

Cayla Davenport

EDUC 410 A

5-5-11

Final Reflection Paper

Starting at Manchester College, I would say I was a little naïve about the intensity of the workload. I thought teaching was going to be all stickers, chalky fingers, and the occasional trip to the principal's office. On the contrary, there are meetings, Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), and a priority on classroom management. Those are the everyday stressful things; however, there are days that are filled with stickers and smiles that make up for the stressful situations teachers have to deal with. I have always considered teaching to be the profession that teaches all the other professions; which in my mind, makes it the most important.

During my student teaching experience, I discovered that not only did I like the idea of teaching, but that I could teach well. I thought I would enjoy teaching Kindergarten the best, and even though it is easier to write lessons for five and six year olds, it was my third grade placement that I enjoyed more. I always thought that the younger the students are, the better, and even though they are adorable, the cuteness is hard to appreciate when all twenty need your attention every second of the school day. I have found a quote that states this scenario clearly, "A good teacher is like a candle – it consumes itself to light the way for others." I would crawl up stairs to my third floor apartment everyday while teaching Kindergarten whereas now, I'm still tired, but I have more fuel left in my tank at the end of (most) days. In my opinion, good teaching is partly preparation and mostly theater; both of which take energy and creativity.

I feel like I can be more comfortable and my sarcastic self around the third graders. They get my jokes and most of my references, which makes it easier to get to know them and talk about life in and out of school.

Before attending Manchester College and student teaching, I knew I was a patient person; however, to say that that was put to the test is an understatement. Through it all, I managed to stay calm and figure out the best solution to most of life's difficulties. I have had four students on behavior charts my third grade classroom. Before starting my teaching experience, I didn't even know what a behavior chart looked like; I sure do now. Each of the students would have a personalized goal for the day and if they strayed from that goal, they would get a mark with an explanation. This has really helped me in understanding how much classroom management determines the effectiveness of the classes' success.

Throughout my time at Manchester College I have learned how much diversity can be found in the classroom. I discovered that language, disabilities, and even gender can play their own roles in how diversity shows up in the classroom. It can be difficult at times to see past a student's differences when that is usually what makes them so special. Some of the most difficult students are the most outstanding in some way. Not only can it be hard to balance as a teacher, but it is up to the teacher to teach the students about respecting diversity in all its forms.

I had many mentors throughout my college career, of which I am very thankful. Before, my mentors had come from my family and the occasional crazy teacher. However, it wasn't until lately that my mentors have become not only all teachers, but friends and colleagues.

Some of my mentors have been my professors and cooperating teachers. They helped me discover my own teaching practices and beliefs; whereas before, I was given guidelines in

directing me towards an ultimate ideal goal. I feel like I have more independence and therefore am enjoying teaching my students even more than I thought possible. Now that I have been able to take on the role of an actual teacher, all the tests and papers I have done to get this experience was worth it. It is so nice to be able to start making differences in a child's life, even if it is just for a moment.

Going to Manchester College, I got to experience a completely different world just fifteen minutes away from the one I grew up in. I received a liberal arts education that allowed me to look at life and situations from points of view I didn't possess before. Some of the classes, I never thought I would take, have allowed me to be a more determined and passionate teacher and person. Gender Studies, Experiencing the Arts, Philosophy, Sociology, and Field Biology were just a handful of the classes that contributed to not only my education, but each student's education that I will teach and make an impression on. After taking all the classes, and sitting through lectures, I can honestly say that I learn something new every day.

Everybody is a lifelong learner in a sense. Even if what you learn doesn't exactly improve society, the fact is that no matter whom you are or what you do for a living, you can learn something new about life each day. I consider myself not only a lifelong learner, but also a seeker of knowledge. I learn things everyday; however, I choose to further my education through conferences, peer reviews, and numerous other ways. The world is constantly changing which means that there is nobody who knows absolutely everything about life, because you can't know everything about something if it constantly changes. From my list of inspiring quotes, Bach once said, "Teaching is reminding others that they know just as well as you. You are all learners, doers, and teachers."

Something I would consider to be my biggest achievement since my freshman year is my confidence in my conflict resolution and management skills. I was always worried that my lack of these skills would deter me from following a career in teaching. Having been in several situations in my student teaching, I am proud to say that even though I am a very patient and calm person, I can still handle an entire classroom day after day.

I have matured and grown even more passionate about teaching since my freshman year of college. These past four years have been long and very difficult; however, the hard work and determination made me into the great teacher I am and will continue to be. I look forward to my next challenge, and all the lives I can influence from the classroom. "To teach is to learn twice," and my ultimate goal would be for me to learn as much from my students as they learn from me. I have already started achieving this goal, and will strive towards it throughout my career.

Resources

"Teacher Quotes, Teaching Sayings, Quotations about Teachers." *The Quote Garden - Quotes, Sayings, Quotations, Verses*. Web. 05 May 2011.
<<http://www.quote garden.com/teachers.html>>.