

ITEC 501.02 Student Binder
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Emily Akers

Secondary English



Throughout my years of grade school I moved around quite a bit. I started off at a Catholic school run by nuns, in Richmond. It took a little time but I finally adjusted to their conservative policies- such as rationing out toilet paper. Later, my father received a job promotion and was transferred to Savannah, Georgia. What a culture shock! Not only was I unaccustomed to living with the fist-

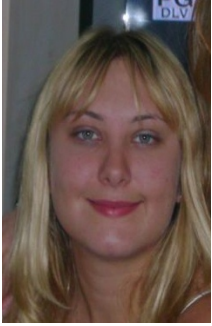
sized cockroaches that persisted in trying to establish residency in my new house, but neither had I been subjected to teachers so insensitive to my innocent ears. I was appalled that on my first day at a Georgia public school the teacher continuously screamed at the class to “shut up.” These were both contributing factors to my mother rushing my sister and me back to Richmond. I attended a different school every year until I was

eleven. Needless to say, I have been exposed to a number of educational styles and philosophies.

It was not until my sophomore year of college, at Virginia Commonwealth University, that I decided I wanted to teach. For as long as I can remember, my mother has been telling me to get a job doing something I can enjoy; don't be one of those people who dreads going to work everyday. So, I decided that teaching was something that I would not only enjoy doing, but probably look forward to. Though I'm sure it will take years for me to fine tune my classroom management plans and differentiated learning techniques, I know that I will persevere, just as those cockroaches did. Assisting students to make well-informed decisions that will improve the quality of their life is an opportunity and responsibility that I am

passionate about. I have known far too many intelligent people who slipped through the cracks of the educational system and lost their chances of living up to their full potential. I find it a shame that so many kids hold such misconceptions about the importance of an education.

I suppose my unpolished philosophy would be to help my students be the happiest people they can be, and happiness means having choices. Being forced into a career that makes you miserable is a terrible predicament to be in. Establishing a firm educational foundation is the best way to ensure that a person will not be limited to just a handful of jobs. My goal is to create an exciting classroom environment that will promote interest in learning and encourage students to go on to higher education.



My name is Jessica Gentile and there are a few things about myself I would like to share with everyone. First of all the reason I am taking this class is because I am a student in the masters for elementary education program. Secondly, I have been in the Fredericksburg area my entire life. Lastly I enjoy online classes for a number of reasons. Hopefully this autobiography will help everyone get a better idea of who I am.

As stated above I am taking classes because I hope to become an elementary school teacher. I am now on my third semester in this program and have enjoyed it more and more as I have become more comfortable with the school. I have slowly familiarized myself with the way things are done. Before coming to this school I earned my undergraduate degree in psychology at the Fredericksburg campus. Even though Fredericksburg and Stafford campuses are part of the same school I can tell you first hand they are entirely different. In the psychology program I was always tested formally and there was limited interaction among classmates and the professor. A typical class would be all lectures and little to no discussion. In this program however, all my classes have been student focused and as a student I have more projects and presentations I need to do. I enjoy this program more because in order to become a teacher I believe practice is necessary and we do get plenty of that in this program.

Again, I have lived in the Fredericksburg area my entire life and can honestly say I love it here. A lot of people don't like staying in the same area their entire lives but for me it hasn't been anything but a good experience. I haven't grown bored of the area at all. Then again, the area has dramatically changed in the last 20 years so getting bored with it would be hard to do.

Since I've lived here Central Park has come and that has completely changed the dynamics of the area. Even when I start my career as a teacher I plan to stay here in the Fredericksburg area. Some people joke that I should branch out a little more but I don't see any reason to at this point, not if I'm happy here.

This is my second online class and I really enjoy online classes. I think online classes are great because you can decide when the best time to finish your work is. I also feel there is a lot more participation on my part when I take online classes because everyone is required to work just as hard. Discussion Boards are also fun because everyone is encouraged to take part and everyone has an equal voice. I believe that in education it is very important for everyone to feel comfortable and to know that they are in an environment that is safe enough for them to ask questions and get a richer education.

Hopefully this helped everyone get a better idea of who I am. I look forward to reading everyone's autobiographies so that we can all learn something about each other. Again, as an aspiring elementary teacher I am greatly looking forward to this class that will help me become the best teacher possible.

