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Final Reflection Paper

My last three years here at Manchester have been my best educational experience. The teachers are caring, available, and work their hardest so that you can gain the best educational experience possible. Due to their hard work, I feel that I am prepared to be a teacher.

I have had a lot of valuable learning experiences in my teacher preparation. The most important thing I have learned is to never judge a book by its cover. Don't assume that a child can't do something because it's not that they can't but they need assistance. Some teachers believe that to befriend students is a mistake but I learned the hard way that some type of relationship must be established or you will get nowhere with a student. Once you show them that you do care and you're not just there to be there, then they will cooperate and are less likely to act out. Finally, just because you plan a day it doesn't mean the day will go that way. Anything can happen so you must be prepared for it. When things do mess up the schedule, make the most of it.

My goals for teaching have changed a little since I entered the Teacher Education Program. I still believe that children come first and my goal is to see them all succeed. Because education is a life-long process, my goal in that aspect has changed to take advantage of every learning opportunity possible. Continuing to go to educational conferences, learning from my students, and staying on top of issues in the educational world are new goals for me. Staying on top of these things will make me a better teacher and more knowledgeable/aware.

My newest goal is to become a difference maker. I started out just wanting to be a successful teacher. Seeing all the hardships that students will go through in their lives or not having someone to look up to outside of school has affected me. Being there for my students the best way I can to help them succeed is a new goal that is every important to me. That's why we become teachers and therefore we as teachers need to be focused on the situation at hand.

I have learned a lot about myself and have grown immensely. When it comes to talking in front of people, I don't talk very loud so I have to force myself to speak-up. Once I was in front of my students though I changed. My nervousness and shyness went away and my voice projected all the way to the back of the room. I had a few doubts but got through all of them just fine.

Planning lessons for the week was also another concern for me. I wasn't sure I was going to be able to do it or keep up. Because I was provided with plenty of materials, my lesson plans were always complete and ready for me to teach. A lot of that goes to a great cooperating teacher who was ready and willing to help me with anything.

Classroom control and keeping student's attention was my biggest fear. I didn't know if the kids were going to see me as an authority figure or just a visitor in the class. Due to plenty of fall visits and the teacher informing her class, my students accepted me as a 3rd grade teacher.

I have grown so much that I feel that I am ready to be a teacher. When it comes to stepping in front of the class or approaching students, I am definitely more confident from when I first started out in the education program. Because of my classes and great teachers I am more knowledgeable than ever. Whether if its lesson plans, accommodating

students, or solving problems I know that I can handle anything due to methods block and my student teaching placements.

I feel that I have prepared myself to demonstrate competencies as outlined in the goals and objectives of the conceptual framework of the Teacher Education Program. Lesson plan creating and writing are not easy tasks but I have created a lesson in all fields of education possible. That has prepared me for the many educational tasks of elementary education. Attending classes that are required within the education profession have also given me hands-on experiences and practice.

Learning of other's teaching philosophies and applying them to my teaching methods has also given me an edge and prepared me for the future. People such as Harry Wong, Gardner, Bloom, and others have developed great techniques and philosophies for a positive and successful education. Researching and applying them to my lessons, beliefs, and techniques has made me a better teacher. Whether it be questioning for deeper thought, teaching to reach different learning styles, or laying down the law of the classroom on the first day of school, I feel that I am prepared because I was introduced to these key people.

My whole education received here at Manchester has prepared me for the future. Because our teachers had us so actively involved in methods block, I feel that I'm prepared for almost anything. This is due to lesson writing, observing, volunteering for different educational events, reflections, and so much more. Prof. Gust takes on so much teaching the special education courses and does a great job. We discuss and write everything possible that we will be involved in within the program. Interviewing people within the profession and giving practice tests, like PPVT, our peers has given me a lot of

information and first hand experiences. Education must be well rounded to gain and experience successfully. That's where Liberal Arts come into play. Classes like ETA teach you about education outside the typical reading, writing, and math. It also gives you a chance to develop other strengths and talents such as musical/art abilities and/or bodily-kinesthetics.

My experiences have also contributed to my growth and development in faith, learning, and service. Going to educational conferences have increased my knowledge and understanding of certain issues with education, such as reading importance and NCLB. Volunteering to help others gives you a great feeling because some students need more help outside of regular school hours. Observing and participating actively in the classroom has prepared me for the future and giving me hands-on experiences that I couldn't have received anywhere else. Because of all the encouragement, support, and knowledge gained from my teachers here at Manchester, I feel that I am prepared as I can be to take on the world of education. A big part of that was Methods Block, Lit. Block, and the mild interventions courses completed here.

Some qualities I have gained that I believe are essential for an educated person are compassion, understanding, flexibility, respectful, and very trustworthy. To teach successfully, you must be able to understand where the kids are coming from and adapt you teaching towards them. The reason we teach is for the students so if no type of relationship is established then you are in for a long and unsuccessful year.

As I complete student teaching, there are some new goals I have established for myself. First, I will work my hardest to have a job within the next year. Second, I want my students to feel like they can talk to me anytime and about anything. Once we have

established trust and they see that I do care, success in the classroom will be more easily achieved. Finally, I want to make a difference in my student's lives. Education is very important and if I can get them to see that and feel the same way about learning as I do, then I will be satisfied. I want to show them that learning can be fun and that an education will be very valuable in their future.

Some of my strengths are that I am a compassionate and understanding person. Students will have no trouble approaching me with their troubles because I care about their future. Another strength is that my personality is like a big kid so I tend to connect with kids easily. Being a parent has helped build these strengths as well. Creativity and flexibility are two very important strengths I possess. You never know what is going to go on throughout a school day. The best thing I can do is go with the flow and take advantage of every situation.

I do need to try and be more vocal when things are on my mind so that I'm not affected mentally in the classroom. That would be my main weakness because I tend to keep things bottled up inside. I am working on it and will try harder in the future. Like the saying goes, "practice what you preach."

Looking back on my education here at Manchester, the only thing that I would change is that I wish I could have started my college career here. Then maybe I would have graduated in 4 years. The school and teachers are amazing and have prepared me for the future. Through all the experiences, hard work, and complaining, I'm glad I can say that it was all worth it. I have never been so compassionate about a career choice in my life. Because of the Teacher Education Program that I have gone through here at Manchester, I know I chose the right profession for me and I love it.