For as long as I can remember, children have been asked repeatedly as they were growing up about what they wanted to be when they were older. Sometimes it seemed my peers and I were forced into thinking about the future when all we were really worried about was when do we get to go to recess. Deciding one's future can be a stressful task, but must ultimately be figured out. I know that there are still people out there who have been in college for three years and are still not sure what it is they hope to achieve from their education. Personally, I feel I have a strong picture of what my future has in store for me, at least when it comes to my career.

To paint a complete picture of the path that led me to this very point I shall start at the beginning. All through elementary school I always knew that I wanted to be a teacher. It just seemed that that was the way things were meant to be. Most of my friends kept changing their dream every year about their future job, however I became permanently fixed on being a teacher. The only thing that has changed over time is what area I wanted to teach. In the beginning I had always planned on being an elementary teacher for third grade or younger. I had worked at a local daycare for two years and I loved working with young children. Most of the time it did not feel like I was working, because work was not supposed to be that much fun. Each day as I was sitting in class all I could think about was what am I going to do with the kids today. My senior year I even enrolled in a cadet teaching course and spent everyday assisting in a first grade classroom.
at Manchester Elementary. I thoroughly enjoyed every minute and it gave me an opportunity to see if this was something I would enjoy doing in the future. It turned out that I did enjoy working with young children. However, during my senior year my art teacher opened the door to a new possibility that I had not thought about.

One afternoon I was sitting in the art room working on a sketch when my teacher told me she would like to talk to me for a few minutes after class. When the bell rang I asked her what she wanted to talk about and she told me she had figured out the perfect job for me. I thought that I had it all planned out, but little did I know that it was all about to change. My art teacher, Mrs. Schuh, knew that I was involved in cadet teaching and that I was planning on becoming an elementary teacher. She also knew that I was very passionate about art, because I had at least one class with her every day that I was in high school. She had also just introduced the exciting and messy world of ceramics to me. My senior year I even ended up rearranging my entire schedule to fit in two extra ceramics courses. She had thought that I could combine my two passions of working with children and with art. This was the moment that changed my career path permanently.

Once I started college things became a little rocky. I thought that I knew exactly what I wanted to do, but when it came time to make a final decision, I suddenly was not so sure. After a year of exploring other opportunities, I was always led back to art education. I am now majoring in K-12 visual arts education and I know that that is what I am meant to do.

All through my education, I have picked apart my teachers and decided what I liked about their teaching style and what I did not like. By doing this I feel that I have
gained a sense of the style that I would like to teach in one day. As I have learned more about the three different theories of education, I have came to the conclusion that I am not in favor of one area in particular, but rather a combination of essentialism and progressivism. I am not in favor of the perennialist style of teaching all together. It tends to focus on everlasting knowledge that has endured through the times, which leaves little room for flexibility in the curriculum being taught. I feel that there must be room for change, especially when it comes to art. Throughout history there has been a wide array of different styles that have and will continue to emerge. I feel that all of these should be addressed, because they could eventually become one of the great occurrences of the past. This theory also endorses teachers who have mastered many areas and teaches their students in all of these areas. I feel that in order for someone to fully master an area they need to focus in an area that they themselves enjoy and have studied in depth. If a teacher has a great passion for the area that he or she is teaching, that passion could rub off on their students. However, I feel that there are not many people in this world who are passionate about every area and feel comfortable teaching such a wide array of subjects. My goal is to show my future students that you do not have to be a professional artist or master every area of it to enjoy it. I want to show them that it is a means to express themselves in many different ways. These could range from doodling, to designing intricate patterns, and even splattering paint like Pollock. If they are passionate about something I want them to follow that desire.

I do favor a couple of aspects of the essentialist type of teaching, but some of them leave a lot to be desired. I do like the fact that it stresses values such as morality, integrity, hard work, respect, and obedience. I believe that all of these are important in a
classroom setting. I think students should respect their teachers by listening to them and working hard. I am not in favor of the idea of only emphasizing the traditional disciplines of math, science, history, and literature. I feel that there should be room left in there to take elective courses that the students are interested in. These courses can help them to explore an area of interest with some help and guidance. One last thing that I do not care for is the fact that classes are centered around the teacher and administration. They also focus too much attention on academic rigor shown through tests and longer school days. I believe that there is a time and place when the class is centered around the teacher, however in an art setting this can not be done all of the time and should be more of a hands on setting. I also feel that teachers sometimes focus too much time and energy on testing instead of making the class interesting. If the students are bored, then they are not going to want to be there and might not pay attention, therefore they might not gain as much knowledge as they could have.

Progressivism is the theory that I favor the most. I love the fact that it emphasizes more hands on activities, field trips, and group work. In an art class, being hands on is very important. It is also important that students can study and experience art up close, which can occur during field trips. Progressivism also respects experimentation, which has helped art to expand for centuries. Without experimentation art would have become stagnant and everyone’s work would look alike. The progressive theory also supports educators in the act of making schools more engaging, which increases learning when students become engaged in activities that have meaning to them. This is exactly what perennialism and essentialism lack.
I understand that the type of classroom setting I am in favor of may not work for every type of class. On the other hand, when it comes to the art room students need to be engaged in hands on activities and not be afraid to explore new ideas and areas. However, I will expect students to follow some of the ideas of essentialism that I favored. These were the values of hard work, respect, and obedience. There will be times when I will need to lead a class discussion, especially when I need to introduce a new lesson or give a slide presentation on artist history, when these will be even more important. I want the students to have fun when they are learning, but I want them to understand that their work must get done and they need to not only respect me, but also other students and the materials that they are allowed to use.

I am sure that once I start to teach everything is not going to go the way I have planned. Adjustments will need to be made and rules will need to be altered. However, I understand that it will only be the beginning of a lifetime of learning and as time goes on, I am sure things will work themselves out and run smoothly.