Jessica Greene



Allow me to introduce myself, my name is Jessica Greene. I was born and raised in Smithfield, Va which is about two hours south of Fredericksburg, Va where I currently reside. I presently attend the University of Mary Washington College of Graduate and Professional Studies in pursuit of my teaching licensure and Master's of Education. Although sometimes I appear shy, I am much people person. I love being around children and helping them discover what they can contribute to the world. I am very family oriented and I love to travel and visit friends and family. I am sports enthusiast; I will watch or play just about any sport.

Isle of Wight County Schools is where I gained my early and secondary education. Throughout high school I emerged as a member and leader of several clubs and athletic programs including basketball, softball and track and field. I graduated as an honor student from Smithfield High School and decided to

pursue a degree in Computer Information Systems at Kent State University in Ohio. My parents' jobs moved them to Ohio led me to the Buckeye State. After about two years, I decided to move into Business Management. Still not satisfied with what my life in the real world would entail, I decided I wanted to become a teacher even though I graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Management (2005).

This decision brought me to the University of Mary Washington, as I sought a graduate program that would help me reach my new aspiration. I am seeking my teaching license with an endorsement in Business Education. This is my second year teaching Algebra Readiness in Spotsylvania County. With this position I have the opportunity to help kids who are struggling in math to see their full potential and find ways to grasp new strategies of learning.

In my philosophy, education is about teaching students to recognize that they control their learning. Students have to believe in themselves and have confidence that with the knowledge gained in school they can be a contributing part of society. Simply put they have to care about educating themselves and what they are learning. Just as teachers have to care about what and who they are teaching in order to be effective educators. Teachers should find ways to make learning more engaging and interactive for the students. Finding ways to relate to students and differentiating lessons to reach all students lead to meaningful learning.

I prefer to find out particular interests of my students and find ways to

link those interests into a lesson or just a casual conversation. I relate to some of my students through sports, as I coach basketball. However, I watch a variety of sports use this commonality to link with students to show them that one adult really does care. I believe in being a real person to the students, someone who listens, cares, and respects them as individuals. In essence this builds a relationship that based on mutual respect for each other and our interests.

Most of all, I love being around children. Teaching allows me to be involved with two things I love, children and sports. I am able to make a positive impact on tomorrow's leaders and decision makers. By Fall 2007, I hope to have my licensure program complete and a full time business education position where I can continue to build positive, meaningful connections with students that will enable their interest in learning.





Sharon Krasny

Back in the days of my undergraduate studies, my writing professor gave us the assignment of creating a poem to describe ourselves to the class and the world at large. Feeling the freedom of youth my poem began, “SPLAT! Here am I beneath your microscopic eye”. Now that a few years have passed, it is fun to look back and see where the attitude and energy of those opening lines have led me. From my studies at Indiana Wesleyan University, to my current studies at Mary Washington life has been full and fun. In the following paragraphs, I will focus the lens of the microscope to career, marriage, and finally to thoughts on education which leads me full circle to career.

At Indiana Wesleyan University, my initial degree was English Literature and Writing with a secondary school teaching certification. However, when I stepped into the schools to do my observation my nerve left me and therefore I left the program. There were many interests that I considered pursuing to complement my English degree. Yet Mom became terminally ill so my education was cut short to return home and care for her. With diploma in hand, thoughts of what to do with just an English Lit/Writing degree flooded my thoughts. My passion had been to teach. My experience had discouraged that pursuit. Until I was presented with the opportunity to travel overseas with a Christian organization to teach English as a foreign language to high school students in Hungary. There the students were different than American students. There was something about their innocence that strengthened my teaching resolve and honed my teaching instincts. After completing my first year in Hungary, my teammate and I moved up to Prague in the Czech Republic to pioneer the way for our organization in this

new country. That year was magical. It was incredibly hard, magnificently beautiful, tremendously rewarding and eventually addicting. I wanted to quit and return to the states, but my students wouldn't let me go. Then near the end of my first year teaching in Prague, I met a wonderful man on the tram and fell in love. We married on one of the coldest days of my life, in an amazing cathedral right in the heart of the city. After our wedding I decided to focus my goals as a teacher and pursue my ultimate dream to teach at the university. My job opportunity came and I went to work at the pedagogical faculty of Charles University in Prague. Shortly after accepting this new position we learned we were expecting our first. I had only one semester of living my dream. Teaching at the university was wonderful and positively the best way to end a chapter in my teaching career.

