

Chase Estepp

Prof. Stetzel

EDUC 410

5 May 2010

### Teacher in Today's Schools Final Reflection

Where do I even start to write this paper? From my freshman year where I was just an eighteen year old still trying to find my way through what it meant to be a college student to now where I am a twenty-two year old getting ready to graduate and enter the teaching field. From the start I set out to become that one teacher that you always remember after you have finished school and look back and think to yourself how important that one teacher was in your development as a person. As my four years come to a close here at Manchester College I can say that I have learned what it means to not only be a lifelong learner but also obtain those characteristics that are associated with being a great teacher that will always be remembered. I started out wanting to teach because I liked being around children and enjoyed being able to help people with problems they were faced with. I have now developed a passion to teach through my field placements, classroom discussions, and student teaching that have instilled in me the will to teach students and provide an environment that is open to learning for all and a place where the students feel comfortable and welcome. The knowledge that I have gained through these experiences will never compare to anything else I have done because they allowed me to see the life as a teacher from the very beginning.

Looking back at my teaching credo that I created my freshman year I have noticed a few things that have changed over the years in relation to how I thought about teaching. The one major difference I have noticed the most is my knowledge of the behind the scenes of being a

teacher. Being in the classroom this spring has taught me a great deal about the time and effort teachers put into creating a curriculum, adopting a new textbook, and buying new supplemental materials to aid in the instruction given to the students. I have seen the stress and countless extra hours put in to make sure they are meeting the requirements of the DOE and on track for the next school year. Coming in my freshman year I would have never thought about the work that teachers do outside of their instruction and planning, I always looked at what it was like to be a teacher in terms of their lessons and plans they created. Having the opportunity to be a student teacher has quickly made me realize the importance of spending time creating your plans and weekly schedule to make sure the management of your week is successful. A couple of courses that made me realize what it meant to be a teacher was Lit Block in the spring of my junior year and Methods Block my fall of senior year. The professors do a great job of giving you a huge workload but they do it in the best interest of the student candidates so they become used to juggling the work load with the rest of their schedule. I can say that personally helped me when it came to student teaching because I was mentally prepared for the workload I was about to take on. One ideology I had freshman year and will have the rest of my teaching career is that no matter what happens with state standards, standardized testing, etc. I will always provide a welcoming environment for my students where they will be able to make connections to their learning and be allowed to be themselves. I have never agreed with teachers who push students to believe a certain thing or try to shape their thoughts on topics, I feel it is the teacher's job to provide great instruction and opportunities for the students to connect their learning to their personal lives or experiences and develop and grow into the person they wish to be. A lot of these changes to my credo are a direct result of the education from Manchester and the experiences I had over the past four years.

From Intro to Early Childhood and Intro to Teaching my freshman year to Methods Block my senior year, there have been numerous courses that have had an important impact on my growth as a professional educator and the type of teacher I want to be. The one class that will never be forgotten in my life will be Lit Block of my junior year. The experiences of that 8 a.m. class, stressful nights, commadore that was created within the class, and the great relation that was built between Professor Schilling and those twenty-two students was an unbelievable experience that will stick with me through my teaching. Not only did she teach us about phonics, literacy circles, and running records but she taught us what it meant to be responsible adults and take ownership of our work. She took interest in every individual and took it upon herself to listen to everyone's complaints, problems they had outside of the classroom, and become a second mom to many of us. I don't know if she will ever understand the impact that she had on me through that eight credit hour class but I will say that it was there in HOLL 106 that I truly found my passion and excitement for becoming a teacher. The lessons that were taught in Lit Block not only helped us to develop as great teachers but also allowed us to look at ourselves and what type of teacher we wanted to be to those twenty some students that are looking at you every day for instruction and guidance.

Another class that I will always remember is Intro to Teaching with Professor Eastman my freshman year on the second floor in the Administration Building. I can recall myself sitting in her class thinking what in the world is she talking about, did I sign up for the correct major, and how am I going to be ready to take over a complete classroom in less than four years? She always came in with a smile on her face and never seemed to change her mood even on days when we didn't want to be in class. She got us thinking about education and what it was going to be like in becoming an elementary teacher. Professor Eastman always had great insight and made

me realize what a joy it would be to become a teacher and develop children through the years as she did with me my freshman year. Although I wish I could sit here and talk about every education class and the impact it had on me in becoming an educator, there would not be enough time for me to express my appreciation to every education professor for the time and effort they put into preparing us for what lies ahead in our lives.

As I sit and think about what it means to be a lifelong learner I recall my experience of student teaching and how I learned something new every day from my students. Not only was I trying to make an impact on their lives and learning experience, they taught me that as a teacher I will never know it all or have all the answers to their questions. Something that I have learned through my professors and teachers at the elementary school is that there is always room for improvement and the ability to learn about new instructional strategies from research and professional development opportunities. Something that I plan on taking very serious during my years of teaching is the improvement of myself as a teacher and the instruction I am capable of providing to my students. Every year President Switzer starts of the opening VIA with the acknowledgement of three faculty and staff that she feels have the characteristics of a lifelong learner. As I have sat there every year, I think about myself and the future I have and how I want to consider growing as a professional as well as a person who learns from all opportunities.

From the very beginning I always thought these “CARE objectives” everyone was talking about was overrated and confused me to no end. Now that I have less than 15 days left of student teaching I have finally grasped the importance of why those twenty four objectives have been such an important part of our four years in the education department. Although assessment and curriculum are important, I look at relationships and environment as core blocks to having a successful classroom where students will feel welcome. I see the importance in creating

engaging lesson plans and appropriately assessing my student's learning but it's the relationships I will build throughout the community and catering to the needs of each individual student that is near to my passion for teaching. Being in a small community of North Manchester and student teaching in this small town has taught me a great deal about the importance of establishing a good relationship between the parents and myself. Since starting student teaching I have encountered students' parents on multiple occasions from the grocery store to sporting events. These twenty-four objectives have been a core set of guidelines that I have looked back on at numerous times so that I could check and see if I was developing and growing the way I felt I should be. So as I leave here as a graduating senior Elementary Education major, I will definitely realize the importance those objectives had and how I looked to them during student teaching to guide my lessons and planning.

I never imagined the day that I would be nearing graduation and be fully prepared to enter the teaching world with confidence and the necessary tools to be successful. Manchester College is just the beginning of the great adventure and journey I will go on in my life. I someday hope to come back to Manchester and share my experiences and reflect back on my days on campus with the professors and my peers. I have learned so much from people I never imagined would have such an impact on my life and those are the people I have to thank for putting me in the position I am today as I near graduation. Although you can never learn everything you need to before you reach the classroom, I feel like the courses I took over my four years prepared me to be able to step into a classroom in August of my first year and have the confidence needed to be a successful teacher.