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EDUC 410

May 1, 2009

Final Reflection Paper

Throughout my time spent at Manchester College, my ideas have changed and transformed due to the hands-on experiences that I have taken part in. Fortunately, Manchester provided many opportunities for me to be in classrooms beginning in my first year. These experiences have helped me to form more realistic and practical goals and ideals for my future classroom. Since I was somewhat unexposed to how teaching actually works as a freshman, I had plenty of room to grow and form new thoughts. Fortunately, I have been able to apply the information and knowledge that I have acquired from these opportunities to my own teaching experiences.

Narrowing the most valuable experiences that I have had in the teacher education program to just a couple has proven to be difficult. However, there are a couple of experiences that stand out among the others in my mind. Taking Literacy Block my junior year of college is one of the instances that I can say caused me to be truly excited to teach. I have always known I wanted to be a teacher but during Literacy Block I discovered one of my favorite parts of reading. By diving into books and learning about different genres and authors, I was able to learn about an area of teaching that can actually excite students. Books and reading can be used to take students to another place via their imaginations. Moreover, I was taught how to use books as a way to cater to the interests of students who are otherwise uninterested in school. By learning how to use

different types of books in the classroom, I discovered my own passion for teaching through books. Another one of my favorite experiences while enrolled in the teacher education program was the time I spent at Lindley Elementary in Ft. Wayne. I was at Lindley for a few weeks during Janterm of my freshman year and I was able to go back for a week during my senior year. Lindley was unlike any school I have ever been in because most of the schools I had previously been involved with were in suburban areas. By seeing how a school works in the city, I was introduced to a different type of learning and teaching. The basics were the same but I found the main difference in the parent support. I felt that students at Lindley had less parental support than any suburban school I had ever been in. This affects the way that the teacher interacts with and teaches her students, which is a reality that I would have otherwise been oblivious to.

Through my experiences with Manchester College's teacher education program, I have developed a few new educational goals for myself. First, after having a lot of different classroom experiences, I have decided that I need to improve my classroom management skills. Although I understand that classroom management is something that seasoned teachers still struggle with, I would like to improve my own skills. I would also like to decrease the amount of time it takes for students in my classroom to transition from one activity to another. For example, when I ask students to stop working on a project at their seat, turn in their papers, and then join me up front, it sometimes takes longer than I think it should. By decreasing the amount of time it takes to do a job like this, I will save literally hours of learning time by the end of the year. Finally, I want to become better at challenging my gifted students.

Throughout these experiences and examinations of areas that I would like to improve on, I have realized how much I have depended on my faith to carry me through discouraging times. After a day at school when I feel discouraged or when I feel like I have mounds of assignments to work through, I often refer to my faith in Christ to help me to take the days more in stride. I have also developed a new desire to learn through my experiences at Manchester. In high school, I always received good grades on my report card and never had a problem taking advanced classes. However, in college, I realized how easy I had it in high school and discovered that I had to work much harder. The main difference was that in college I was studying a subject that I was truly interested in and wanted to learn more about. Therefore, never settling for anything less than my best became how I completed all my assignments. Additionally, high school was where I started to develop my love and passion for service, especially with children. In college, this passion has continued to grow as I have consistently been surrounded by children and realized how important they are to our future as well as how important we are to their future.

I still have many areas where I would like to improve my teaching style. Most notably, I need to become better at changing my lessons on the spot and being more flexible with individual lessons. For instance, if a student is not understanding a topic that I am teaching, I need to be better able and more equipped to change the lesson and use other resources to help the student understand. Moreover, if a student already understands a certain topic, I need to become more able to change what I am doing so it serves as enrichment for that particular student. All of these experiences have improved

my style of teaching and given me direction for the future. I am thankful for the opportunities that the Manchester College teacher education program has allowed me.