When our first born celebrated her first birthday we moved to the United States to try our hand at the American dream. Two children later and a long hard struggle to succeed we found ourselves buying our first home in Fauquier county. Having children has really helped to define my beliefs of how to teach children. It is tremendously important that I do not only bestow upon them the knowledge that I already have, but that I reserve their right to make their own knowledge by learning things together. If I am to be an effective teacher, I need to be a diligent student. If my students are to hear what I am saying they need to play with their perspectives and take hold of the information in order for them to apply knowledge and truly grow. And if I respect my students I will give them firm boundaries in which they can move and grow.

Now that my youngest child has begun her path in kindergarten, I have returned to my passion and am pursuing my teaching certification in secondary education. After all this time of avoiding American high schools, I find myself excited to seek out the student who is ready to go SPLAT!



MARYCLAIRE LINDGREN: A Life in Short



Life moves fast. One day you are happy to be getting “A’s” on your spelling words in elementary school and all is simple in the world, and the next day (it seems) you are in your 40’s looking back on your life. You know you have done a good job with that life if, despite some definitely rotten times, you can smile about it all in the end. I suppose I can smile about my life, for surely, it could have been much worse! I like to break down my life into the main three beings within me: a mom, a student, a teacher.

When I was four years old and was asked the requisite question for children that age (What do you want to be when you grow up?), I always answered, “I want to be a mommy!” So I am. I am the proud mother of two boys: a Coastie and a cowboy. My oldest is in the Coast Guard, and I can tell you that the United States is safer with him on watch. My youngest is ranked 9th in the world in Reining, a western, high performance horse sport now recognized as an Olympic sport. Please look for him at the 2012 Olympics. When I think of myself, this is the being about whom I think. I am a mother first. It is a job I love, and you should know that once you are a mother, you are always a mother! I am extremely proud of my children. Can you tell? A mother must take care of herself in order to care for her children though, and as my sons grew older, I found that my brain needed some care. I went back to college to finish my undergraduate degree.

I have a love of learning. I am a sponge for new information. While raising my children, I always was involved with some kind of class or activity to engage my mind. Of course, it goes without saying that I love to read. I found, one day, that I could not find a big toothy grin about my life; something was left unfinished. I left college to begin my life, and suddenly in my early 40s, I

had a need to finish the undone. Fall 2002 found me with backpack on my shoulder amongst many young faces - as well as older, familiar faces of professors still lurking the hallways - at Mary Washington College. I loved being a student again! In 2004, I graduated with my coveted Bachelor of Arts with a major in history. Finally, I was able to smile when I looked back at my life. My children were proud of their mom, but they were getting older. They didn't need a whole lot of mothering. I decided that I could still make after school cookies (and cookies to package up and send to a USCG base) and make use of my degree. Thus, I find myself a student again. I have a big smile and my students seem to like that.

There are many children in the world, and many need extra mothering and teaching. Presently, I am the teacher of children with severe emotional disturbances. I teach 3rd grade and I enjoy making my students smile along with me. My constructivist teaching philosophy is grounded in the art of remembering what it is like to be a child. I believe in a soothing classroom environment that helps a child escape from the tensions of their ridiculously stressful lives long enough to learn something they find interesting. I find teaching these children a rewarding challenge. Sometimes, my kids just need a hug to find the courage they need to win at the game of life. I help them find their courage. The mother and student inside me have merged to become a teacher. If you are wondering, my smile is shining brightly.

So, there it is: I am of multitudes! Of course, I have left many things out such as my husband, my friends, and many others important things and people, but this is my autobiography, not theirs. My three main beings have finally merged, and I can look back on my life and smile. I must have done it right. Life is short, but it is amazing how much you can cram into it – if you find the courage. Find it.



“An understanding heart is everything in a teacher, and cannot be esteemed highly enough. One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers, but with gratitude to those who touched our human feeling. The curriculum is so much necessary raw material, but warmth is the vital element for our growing plant and for the soul of the child.”

-Carl Jung

Many teachers overemphasize curriculum, or overemphasize technique, or underemphasize both. A great teacher understands the importance of both, while keeping in mind Carl Jung's wonderful perspective – that warmth and kindness play an equal part. I want to be a great teacher. I will be a great teacher.

My name is Brian Meermans. I graduated from Virginia Tech with a degree in Mathematics. I now teach math and computer science at Woodbridge Senior High. Was it always my plan to teach? No, my life has taken numerous paths with numerous twists, but ultimately I was led down this one. Thankfully, it seems to have been the right one.

