

“Every great leader is teaching, and every great teacher is leading.” (Gardner, 1989) I have always thought that the people who make a difference in the world somehow teach others. When I think about all the people that teach things, these people also lead. Through leading you can teach people by example. Although it was not until recently I decided I would become a teacher, I now know that I want to lead, and hopefully by my example, I will teach people.

My father has always told me that I would be a great teacher. He has been teaching for 28 years and ever since I can remember I have been grading papers and helping him decorate his classroom. I think every little girl at some point wants to be a teacher, and I also at one time wanted to be one. But, as I got older I decided that I did not want to follow in my father’s footsteps, and I was determined to be a Pediatric Physical Therapist. I have always loved children and was still going to work in the pediatric field. My parents both supported my decision, although my father would drop me hints every so often about teaching. When it came time to look at colleges my senior year, the first thing I looked for was a Physical Therapy degree. I also had the choice of athletic training or sports medicine as undergraduate work, then moving on to graduate school.

Then the second semester of my senior year I decided to join a Cadet Teaching program at my school. This was going to give me the opportunity to continue French and receive credits. I taught French to kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth graders at three separate elementary schools. Since it was an independent study class, I made out my own lesson plans two days a week and taught the other three.

Even though I was determined not to be a teacher the thought had always been in the back of my mind. I was very nervous about this class, not because of teaching, but because of what I would be teaching. I was not sure how elementary students were going to learn French. Each week I would teach them a new lesson, play games, and review the lessons we had learned before. Although we only learned things such as numbers, colors, alphabet, and emotions, the students caught on quickly. It gave me this great sense of gratification to see that I could teach these students a new language and that they were excited to learn.

Each teacher would fill out an evaluation for me each time I came to their room. I received good comments and looked forward to class more each week. I also received quite a few comments that I would make a good teacher and began to think about it more. The students were great and made class enjoyable. They would request games to play and loved to sing and dance. The amount of French they comprehended in just one quarter amazed me. After enjoying the experience so much the first quarter, I decided to keep teaching the second quarter. I took on new classes and this time I would be teaching a third grade class that happened to be my Dad's.

After overcoming the fear of teaching students French, I now had to overcome the fear of teaching in my father's room. I knew he would be hard on me, but I figured it would be a good experience. I taught the same lessons and played the same games as in the other classes and surprisingly received the same comments from my Dad. On the end of each evaluation he would write "Ms. Quandt would make a wonderful teacher." I would just smile and shake my head. I knew my Dad did not want me to be a teacher just because he was, but because he would say "Emily, I have been teaching for 27 years and

it takes something special to be a teacher, I would not tell just anyone to be a teacher. If you did not have what it took I would not tell you this.”

That quarter I also taught a kindergarten class at my grade school. Mrs. Becker was great, and just like my dad, encouraged me to become a teacher. She told me that this was one of the most active classes she has had in years and if I can handle this I can handle anything. After hearing these things I could not help but give up my goal of not following in my father’s footsteps.

Now that I have decided to become a teacher I am pursuing this career. I believe that everyone is unique and that they should have an opportunity to show that. Each student should have the chance to express themselves and develop their own values and morals. With good family and school support this should be possible for each student. As the world changes it becomes more and more evident that students must be fully prepared to enter the real world. I feel they receive much of these preparations through school. As technology becomes more advanced students will have to be more intelligent to operate such things.

Through teaching I intend to allow each student to live up to his or her full potential and to prepare each student for the challenges they will face by our ever changing world. I plan to meet every state standard and prepare my students while allowing them to grow not only intellectually but physically, socially, and emotionally.

By leading others to achieve their potential, I will hopefully teach them how unique they are and what they have to offer. I will teach them not only about academics but about themselves and the world, and by doing so I plan to lead them to a life where they can have high aspirations for themselves and attain their goals.

### Works Cited

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