

## **Anchor Currere Project**

My anchor placement has been an incredible experience of personal discovery and growth. On my first full day with my third grade kiddos, we took a field trip to Elms. It was quite the first day! I already knew many of their names from my short visits to the classroom, but I did not have the helpful desk tags to help me out with names. After about the first 30 minutes at Elms, however, I had all of their names down with 100% accuracy and had picked out a few students who I felt merited a bit of extra supervision while we were hiking through the woods. I went home exhausted and not really feeling like a teacher. The next day was just as overwhelming and exhausting; the entire third grade was having a “heritage feast” with parents. Again, I did not really get the chance to get to know the kids because of all the crazy happening.

By winter break, I was teaching for more than half of the day and directing most of the daily transitions and routines. During the week before break, our class spent a lot of time with another third grade class; I worked with the third grade team to collaboratively plan many of these activities. I really enjoyed being able to share these festivities with my students, who reminded me of excitement of the holiday season for children.

The first subject I took over was science, and I continued to teach science for the rest of my internship. Even though science has never been ‘my thing,’ I apparently (unwittingly at first) presented a contagious enthusiasm for the subject, and my students responded with equal enthusiasm. Before school on most days, at least one student would bounce up to my desk to ask if we were going to do an experiment in science that day. The students asked me questions for which I could not even pretend to know the answer, and I realized that that situation

provided me with a chance to explore with the students. We had some science experiments that went terribly wrong, and we kept moving and talked about why the experiments turned out as they did. Flash forward: on my last day, my mentor asked each student to share their favorite memory of me as their teacher. A majority of students named experiments, projects, and lesson from our shared science experiences.

My last day with kids before coming back to campus for the three week spring semester was heart-wrenching for me. Even though I knew I would be back and would probably visit during those three weeks, I viewed the three weeks not as a break, like many of my colleagues, but rather as a horrible period of drudgery I needed to get through to get back to my babies. I was so into the routine of spending all day everyday with my kids that I could not imagine spending time in class with students of my own age.

My very last day with my third graders was an extremely emotional day for me. I oscillated between feeling incredibly excited for my upcoming trip and overwhelmingly depressed because I felt that I was abandoning these 24 amazing little people who had welcomed me, taught me, willingly participated in my teaching experiments, and wormed their way into my heart. I realized that I will have to say goodbye every year to my students, then quickly recuperate enough to take the next group into my heart in the same way. This group, however, will always hold a special place in my heart because they taught me that I could teach and they showed me how to pick up the pieces and keep moving forward when things go wrong.

## **Progression**

Ten years after graduating from the M.A.T., I am still teaching third grade. During those ten years, I have continued in my professional development, working toward my doctorate. I still give my all to my students and work closely with the third grade team to create meaningful and exciting learning opportunities for our students. Twenty years after graduating from the M.A.T., I am still teaching third grade in the same school. I have earned my doctorate and teach as an adjunct at a local college, sharing my expertise with future educators; additionally, I mentor intern teachers each year. I still grow extremely attached to my students each year, and the last day is still the hardest day each year by far. Over the past twenty years, I have developed a unique and powerful bond, full of shared jokes and good times, with each of my groups of students.

## **Analysis and Synthesis**

My regression and my progression both highlight the importance I place on teacher-student relationships; I find parting with each and every one of my student a painful yet joyous occasion. Another trend in my regression and progression is continuity. I have remained at the same school, teaching the same grade to maintain my connection to my students, even after they have left my classroom, and to develop strong connections to the community. It is clear to myself, my students, and others that my success as an educator comes from my deep connection to my students, based on mutual respect and shared adventure. I never get stuck in a rut teaching the same thing year after year; I continually look for new ways, new adventures based on the students in my room.