I came out of high school as a top notch budding computer programmer, being lead programmer and designer on several online video games as well as owning my own personal game. These games were not the spectacular corporate sponsored giants that most people will know of, but they certainly generated quite a following and my services were sought out by many. I was convinced that Virginia Tech would help develop and test my skills further. Unfortunately, events changed my life.

College was one series of being ill after another and after several years of battling various maladies I was finally diagnosed with cancer. Throughout the ordeal, my outlook on life

changed. Watching nurses interact with their patients, parents interacting with their ill children...reading literature of wonderful things, discovering new philosophies on life...everything seemed so wonderful. I wanted to do the same. I wanted to help people. I wanted to find a way to use my skills to do what I could for the world. And I wanted to continue learning, which has always been my biggest personal passion. The answer was simple: to teach.

Friends wonder why I would go into teaching. They scoff at the idea. They look at job opportunities offered to me, jobs that would have been fun, with laid-back attitudes and great pay. But these friends do not understand what it means to pursue life, to find your own calling, and to embrace it. Teaching is not a step down, its the right path. And I will bring all of my skills, talents, enjoyment of life, and bring it to students who oftentimes are not shown how wonderful learning can be. My students will get hands on activities, games that promote learning, and a teacher who cares about them personally.

All in all, I have been tutoring for three years now. Students who were failing excelled. I substituted for six months and was met almost daily with, “Why aren't you our teacher?” And now, I have my own classes. I am happy. But more importantly, the students seem happy as well.

Rosemary Moretti

Autobiography

ITEC 501.2

Online



This is a story of a girl who always wanted to be a teacher throughout her life, but did not have the opportunity to fulfill that dream until well into her forties. She grew up in a community where she was happy, safe and comfortable. Her education prepared her for becoming a well educated and rounded person. One who had the drive to become a teacher who can make a difference in the lives of the children she has come to teach.

I was born in Alexandria Virginia over forty years ago. I grew up in a loving family with parents who both worked and two brothers one older and one younger. I attended Catholic Elementary, High School and College and made many life long friends along the way. During this time I always wanted to be a teacher. I hit a brick wall in college when I had to take a Communications class which was run by the theater department. The head of the department ran this class and did not like anyone other than theater majors in his class. Any one else was considered an outsider and he would belittle and berate them throughout the class. I was one of his favorite to make an example of and I only lasted two weeks before I decided to drop the class. My teaching dreams were side tracked; I graduated with a degree in English.

Fast forward twenty-five years, I find myself deserted by a husband of 14 years and with two children to take care of, I needed to get back into the job market. The only

profession I felt would fit into their lives was teaching. I could be home for them when needed, and work at something I loved.

I was hired by St. William of York Catholic School as a long term Kindergarten substitute. I found that I loved the school and the children at that grade level. The next year I was hired full time as the Kindergarten teacher and after three years I am still with the same school.

Three years ago, I started my journey at the James Monroe Center of the University of Mary Washington. I am slowly making my way to a degree in Early Childhood Education and Licensure for the State of Virginia.

My philosophy of teaching is simple. I feel that it is important to “plant a seed of knowledge” in each student I encounter. If I am able to instill a love of learning and reading with a child I have done my best as an educator. Because I have chosen to teach those children just starting out in the education process, it is my goal to make sure they leave me as confident children who find school a fun and exciting place.



Born and raised in Latrobe, PA. I lived with both parents, a twin brother, and older sister. During high school I played softball and basketball. I then went to college. I attended Edinboro University of Pennsylvania and obtained my degree in special education. After graduation I moved to VA to teach special education.

Throughout I high school I played softball and basketball. I played two years of basketball and nine years of softball. I played just about every position on the softball field. For the past three years I coached girls' softball in VA. We did not do so well, but the girls had fun.

Teaching students with special needs is very demanding. As a teacher

you must arrange your schedule to meet the needs of all the students. They all learn in different ways and it is the job of the teacher to find that way. One lesson does not go for all special needs students. If you have eight students then you need eight different lesson plans. Education is a field in which creativity and patience are a necessity.

Being a special education teacher is something that I always wanted to do. When I was in third grade I knew that is what I wanted to be. I have volunteered with students with special needs for many years. The main organization I have been involved in is Special Olympics. I have volunteered with bowling, track, and basketball. It is one of the most rewarding experiences to see

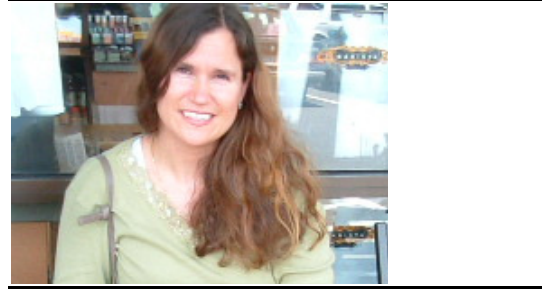
how much you are appreciated and the fun the athletes have.

