively working with other individuals. Under R3 it asks for evidence that you are becoming a lifelong learner and growing professional. I have documented two certificates from volunteering as a Special Olympic coach and attending a workshop called Fit4Learning. Both of these show my passion to be involved and continue growing as an educator. The goals under
environment provide details about the management you have of your students and the diverse types of teaching methods and materials we use to reach our students. Under E2, you will find two lesson plans that use different types of teaching styles. This allows the students to learn in various ways. Overall, the twenty-four CARE objectives show my willingness to reach out to all my students no matter what their learning style and assess them to drive my growth and theirs too.

Over the past four years, I have been a student that has faced many troubling stones that have turned into guiding stepping stones. I have developed from a full-time student to a full-time licensed teacher. Manchester College has instilled in me a desire to continue my learning and growing after I have walked through its doors with a diploma. I look forward to becoming employed within a school system and teaching physical education to young minds. However, I hope throughout my years as a physical educator I may reach more students about life and persuade them to chase their dreams no matter how large or how small they may accumulate to be. I want to become a teacher who inspires and sets a desire within students’ hearts to become all they can be.