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Early Childhood Teacher (NSW)



To work with children is a privilege that should never be taken for granted. The last five years have taken me on a journey of learning the details of this relationship in the context of education and have shaped my vision for the future. I finished studying my Bachelor of Education: Early Childhood Education (birth to 12 years) degree last year, became a 'targeted graduate' and have invested my first year working with a class of Year 5 students at a Department of Education school in northern Sydney.

Looking back

My experiences during university life grew me holistically and shaped what I believe about education today. I quickly found myself seeking to support people who were new or on the 'outskirts'. I volunteered in the 'Mentors@Macquarie' program and worked with a team to facilitate the transition of many first-year students. My involvement and leadership in a Christian student society, 'Student Life,' taught me about developing and enlarging my vision, goal setting, strategic planning and the importance of continuous personal and professional development. I received many opportunities to engage in public speaking and developed a priority of being intentional in relationships with the view of supporting others. I worked at Macquarie University across four faculties in total while completing my degree. In these various roles, I sought to equip students studying education, mostly through individual tutoring. This taught me about working with others on a whole new scale as I was impacting the future teachers of society. During professional experience placements, I decided to get out of my 'comfort zone' and requested schools from varying demographics to ensure I got out of the 'middle class suburbia' bubble.

This year—2016

My current season of work as a Year 5 teacher has been a joy-filled and challenging experience. During Term 1, I felt as if there was a wall between the theories taught at university and the overwhelming amount of learning I had to do to become acculturated in this new setting. As time went by, I began to draw upon EC philosophy and pedagogy. Family-centred practice, the importance of aesthetics and aiming for students' holistic growth are probably the biggest three. I have kept a journal of my experiences in order to document what the roller coaster of beginning teaching is like and to give me clarity of thought when making decisions. I cannot reiterate how helpful underpinning reflective practice in my work and life has been.

The addition of mentoring time to support beginning teachers has been a leadership decision that has had a direct impact on my ability to succeed this year. My mentor has been a cornerstone in supporting and empowering me as I have sought to 'find my feet' in this new setting. I have had someone to ask how I am really going, provide ideas and resources for lessons, clarify the expectations of my role and share wisdom and advice. The executive leaders of my school have enabled me to work with my first year colleagues to create a teacher induction and transition program. It is only with their support that I am being empowered to use my ideas and vision in this capacity. This has been supported because of the broader landscape of leadership and the government's initiative of the Great Teaching, Inspired Learning (GTIL) reforms in New South Wales.

Looking ahead

My vision is to connect, support and empower children who experience marginalisation to live vibrant and fruitful lives

with respect, equity, justice and hope. My passions stem from my Christian faith and worldview, where I am constantly challenged to think of what it truly means to 'love my neighbour as myself'. Professionally, this is working with my colleagues to support, connect and empower our students, with over 90 per cent learning English as a second language and many who are new to Australia. Outside of work, it means building relationships with children and families who have just arrived after fleeing the war in Syria. With people from my Armenian cultural community, we are taking initiatives to build relationships with people individually and connect them to society in ways that will empower them, restore their voices and bring out their best. It is a joy and privilege to gain new friends and share life together.

To be successful, I cannot do it alone. I need to work alongside others who share this vision and will be advocates, community builders and who will be present with these children. Teaching is an incredible career that gives us opportunities to use our leadership for the good of society and I am excited to be on this adventure.

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