I graduated college and needed a job. I could not find one in PA so I moved to VA. I taught middle school for three years. I taught students with mental retardation and autism. I really enjoyed VA, but I missed my family and the cost of living was too high for a teacher's income, so I moved back to PA. I am now teaching K-5.

I am glad to be back home. I recently got married and bought a new house. I only have two classes to finish my master's degree. I will finish in December. I look forward to what the future may bring.

Greetings

Short Biographical Essay of Jodi Nicholson



My name is Jodi Nicholson. I live about an hour and a half away in a little town formerly known as Slabtail. My home is about 150 years old, and I have learned volumes about old homes and antique construction since moving here nearly ten years ago. I can patch holes in walls, caulk and paint like a professional, fix some of my own plumbing, lay ceramic tile, and even refinish wood floors (which I am currently undertaking). All these expertise were not easily acquired. Necessity may be the mother of invention, but I relied on a variety of expert advice to get past my learning curve. The backs of product labels are always a good place to start. Friendly, experienced neighbors and family members can help a lot, too. My “experts”, along with some trial and error, directed me in the learning of these new skills. These learning and problem solving strategies probably sound simple and obvious, but they would not avail themselves so easily to all members of our society.

What most of us take for granted, some people fight and struggle to achieve. The people to whom I refer are the people with “exceptionalities”, “differences”, or “special needs” who need different, individualized learning experiences. I am intensely interested in learning all I can about exceptional children, identifying the obstacles to early intervention, understanding what causes exceptionalities, and how to adapt teaching to fit their special needs. That is why I am here, with you, at the College of Graduate and Professional Studies. My goal is to graduate next May with my Master’s degree and endorsements in Special Education.

I received my B.S. degree in Psychology from University of Mary Washington. During my time as an undergraduate I interned as an ABA Therapist for children with autism. The progress I was able to be a part of and the strength and optimism of the children’s parents gave me so much hope for situations I had previously thought of as unfortunate and unchangeable. That experience, combined with my family experiences with exceptionalities, germinated my conviction of the worthiness and rewards of special education.

As special educators, we have the opportunity to engage children in positive learning experiences, to find their promise. Everything we do to help a special child is echoed in all of the lives touched by that child. The quality of life for that child is forever improved. These are the precious rewards that special educators can work everyday to claim. As special educators, we can add purpose and meaning to life.

This is not to say that there are not other worthy trades. For a while I considered being an attorney. As I developed that path I realized that I wanted to be a child-advocacy attorney, or an attorney for people with mental illness or impairments. Mulling it over further, I realized how much I enjoyed research and I thought of being a research psychologist. Interestingly, as a special educator, I can both advocate for children with special needs and research ways educators can improve their learning processes. Special education has some of the advantages of both of those fields, and resonates best with me.

I believe a teacher should be flexible in their approach. There are times for behaviorist interventions, but ultimately we should be working towards students' independence, having responsibility and ownership in their education and other areas of their lives. Teachers also need to be aware of the social and emotional life of their students in the classroom. We need to do this for the sake of their holding their attention, as well as nurturing a positive relationship among peers and between the students' relationships with the process of education itself.

So, here on top of a hill in the middle of Slabtail, sandpaper in hand, I keep in mind my greater purpose. I notice how I learn, I notice how that is different from some of my students. While reflecting on the pattern of their disorders, I appreciate them as complex individuals. This reinforces my belief in the value of teachers being tuned in to their students social and emotional lives. I am thankful for my choice and for the opportunity to be a special educator.



“When life hands you lemons, make lemonade.”



My name is Tim Paluch and this is my short autobiography. In my autobiography, I will discuss background information about my family, my educational background, and my philosophy of education.

I grew up in Buffalo, New York with my parents and my two brothers, Matthew and Andrew. I earned a B.A. in Elementary Education from Niagara University in 2003. After earning my New York State Certification in Elementary Education, my wife Heather and I moved to the Richmond area because there were not many jobs in the field of education available in the Buffalo area.

