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Final Reflection on Teaching

Over time, we learn who we are and what our purpose is, and then finally we set out and reach for our dreams. Almost four years ago I set out on my journey to become an educator at Manchester College. As my journey comes to an end at Manchester College, I look back and think about the path I chose, and the milestones I had along the way. Looking back now, it was the education classes and professors, the field experiences, and student teaching that helped me find my purpose and become the educator I am today.

Introduction to Teaching was the first education course I took at Manchester College. During this course, I was able to develop my teaching credo. My teaching credo is a reflection of my beliefs on education and teaching. Looking back now, it is clear that many of my beliefs have been altered and changed over the past four years, while others remain the same. I still believe in the influence a teacher can have on a child's life, and that anything is possible if I take the time to help my students succeed. However, my belief on what would be the hardest thing about teaching has changed dramatically. Originally, I believed that the hardest thing about teaching would be working with all the diverse and multicultural aspects of the class. Now, I know that the hardest thing for me is personally dealing with the hardships students face outside of school such as negative influence, broken families, neglect, poverty, and abuse.

Although all of my education courses have touched on the hardships students face outside of school, it did not become completely understandable until I was able to witness it for myself. I have always been very blessed, and have been aware that others are less fortunate than I am. However, while judging science fair projects as part of Literacy Block, I found out just how sensitive I am to students who do not have the parent support I had as a child. After viewing a project that was nothing but a dirty poster board with a few mud stains, I could not hold back the tears. While the little boy explained his project to me, it became clear to me why being an educator was the correct path for me. I wanted so badly to take the child aside and help him create the poster he had wanted his to be. From that day forward, I have remained passionate about helping each child succeed regardless what support he or she is given outside of the classroom. I want to make a difference, and it is the passion I found on that day that will drive me to never give up on my students. Most importantly, I will strive to help them never give up on themselves.

Introduction to Teaching marked the beginning of my education courses at Manchester College, and my original teaching credo is much different now. I have had wonderful, engaging, and life changing education courses at Manchester College. From Introduction to Teaching and Child Development, to Lit Block and Methods, all of the education classes have helped me become the professional I am today! The professors have showed me how great it is to have teachers who care, and what it is like to love the world of education. Their dedication, passion, and willingness to give everything they have to their students, is what I hope my students will see in me. I am the educator I am today thanks to Manchester College and the professors who have made a difference in my life.

While completing my education courses, and exploring field placements, I have been keeping the CARE objectives in mind. I have completed lessons, both formal and informal, that include the CARE objectives. At first, I did not take the importance of the CARE objectives seriously. I learned over the past four years that the CARE objectives have become easy to meet as I have learned and as I have grown professionally. My lessons, my reflections, and the overall quality of my academic work has improved immensely over the four years at Manchester College. I have met all of the CARE objectives, and have built a portfolio to show my growth over the past four years. I am proud to have met all the CARE objectives, and know that I have achieved so much, thanks to the high standards that were put in front of me.

Currently I am finishing my second placement of student teaching. This is my last experience I will have while at Manchester College, and I will take all that I have learned over the past four years with me as I have a classroom of my own. Field experiences that I have had over the four years have all taught me lessons, and helped me grow. However, it is student teaching that has really opened my eyes to the world of being a teacher. I have learned that it is not always easy to implement what seem to be the easiest lessons. I have learned that not all students want you to help them, and that some students do not want to do even the fun activities. Unfortunately, they cannot teach us everything in the classrooms at Manchester College. Our professors set us free with our student teaching placements, knowing that we still have much to learn on our own. I have learned so much from student teaching that I will remember throughout the years to come. I have made mistakes, but I have also made a difference.

Manchester College has helped me learn the importance of being a lifelong learner. I have learned so much from my experiences at Manchester College. I did not expect to attend the Indiana Early Childhood Conference and love every second of it so much that I would end up

returning the following year. I did not expect to take everything that comes my way as something to learn from. I did not expect to become a lifelong learner. Before knowing what it really meant to be a lifelong learner, I was blind to how important each obstacle, each day, and each experience is in the life of a teacher.

To me, a lifelong learner is one who is always learning and believing that he or she can learn every day. While at Manchester College, I have grown to be a strong believer in the importance of lifelong learning. I do not believe any other college or university could have instilled this mindset in me like Manchester College. I will learn and grow each day, and strive to keep up with the ever-changing world of education. I will take with me all the valuable lessons that I received while at Manchester College, and I will apply the best practices in my own classroom. Manchester College, the education courses, my professors, and my experiences have all helped me grow to be the individual I am today. I will use what I have learned as my platform to continue growing and expanding my knowledge as an educator. I am forever thankful for the guidance I have had that led me here today.