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“Some people go into teaching because it is a job. Some people go into teaching to make a difference (Wong and Wong, Title Page).” Teaching is not just another mindless job in which an individual shows up to and does what they are told. It takes preparation, thought, and inspiration that comes from the heart. To be a teacher means to selflessly think about others and meeting the needs of those who are relying on you to provide them with the tools to learn and grow. As a senior in high school, four years ago, I decided that my calling was education, mainly because I enjoyed working with children. Little did I realize then, that by the end of my time at Manchester College that I would feel so passionately for teaching, that I would have philosophies about learning and views about how important it is to be an educator; how many responsibilities coincide with the title of “teacher.” I am a teacher because I want to make a positive difference in the lives of my students, because children, after all, are the future.

As I look back at the philosophy of education that I had when I first began college, my basic beliefs and goals as an educator have not altogether changed. My philosophies have, however, developed into a deeper understand as to what it means to teach and I have gained a more sophisticated vocabulary of educational vernacular. The teaching credo that I wrote during Introduction to Teaching as a freshman outlined my thoughts about education, prior to my having very much experience with thinking like a teacher. Thanks to the education courses that I have taken at Manchester College I have learned so much about education and how to be an effective teacher. Not only have I been taught about the different elements of education I have had the opportunity to experience and try some of the things we talked about in our classes. In the child development course I took my sophomore year, I learned about the social, emotional,

and physical development of young children. I was then given an assignment in which I chose one preschooler and observed him and I began to notice and understand the attributes of developing children. Understanding how children develop helps me as a teacher know the abilities of my students and I can plan lessons that are developmentally appropriate for the age in which I am teaching.

The courses I have taken at Manchester College have prepared me to plan lessons in a variety of ways to meet the needs of my students. The education courses emphasize the importance of meet the needs of all students by incorporating multiple intelligences, enrichments for student with high abilities, accommodations and modifications to sections of a lesson for students with special needs, and opportunities to integrate many different subjects into one lesson. I have written lessons that incorporated movement and physical activity for a physical education class that involved a science theme, the states of matter. The students were active and moved while learning about how the states of matter and particles move. Not only have I experienced writing lessons with multiple subject integrated into one, I have found that I am getting better at thinking about touching more standards and subject areas without struggling to think of interesting and fun ways to teach the content. I am also fortunate, because I have the Mild Intervention major, to have a familiarity with writing lessons that include accommodations and modifications for students who struggle, or have special needs. My special education classes have prepared me to work with students who struggle and to have compassion and patience with them. My special education student teaching placements have given me the chance to work with students with a wide range of abilities, and I am growing when it comes to planning my instruction.

My overall philosophies and thoughts about teaching have not changed drastically since I began my journey at Manchester College. However, thanks to the passion and inspiration of my professors, fellow future educators, and my mentor, my mother, I have made some changes to my personal teaching credo. My understanding about how children learn has grown and I have been able to put into practice techniques and methods that I had only ever heard about prior to my coming to Manchester. I know now that it is so important for curriculum information to be scaffold by the teacher. By building bridges of new information to prior knowledge students connect to what they are learning about and are able to grasp concepts much faster and learning becomes more meaningful. When students connect to their learning they become excited and more engaged and a deeper understanding takes place. I know this to be true not only because I know that as a learner I become more excited to go to class when I can make connections to the content, but also due to what I have seen in my student teaching placements. While reading a book that features a character who is autistic, a fifth grade student of mine shared that her younger brother is autistic. She was able to give the group more information about autism and made connections throughout the book as a result of the story activating her prior knowledge about individuals who have autism. My increasing knowledge about how students learn through connections helps me to be an effective teacher.

My educational philosophies have shifted slightly as my thinking has become broader and I have learned how important it is to listen to the differing points of view of others. I previously wrote about teaching credo being mainly drawing from ideas that involve existentialist, perennialist and progressivist ideas. I continue to believe that curriculum content should relate to the students' interests; however my views as to the role of the teacher have changed. I once thought that the teacher's instructional "job" was to provide students with

knowledge and information, I now see that it is so much more complex. Teachers provide students with the tools that essential for self-discovery and exploration. We do not teach the information; we show the students how to find it on their own through research and investigation. My job as a teacher is to demonstrate to my students how they can be in charge of their learning and model the effective ways to go about this journey. As I teacher, I strive to engrain the passion and excitement for learning in all of my students, so that as they grow and become adults they will continue to value learning.

Through out my field experiences at Manchester College, I have taken the opportunity to attend professional development conferences and workshops to better myself as an educator. Education is a never ending field of change and it is important to stay up-to-date on new curriculum, teaching methods, and standards. Effective teachers are constantly reading professional books about ways to reach students and meet their needs. Not only will I continue to grow and learn as a professional, but I will also seek knowledge for my own enjoyment. I love going to museums, zoos, traveling, and reading about history. Through my leisure activities, I pursue new information and knowledge to make myself a more “well-rounded” individual. As a teacher I can share my love of learning with my students in hopes to inspire them to pursue lifelong learning.

At Manchester College, future educators are held to a set of twenty-four CARE objectives. These standards are put into place to ensure that future educators that graduate from Manchester College have the skills that are necessary to be an effective teacher. The CARE objectives have challenged me to submit high quality works in everything that I do, in order to that show my growing ability to think and prepare like a valuable teacher. My student teaching

experiences, as well as my observational field experiences throughout the last four years, have allowed me to practice all of the CARE standards.

CARE stands for Curriculum, Assessment, Relationships, and Environment. My curriculum focuses on developing lesson plans that accurately and effectively teach the academic standards. Throughout my student teaching I have constantly looked at the Indiana Academic Standards when planning my lessons to ensure that my students are mastering the standards. I have created many assessments for my student teaching placements, such as project rubrics for the fifth grade fifty states research project, a checklist rubric for a science biome group project, and a quiz that I created to make sure my fifth grade students understood the history of the constitution, to name a few. I also have done a lot of informal assessments like through observation and interacting with my students. I reflect on my observations with my cooperating teacher and talk about ways that I can help a struggling student or enhance future lessons for advanced students. I also ask a lot of questions during my lessons; I am constantly assessing my students so that I can drive my instruction in the direction that meets their needs. I create relationships with my students so that I can find out what their strengths and weaknesses are which helps me as a teacher meet student needs. I also develop relationships with my teacher colleagues, and I have co-taught with my cooperating teacher several times. My cooperating teacher and I plan a lesson in which we modeled how to have small group book clubs. Through my student teaching I have practiced a positive and caring environment for my student's development and learning through using new technologies, like the Smartboard to enhance learning. I have also learned to manage my classroom in a positive way that focuses on student safety and creates an environment that is conducive to learning.

I am so excited to begin the next step of my journey as an educator. I have learned so much about what it means to be an educator, and I am so excited about making a difference in the lives of my students. I am so grateful that I have had passionate college professors, cooperating teachers, and my mother to look upon as inspiration as I become an educator. I see myself following the path of education for the rest of my life, whether I stay in the classroom, or I move on to instructing in the field of higher education to share my enthusiasm and knowledge about children and instruction to aspiring teachers. I can hardly contain myself; I cannot wait to go out into the field of education! What an exciting and important profession that I am about to embark upon!

Bibliography

Wong, Harry, and Rosemary Wong. *The First Days of School: How to be an Effective Teacher*.

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