I am currently starting my fourth year teaching 4th grade mathematics at Bowling Green Elementary School in Caroline County. My wife teaches 5th grade there as well. I am also working on my masters of education at the University of Mary Washington. I plan to complete my master's degree this coming May. I then plan to take a year or two off to spend time with my son before going back to college to earn my administration certification.

I decided to become a teacher because I really enjoy working with children. While in high school I volunteered at a camp for students with special needs and this helped to reassure me that I wanted to work with children. One of the requirements that Niagara University, where I earned my certification, had was that you had to spend 20 hours volunteering in a classroom each semester. During this time I came to the conclusion that I really liked

working with students at the elementary level.

Through these experiences in college and my first few years in the classroom, I have come to the conclusion that all children are capable of learning. But it is also important to point out that all children learn in different ways and as an educator I need to be able to evaluate the needs of my students and provide them with the instruction that they need in order to learn and to fulfill their potential. That is the challenge that educators face today and that is one of the reasons that I enjoy my job so much. As classrooms become more diverse today and the needs of students vary greatly, it is important to adapt instruction to meet the needs of the students.



Whenever I meet someone they usually break the ice with the question “Where are you from?” I begin by taking a deep breath before answering because to answer accurately I can’t give a short answer. It is a long story.

Perhaps the term “glove-trotter” applies in my case. My name is Maria and I was born in Budapest, Hungary. When I was a pre-schooler, my parents immigrated to Buenos Aires, Argentina. I grew up in a city that boasted of being the “Paris” of South America. It is truly a very cosmopolitan city and my family felt very much at home there. It is not unusual to hear French spoken in the streets, as well as Italian, German, Check, Polish, Portuguese and English. In the 1960’s the economic situation

worsened and my family moved from Buenos Aires to Washington D.C. My father was one of many engineers hired thanks to lucrative defense contracts the federal government regularly offered to support the Vietnam War effort.

I completed my education in the states. I am a product of Fairfax County schools. While taking undergraduate courses in George Mason University, I discovered, or more aptly put re-discovered, Latin American literature and culture. When I read the works of our greatest Latin American writers, I realized I actually lived in a neighborhood described by Manuel Puig, and I visited the National Library in Buenos Aires when the famous author, Jorge Luis Borges, was its director.

Teaching is the only profession I have undertaken. The decision to become

a Spanish teacher was relatively easy. My teaching experience includes 6 years of teaching Spanish in high school, and 3 years of teaching night time Adult Education classes. Teaching is compatible with my personality because I enjoy interacting with young people and being a part of their maturation process. I am basically a creative, hard-working and optimistic individual. I decided to start on my doctoral degree after my own children were grown. After completing my Ph.D. in 20th Century Hispanic Literature in Georgetown University with a concentration in Contemporary Hispanic Drama, I was fortunate to have been asked to join the faculty at Mary Washington. I have been teaching Intermediate Spanish, Linguistics and Hispanic Drama courses since 1997.

I find that teaching is an extremely challenging and difficult

profession. If one takes it seriously it is consuming. I can not help but become attached to the students and empathize with them as they embark on adulthood. I know that we as educators are teaching them about things that extend way beyond the content on the curriculum and the syllabus. We teach responsibility, tolerance, perseverance and self-discipline. In sum, we teach character development.

I have no doubt that I will continue teaching for several more years. My goal in taking this class is to learn about the potential of technology in the classroom. Someone once told me that to be a good teacher you have to be an avid learner. I wish I could remember who should be credited with that idea because I think it is very true.

Maria Riegger

My name is Tawny. I am pursuing my Master's of Elementary Education. What inspired me to teach has to do with a bad educational experience in kindergarten. As an ESL learner the teacher treated me as if I were inferior to the other students. The teacher knew beforehand that I was a Spanish speaker and that I had years of preschool education (Catholic school). There was no information in the classroom that was accessible to me. I did not know what was going on during the day and was not able to ask for help. Instead of pulling me aside or enlisting a language teacher, I was left alone. I was tested by the professionals in school, in English and the results, were not surprising found that I was a low learner. Had I been tested in my native language the results would have been different. But it was easier (cheaper) for me to fall through the cracks that get a tutor. After all, the statistics for Puerto Ricans finishing high school is low. It was a self-fulfilling prophecy and racist. When I was able to realize this I promised myself that I would never let another child feel inferior about themselves or their culture. I received my undergraduate degree from the University of Mary Washington in Sociology. I felt Sociology was an important undergraduate program to pursue with education, due to the fact that in order to teach my students I have to be able to understand them. I need to be able to understand cultural, sexual, physical, financial and family lifestyle differences that my student may have in order to relate to them. I work full time as an insurance agent and am married without children. In the remaining essay I will discuss my personal philosophy of education. I come from a Dewey and Vygotsky perspective more than other educational theorist but would not pigeon hole myself into any particular theory as the "solution to education".

