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EDUC 410

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Final Reflection

Over the past four years I have been given the tools to become an effective teacher. I have taken a range of courses that have opened my eyes to new topics, and have made me a more well rounded individual. My education courses have given me knowledge and allowed me to gain experience in the field.

Reflecting on my education I can remember several experiences that were vital to the teacher I want to be. When I came to Manchester College in the fall of 2004, I only knew one thing for certain, and that was that I wanted to major in elementary education. However, upon registering for classes I was introduced to mild interventions. It was something that I was not sure I wanted to do, but I thought it might be helpful to have on my license. Once I became immersed in the program, I realized it was something that I was very interested in pursuing.

In my Assessment and Implementation for Mild Interventions class, I had the opportunity to go to an elementary school and work with a resource teacher. While I was there I was able to perform behavior observations on a student. I was assigned to a rambunctious kindergartener, that was extremely intelligent and an absolute joy to be around. He was diagnosed with autism, and seemed to be off task more than on. But nonetheless, I loved working with him. It was a joy to see him accomplish something, and to know that I helped him get to the solution. That experience made me realize how

exciting and rewarding special education can be, and that it was something I wanted to pursue.

Another valuable learning experience was my multicultural placement in Indianapolis. This experience opened my eyes, and allowed me to see exactly who I did not want to become. While in Indianapolis, I was placed in a kindergarten room. Before arrival I was extremely excited. I love working with the younger students, and when I think of kindergarten I think of student-centered active learning. However, that was not what I encountered. I felt like I was in boot camp. The students were constantly being reprimanded, and were expected to be seated at their desks at all times throughout the day. There was no time for play, creativity, or exploring. They were told exactly how to color and cut everything and were scolded if not completed perfectly. I have learned through out my education that it is important for students to have structure; however, I also feel that it is important for them to experience learning and a student cannot accomplish that by sitting at their desk all day with no creative choices. From this experience I really gained perspective on the teacher I want to become.

When I started my student teaching, I had three major goals: to achieve better classroom management skills, gain self-confidence, and learn ways to better accommodate students with disabilities in my classroom. Through my experience in the classroom I feel that I have met two of them. I have gained so much confidence in myself throughout the student teaching experience. I have been able to use the tools that were given to me by educators and teach students. I have seen their assessment scores and known that they were actually retaining the information, which is an awesome feeling of accomplishment to see them succeed on something that was taught by me. I

have also learned some new and creative ways to accommodate and bring services to my students. My cooperating teacher for special education was amazing and pumped full of ideas on how to meet the needs of students. These are ideas that I will take with me in the future.

As for my other goal, I do not think that I can say it was successfully met. When it came to classroom management I followed the structure and procedure that was already in place by my cooperating teacher. The students already knew what was expected of them and consequences for misbehavior. I do however, feel that I executed her management plan very well, and I did learn ideas that I can use in my own plan in the future.

I have also established new goals, such as time management. I realized that it is an issue that I struggle with. I would often plan a lesson thinking it would last thirty minutes, but then it would realistically only be fifteen. It is hard to gage how interested the students will get and how long to give each part of the lesson. I quickly learned from student teaching that it is better to plan too much than too little. Another goal would be organization. As I go through the day I tend to misplace things; part of the reason is due to not having my own space. I think it might be different in my own classroom when I have the opportunity to set up my own organizational system. However, while student teaching I realized that the small area that I got to call my own was often disorganized and messy. Lastly, I want to continue my goal on classroom management. I want to continue to play around with management ideas until I find one that works and matches my personality, and that can only be gained through experience.

Through my experiences at Manchester College I have grown and developed into a teacher. When I arrived as freshman I had a vague idea of what teaching entailed. It was not until this past semester that I have come to realize the depth of teaching. I have learned that teachers perform a great service to individuals, and that I am going to have that same opportunity. I will get a chance to serve the youth of my school. I will be providing the building blocks for learning. In my classroom learning will be loud, and the instruction will be student based, allowing students to discover concepts on their own.

I know that I still have a lot to discover about myself, but Manchester College has opened a window and allowed me to see the teacher I want to become. As I continue on my journey as a teacher I will have the opportunity to apply the ideas and concepts that I have learned throughout my four years here and make a difference to some young individual.