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Thousands of students arrive at colleges and universities with goals, dreams, and aspirations, while some students are undecided about their future careers and what is in store for them. Before I came to Manchester College, I knew that I wanted to become an elementary teacher because I wanted to make a difference in children's lives and learning experiences. As I searched for the right college for me, I knew I wanted to find an environment that was welcoming, friendly, and strived to educate their students everyday. I felt like I had found everything I was looking for when I came to visit Manchester College. The people I met on my campus visit day were very cordial, welcoming, and showed that they cared about my questions and opinions, which are a few aspects of what prospective students look for in colleges and universities. I knew Manchester College was a liberal arts college, and I thought that element about Manchester would play a vital role in my education experience by preparing me for the real world. Having a well-rounded education at a liberal arts college has both advantages and disadvantages depending on each student's perspective. I believe my liberal arts education at Manchester College has prepared me in many areas that will help me in my future teaching career as well as my life in general.

Liberal arts ties in a learning process that is useful to college students' lives as well as their future careers. For example, since I want to become an elementary teacher I had to take a course in art and a course in music here at Manchester College. These two subject areas are a big part of the learning experience in elementary schools. In my, *Essential Skills in Music*, class I learned about how to tie in music in the classroom and

why it should be used in our classroom lessons. I found the course to be very informative and helpful because I was able to see how music could be used in my future classroom. Also my, *Art for Elementary Teachers*, course expanded my ideas in creativity. Not only did we talk about how to apply art in the classroom, but we learned about the process children go through with writing and drawing. Both of these courses were significant to my preparation as a teacher because I will use what I learned as resources for my future lessons in the classroom.

Because of my liberal arts education, I am more open to others views and beliefs about the world, but I still remain true to my own beliefs. I took a course called, *Political Ideologies*, and throughout the course we learned about different ideologies that individuals believe in. During the first couple weeks, we talked about different beliefs that conservatives and liberals hold. I really feel that learning about these many different ideologies helped me understand and grasp why individuals believe what they believe. This course definitely widened my knowledge about different ideologies which also helped me find a foundation on why I believe in what I believe. I struggled at times during this course because sometimes I did not know why I believed what I did, but it did make me question my own thoughts and opinions. So that is why I really believe I am more open to others views because I am still finding meaning in what I personally believe in as well.

Manchester College provides a unique learning environment because there are many diverse backgrounds represented on the campus. There are both students and professors that come from all over the world which makes the learning experience more rewarding. I have met many individuals from different cultures who may not agree with

me on certain values or beliefs I hold, but I also get to learn about their values and beliefs based on how they grew up. I find these views to be conflicting at times because we may not agree on the same things, but it is a learning experience that will help me in the real world. I took a January-Term course called, *Human Conflict*, which talked about ways to approach conflict in our daily lives. My experiences on campus that deals with conflicting beliefs are just like what I may have to deal with in the real world.

Personally I know my liberal arts education at Manchester College has expanded my perspectives in many different areas of life, as well as my future teaching career. Although most of my courses I have taken at Manchester College deal more with life situations, these courses have taught me how to be more open to other's views and beliefs. For example, I talked about the many diverse backgrounds that are represented on campus and because of these different backgrounds I have learned to respect other's opinions and listen to what they have to say. I know a lot of what I have learned about cannot be applied to elementary classrooms, but some ideas and concepts that can apply to the classroom may help me when I start teaching. Overall my learning experience at Manchester College has been, and will continue to have, a great impact on my future and my professional career as an elementary teacher.