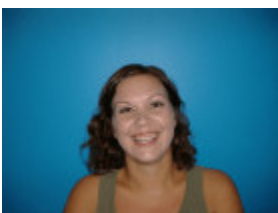
I am not a teacher and do not have the experience of being in a classroom setting. But I do find that the structure of what is being taught is really based more on how to manage the classroom and less on the needs of the child. With so much emphasis on making sure that the class runs smoothly we can lose what we are really there for, making sure that the children learn.

But, more important than that we have to foster the love of learning. If as teachers we fail to have the children actively engaged and enjoying the learning process we have not done our job.

Classroom management is important and making sure that the class runs smoothly should not be ignored by any means. But if that is the focus daily is running of the classroom that we are little more than babysitters. If the children feel an agency in the learning process than I believe, the classroom management issues will work themselves out. Of course from time to time there will be the child who has outburst, but if the children feel that they have stake in their education than it gives them power. Power should not be overlooked as a great motivator for children (and people of any age).

Teachers should not feel that they lose their identity or worth if the children gain power in the classroom. It benefits the children and I argue the teacher as well. It builds self-esteem and a sense of classroom community. How much easier would the day be if the children were actively engaged in the classroom activities and not bored?

Again, I emphasis that teaching should be student-oriented. The students should have a sense of agency within the classroom and the assignments being taught. The teacher should be able to rely on the students input when it comes to what interests the students and incorporate that into the curriculum to keep the students engaged in their learning. Make sure to include your ESL students because they can teach the students differences and similarities between societies. After all if the students are interested in the subject matter they will pay attention they will want to learn more.





CHRISTIE STAPLETON

ITEC 501- OL
BIO 2

Apparently I am from “NOVA” or at least that is how I have been labeled. “NOVA” was not a term I was familiar with. Sure, I knew of Northern Virginia Community College. However, I had never heard of this acronym being referred to as a hometown until I left the area. Since the age of seven, I have lived in Vienna, Virginia. Growing up I was extremely into sports. I can honestly say I do not remember being bored a day in my life, even in the summer time. I always remember leaving swim practice in just enough time to get to tennis team practice, leaving and getting lunch then driving to a rival pool for a swim meet.

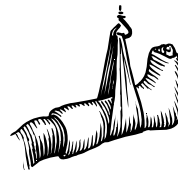


After high school, I started

college at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia where I learned of my label of being from NOVA. I loved Virginia Tech,



and I am a Hokie for life! I graduated in four years with a B.S. in Human Development with a concentration of Human Services and a minor in Psychology. After graduating, I knew that I wanted to help people but I was unsure in what capacity.



My first job post degree was working as an Orthopedic Tech, in an Orthopedic Surgeon’s office. I was the person that puts on and takes off casts, takes out stitches, as well as fit all splints and

braces. The most amazing part of my job was that I assisted with reducing fractures. After working at that doctor's office I moved to a different specialty. I then worked at a General Surgeons office helping out with in office procedures and some educating aspects of the field.

Being able to help people achieve their goals of getting healthy, relearning to walk, and returning to sports was inspiring. Since I was a child I have always wanted to be an elementary school teacher. Even though working in the medical office is very different than teaching it allowed me to realize how much I want to help people learn and achieve their goals.

I have not yet had the privilege of being a teacher and having my own class, so I do not have a philosophy of teaching clearly defined yet. However, this program has allowed me to think about my philosophy so I have some ideas. I believe that my job as a teacher is to help each child learn, grow, and achieve beyond their

potential. I know that there will be classroom of children of different backgrounds, skills, and experiences, but I want to take the time to get to know each of them and help to connect them to their education in a positive and meaningful way so that they will enjoy school and get the most out of each lesson every day. I know my philosophy of teaching will become more specific and will change because of my personal experience in the classroom, but I hope I will never lose my compassion for the students and my passion for education.





Stephanie Trant
ITEC501-02
BIO2

Fredericksburg has always been the place I call home. No matter where I have gone or what I have done, something has always brought me back to this area. I was born and raised in Fredericksburg, Virginia. So when I decided to become a teacher, I could not think of anywhere else to do it but here in the town in which I grew up.

