

Content and Methodology Paper

It wasn't until the end of my sophomore year of college that I decided I wanted to be a teacher. Working in after school programs and observing how teachers run their classrooms, I decided I want to be a difference maker. I have noticed that most of today's classrooms are not engaging and teachers are focused more on tests than the actual student. Manchester College was the place for me to reach my goal in becoming a difference maker and try to bring back the excitement of learning to the elementary classroom. As I got deeper into the education program, I began to question myself on how I was going to become a difference maker and then I enrolled in the content and methodology courses.

My content and methodology course have helped prepare me for my upcoming student teaching placements and future teaching career. These courses have also prepared me to be the difference maker I want to be by supplying me with the knowledge, tools, and experiences that I will need at the elementary level. Due to many hours of observations and learned theories, I have gained theories and practices to incorporate into my own classroom. I have also learned what and what not to do in the classroom. This knowledge has changed or strengthened my views and attitudes of how a classroom should operate, how theories and practices should be implemented in a classroom, and the actual content that should be taught.

My biggest area of concern as a future teacher is reading and writing. Due to my reading and writing experiences from the past, I feel that I'm not that strong of a reader or writer. Because of these negative experiences, I feel that I won't be a good example for my students. By taking content and methods classes such as Lit. Block and Corrective Reading, I feel that I am better equipped with ideas to help my students become successful readers and writers. Throughout

these classes, I have gathered large amounts of material to help build comprehension, organize writing, meta-cognition, and the list continues. The six stages of reading and writing are two techniques that will definitely be used in my future classroom. The techniques are great because it engages the student by getting them interested about what they are going to read or write and the steps also help keep the student on track and organized.

Social studies is another area of concern. Due to my past experiences, I am not interested in social studies at all. My methods class has taught me that social studies can be fun and that it doesn't consist of reading from a text and then testing over the material. Life is what you make it and if you make a subject engaging, then the students are more likely to enjoy that subject. This methods class has given me a few ideas for turning this subject into something interesting such as historical art projects and alternative assessments besides tests. Students can give speeches, create charts, build art pieces, and etc. to show me what they have learned. School should be focused on how the student learns and the best way for them to show me what they have obtained besides pencil and paper tests.

All teachers need to understand how a child's mind works and how it develops. With this information, teachers can better prepare themselves for what and how to teach students so that they benefit in the best way possible. Content classes such as Ed. Psych and Child Development have introduced me to theorists who have a good idea of how the mind develops and the best way to succeed in educational growth. Two theorist that stick out in my mind are Gardner and Bloom. For example, Bloom focuses on the three types of learning (cognitive, affective, psychomotor) and the best way to train and acquire the skills from each based on six categories (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation).

All teachers know that students learn at different rates and in different ways. Theorists learned have proved this but special education took it more in depth for me. Mild interventions courses, observations, and actually working with students who have learning disabilities has been a great opportunity.

What I like about the Mild Intervention courses is that every category is discussed and dissected for what we will be licensed for. We learn about what a student is identified with, how it affects their learning, and strategies for helping the students succeed. Due to this dissection and learned methods, I am better equipped with what I have to look forward to and how I can teach in a way so that ALL students can be successful.

The best thing I enjoyed about methods block was the field experience week. As a future teacher, it was great to see the difference between small town schools and big city schools. The biggest differences I noticed between Manchester and Ft. Wayne are the social classes, language barriers, ethnicity, and discipline issues. Although I enjoyed my week, I must say that I was happy to be back in the small town of Manchester.

Field experience week did give me a great outlook for what I can expect in the future. I have always said that once I become a teacher that I would head for the city to try and help those with trouble lives. There were doubts because of stories I have heard about inner-city schools and my fear of failure as well. I survived my week in Ft. Wayne and changed a couple of my student's attitudes as well.

There was a student who was labeled as a "trouble maker" in my classroom. The teacher warned me a head of time and even shared background info and stories. I had a few

conversations with the student and to my surprise I had no problems with the student all week. All this student needed was a friend first and an authority figure second. He came from a troubled home and all he needed was for someone to show that they cared about him. Because I showed caring and understanding to the student, he was willing to behave, participate in class, and get his work done. On my last day, the student gave me a great big hug and a note that read "Ms. Bennet thanks for being nice to me." As a future teacher, that was a great thing for me to experience because it showed that with patience and understanding I can make a difference and survive.

There are some courses that have good intentions but the class tactics need to be updated. Conflict Resolutions is a great course that can prepare teachers for future behavioral issues that can happen within a school corp. Throughout the course you learn some great tactics to use when handling conflict in the classroom, school, and outside of school. These tactics include I-messages, the peace corner, negotiation, peer mediation, and etc.

This class is once a week for 2 ½ hours. We spend most of our time reading and/or acting out scripts, situations, and experiences. There is a lot of time that we could spend in our placements trying to use these techniques or talking to students about better ways to solve conflict. Maybe we could actually go to schools or classrooms with a lot of behavior issues and try to teach kids that there are better ways to solve problems than acting out. I feel that would be a great experience and we would get more out of the class because it's hands-on and real life involvement.

These experiences have prepared me for what's to come in the future. By being involved in the content and methodology classes, I feel better prepared to handle students in the

classroom. I know that I will never feel completely prepared because there is only so much experience you can get from a classroom. Anything can happen on any given day, so the best thing I can do is be flexible and patient, which are two important qualities all teachers should have. Teaching is a life-long process and through my students and professional development, I will continue to better my practices, change my beliefs to best benefit the student, and to grow as a person.