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CEP 807 Capstone Class
Reflection Essay

The Beginning of a Lifelong Learner's Experiences- Looking Back

In March 2012 I was already in the midst of my second semester at University Liggett School. In those first six months I had taught five different subjects, coached two teams, and already put on a first semester of activities with the student commission. As I sat down to write my goal reflections essay for admission into the College of Education's Masters of Arts in Educational Technology program I wondered how I would be able to make everything work. Since then I have added five different subjects to that list, a state championship in hockey, and expanded the amount of influence student commission has on school events. In this essay, I attempt to assess the goals I had at the beginning of this program, while also acknowledging that as I change as a teacher, my goals and interests will have shifted as well.

At the time of my admission into the program differentiated instruction was a major interest of mine as an educator. Throughout my internship experience and job at University Liggett School, I observed that this allowed me to reach the most students and offered a variety of ways to help the different learning styles I interacted with in the classroom. Though differentiated learning is an important aspect of my teaching today, it is amazing how much can change in a short period of time. In my original goal statement to the university I identified three classes that could expand my knowledge in this area and offer examples for my students to use. CEP 813: Electronic Portfolios, CEP 818: Creativity in Teaching and Learning, CEP 820: Teaching K-12 Students online all would have been beneficial based on the course descriptions and the needs I had as a teacher, however due to time constraints, state requirements, and my own selections I never was able to take these courses. Despite the specific

aspects of my goals not being realized, I still used the topic of differentiated instruction to guide my work in the program.

One thing that has greatly impacted my work in the program is the consideration of balance in the program. During the introductory programs of CEP 810, 811, and 812 I was introduced to the notion of TPACK and from that moment forward each class I took in the program my main goal was to identify the content appropriate for my students, come up with a sound way for them to interact with it, and consider if there were any additional tools that might make that process more successful for them. One of the reasons I did not end up taking the classes that I mentioned in my original goal statement was because I was originally unaware of the accelerated summer program that definitely helped ease some of my concerns about the overall work load during the school year. Though the classes in that program did not carry the names of the ones mentioned above, they were excellent tools for research into differentiation, experience implementing aspects of a differentiated classroom, and great models of examples of how to do it successfully. By keeping content, pedagogy, and technology at the heart of my learning I was able to keep my original goals within a successful reach even if I had to do it by greatly adjusting my original schedule.