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Content & Methodology Paper
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Being my senior year here at Manchester College I have valued my education more than when I was a first-year and a sophomore. When I first arrived at Manchester College as a first-year student I knew I wanted to become a teacher, but I had no clue what theories I believed in or how I will implement those theories into my classroom. Because of my education courses, I have been able to finally see how to put what I have learned to practice and use it in my professional career. I have dramatically grown in the last year because I observed literacy, math, social studies, and science lessons in the classroom. These observations have allowed me to see how to implement these lessons into the curriculum and it has also encouraged me that I do know how to implement my ideas and manage my future classroom. There are a few education courses in which I feel have really developed my educational knowledge of the classroom. These three courses are *Literacy Block* course, *Social Studies Methods and Science Methods Course*. All three of these classes have really played a role in shaping my views on my style of teaching.

The first class I would like to talk about is my *Literacy Block* class because it really changed my opinion about reading. When I was taking this course, I made a personal goal to learn to love reading again like I did when I was a little girl, and as I went through each week I came to a realization of how vital reading is to our everyday lives. I plan on trying to find a job teaching the lower elementary grades, Kindergarten through third grade, and a huge emphasis in these grades is literacy. These grades are the most influential years to teach the components of reading. I learned about many different

literacy topics, such as stages and types of reading, word wall words, phonemic awareness, spelling, fluency, comprehension, writing stages and the process, assessment, literature focus units, and literature circles. These are just some of the major topics I learned and will put into practice in my own classroom.

During this *Literacy Block* class, I enjoyed observing a second grade classroom every week at South Whitley elementary and seeing how the four block literacy instruction is used in the classroom. The first day I went to observe was really eye opening because the students worked on their word wall words. I had been learning about word wall words in my class, but seeing it done in a second grade classroom really reinforced what I had been learning. However, I did not know what to expect when the teacher said, “Lets pick out a word wall chant to do for our new word wall words.” One of the students picked out a word wall chant and it just so happened to be the “Mexican Hat Dance.” Well, it was amazing to see these children spelling their word wall words for that week to the “Mexican Hat Dance!” I will never forget that day I observed in that classroom because it really had an impact on the many components I will incorporate in order to provide a balanced literacy instructional classroom.

The next two education classes I would like to talk about are my *Social Studies and Science Methods* courses. Honestly, I was not excited about going into either of these courses because I immediately resorted back to my days in elementary school and how I despised the subjects of social and science. To my astonishment during this last semester of my major content courses, I have absorbed many wonderful and insightful ideas to put to use when I teach. These two classes have showed me new ideas for instruction and how to approach both of these subjects with an open mind.

In my *Social Studies Methods* course, some of the major topics I have learned about are the threads approach, unit planning, and assessing my students. The threads approach is based on five subject matters, which are geographic, political, economic, sociocultural, and global. Each of these five threads are then broken down into the related academic curriculum, key ideas, and questions. It was interesting for me to see how each of these five threads are interwoven into our academics for history, geography, economics, and sociology.

Also during this course, I had to plan a unit including twelve lessons on twelve different subject areas, assessments, brainstorm to make a unit web using the program Kidspiration, incorporate technology, make a list of trade books to use, incorporate a field trip or guest speaker, create a bulletin board, and write a parent letter. All of these areas for this unit have been a learning process, and I will be taking some great ideas on how to make and use a unit in my classroom. I gained knowledge from my professor, but also from my fellow classmates because we shared our various opinions and ideas from our units.

The last topic I have learned about is assessment. I used to have trouble with assessment because I did not have the confidence on how to use it appropriately in the classroom. During this course, I learned about formative, summative, and diagnostic assessment and how I can use it to evaluate what my students are discovering and learning. Now that I am more aware about the forms of assessment, I feel that I have the self-confidence I needed to evaluate what my students have learned. All three of these topics that were discussed in my *Social Studies Methods* course have taught me some very important tools to use in my future classroom.

In my *Science Methods* course, I have learned a very fundamental way to teach my future students. During my elementary years, I did not enjoy just learning about science because I wanted to “do science.” In other words, I wanted to discover through hands-on learning with experiments, observations, and demonstrations. There is one specific instructional practice I will definitely take with me into my future classroom, which is the 5-E Model. This 5-E Model is based on five phases: engagement, exploration, explanation, elaboration, and evaluation. All of these phases are included to make the lesson rounded like a learning cycle. When I think of science, I think of this 5-E Model because it integrates all the components needed when teaching hands-on science. I really want to teach science by “doing science” because students learn more from these experiences. Not only will I be incorporating the 5-E model, but I will be applying my knowledge of assessment I learned in my *Social Studies Methods* course in order to evaluate each of my students. I fully believe this instructional approach will be beneficial to use in the future. Both, the *Social Studies Methods* course and the *Science Methods* course have helped me gain some wonderful and very useful ideas to use in my classroom.

The three classes I have talked about above are not the only content and methodology classes that will have a lasting impact on me. There are several other classes that I could have mentioned, but the knowledge I gained from all these classes is only the start of my growth as a teacher. These classes have allowed me to reflect on why I want to make a difference in every single student’s life. Each one of these content and methodology courses have shaped me and molded me into the teacher I will become, and I am very grateful!