

Reflection Paper

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EDUC 111-Introduction to teaching

Over my past few months at Manchester College I have had the opportunity to observe several teachers at different levels of grades. At the beginning of this teaching observation experience I was certain that observing the other levels of education would be unbeneficial for me. Even though I will be majoring in elementary education the observation that I had experienced with the older levels of students were quite helpful.

When I first learned about going to do observations I was very excited. Although Manchester does not seem like a very diverse school system I was excited to be getting out of my comfort zone from West Lafayette, Indiana where I had done my cadet teaching my senior year. I knew that all schools were different and I was excited to get my “second opinion” of teachers.

The Classroom environments all differ from each place that I observed at, the high-school science class was the most un-decorated class I had envisioned for a 9th grade classroom to be. Even though the students were older I envisioned a much more organized appealing room, with posters of

biology related topics that students could engage in their studies. In the elementary school however the hallways as well as the classrooms were decorated with students work and pictures that were colorful as well as entertaining to see. The elementary classroom that I was in had book covers hanging around the room. It was decorated brightly and the desks were set up so the teacher could easily get to the students and it seemed that the "troubled children" were placed on opposite sides of each other and in the aisles so the teachers can easily get to these students.

The lesson plans all were very different than what I imagined an elementary school teacher to have planned. I liked the technique she had used. There was a schedule that was followed every day, math, science, ect. Observing this I felt like the students had much more of a sense as what was coming next and could follow the same daily schedule. Compared to what I observed at the high-school it was strange that the elementary school classroom had more structure pertaining to a lesson plan. The teacher in the high-school science class seemed to have a different plan each day, or if not the 9th grade students seemed as if they did not know what to expect next. Observing both these different curriculums I have

found structure and discipline are two main importance's to having a positive lesson experience for the students. Although the punishments will be substantially different both teachers I observed had specific tools they used to enforce rules. For instance when observing high-school students, the teacher, used detention or punishment points which were like participation points; while observing the elementary classroom I noticed that the teacher gave several warnings to some students before doing anything. Eventually a student would have to get up and stand over in the "closet area" which was just a little room where they hung coats and backpacks.

After observing the different areas of teaching that I could educate in, I realized I had several strengths that would be very beneficial to my students and myself. One of my strengths that will be a positive influence is my personality. I have many characteristics that will be helpful to my students' learning adventure. First I am a very easy going but strict woman. I love to have a good time, I would love to have fun with my students and get involved in many different hands-on activities that they will enjoy along with learning. However, I also can enforce rules that need to be enforced and believe that I will be able to gently enforce rules my elementary aged

students. I am also a very patient person. I have younger siblings and have been a babysitter for many years, with these opportunities I have learned how to control anger, and help children with a welcoming attitude. It is very important to me that an elementary school teacher has these two personality traits. Without patience I believe that a teacher will get frustrated easily and might handle situations the wrong way that could potentially cause them their job. I also believe that being strict is not something someone thinks about when they think about an elementary school teacher, however, teachers need to be able to enforce rules calmly so that their students can learn right from wrong. Every child has a right to learn in an environment that is set up for learning. The rules set by the elementary school teacher will have a big impact on the students' lives and how they continue to act throughout their twelve years of schooling.

As a student considering the teaching field there is a lot of knowledge that I need to gain if I want to succeed in becoming a teacher. First I want to explore different locations of elementary schools. I need to know how a teacher acts around inner city learners. Growing up in West, Lafayette and observing there, and here at Manchester, I feel like I have not gained

enough knowledge to know what to do when different situations arise. I am hesitant that without this knowledge I will not be a successful teacher because I will not know how to handle situations that I have never been faced with, for instance bomb threats and things of the sort. I believe that obtaining this knowledge will have to be done while at a school that is more diverse, and has a larger community of people. I also believe I need to work on how to put together lessons according to the Indiana State Standards that are mandatory for teachers to teach. I need to understand what standards I need to focus on and how to add them into the appropriate lessons.

As a teacher I want to help enhance students' lives and be a positive role model that they can look up to and trust. I believe interaction between the students and the teacher is the most important factor to how a student learns. Part of students learning process is if they want to learn. Having a teacher that shows they care about their future in education and life will encourage the student and trigger their wanting to learn, causing them to learn more. Teaching, I think is a very difficult job; you have to learn to balance teaching your students what they need to learn with education and

life. You have to be a friend when one is needed yet establish your authority with them, or even act like a parent and enforce punishments that can be hard to give. With my field experiences I have learned and talked with many teachers. Getting their ideas of teaching and what is needed has helped me understand what they have all had to go through to become a teacher and. I am looking forward to becoming an elementary school teacher and be the first to start changing students lives for the better.