I am a product of Stafford County Public Schools. After graduating from Stafford Senior High School, I was off to North Carolina to begin my college career. After staying in North Carolina for three years, I realized that it was not where I wanted to be. Home was calling me so in my third year of college I decided to transfer to the University of Mary Washington. In

my last year of undergraduate work, I became engaged to my boyfriend of three years. During the year prior to our marriage I worked and took graduate classes at night, trying to complete my teaching certification and Masters in Education.

The biggest changes in my life have come within the past few months. In July, my husband and I were married. After our honeymoon, even though I have not completed my certification, I decided to apply for jobs in the hopes that I would receive a provisional license. This wish came true and two weeks before school started, I was hired as a sixth grade science teacher in King

George County. It has been a very eventful summer to say the least.

As a new teacher I have very quickly learned new philosophies. The first thing I learned was to take one day at a time. Not to stress myself out with what is going on a month from now.

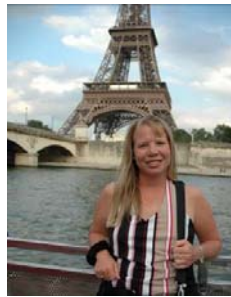
Everything will fall into place, as it should. Organization is a key factor in being a great teacher. Not only having my lessons organized and laid out but also having my classroom structured so the students do not feel overwhelmed and can also learn a routine. I also try and raise the bar. I believe that children can achieve something greater than what was previously thought of them. My student's best interest is my main concern at all times.

As the years go on and the more experience I gain, I am sure my philosophies will change and grow.

That is all I can hope for as a teacher, to

grow and become better with each passing year. I never want to lose the excitement I feel right now as a first year teacher. I think that is what can make the difference between a good teacher and a great teacher.

My name is
Tonya Wasser and I
would like to share a
little bit about myself. I



will enlighten you about my past and present
experiences and my future plans in life as
well as my philosophy of teaching.

I was born and raised in the
Fredericksburg area. I grew up in King
George County where I enjoyed living in the
country. Ever since I can remember I wanted
to be a teacher. I would always play school
at home. I had a chalkboard and my dolls
and stuffed animals were the students. I had
teacher manuals, worksheets and anything
else you can think of, I had it. I was always
involved in something at school such as
sports, clubs, and eventually, working a part
time job. One summer, I even had the
opportunity with other students to visit
Fredericksburg's Sister City, in Frejus,
France. That was such an adventure! By
the end of my high school years, I was ready
to spread my wings and go to college.

Initially, I wanted to pursue a degree
in photography, but before classes started, I
decided to get a degree in Education at
Edinboro University of Pennsylvania.
While in school, I kept busy. I worked on
campus, I was the photography editor of the
school's yearbook, and worked towards my
dual degree in Elementary and Special
Education. Once again, I returned to
Frejus, France as an Au Pair or Nanny.
Needless to say that was an educational
experience! I worked with three children on
their school work over the summer as well
as entertaining them.

When I graduated from college I
taught for three and half years. I taught 6th-
8th graders and 5th and 3rd graders.
Afterwards, I ended up taking a five year
sabbatical from teaching. I had a great
opportunity to return yet again to Frejus and
Paris, France, this time with my Mom. We
wanted to go together for the 25th
Anniversary of the exchange program. We
had such an unforgettable trip together!
Also, I worked a dream job, working as a

photographer for the government. Unfortunately, though for the best, I was dissatisfied with the direction of the job and felt as if I needed to be back in the classroom. I missed providing that positive influence and making a difference for those who desperately need it. I decided I would return to teaching in November of 2005. When I stepped into the second grade classroom, I knew right away, that was where I belonged.

Presently, I am starting my first school year since I returned from my five year leave and things are a bit different including the importance of SOL's. I teach third and fourth grade Special Education in the subject areas of Reading/Language Arts and Math. The students I work with are diagnosed with a Learning Disability, Other Health Impaired, or Autism. Before I returned to teaching, I planned to get my Masters. I wanted a program that I knew that would be directly beneficial for the children as well as hands on for me. I have begun that goal, and I have just started

taking this class and I am working towards my Masters in Instructional Technology here at University of Mary Washington. Also, I became engaged this spring so I have a wedding to plan. Not a lot to do, right?

In a couple of years I will be married and hope to start a family. Additionally, I plan to complete my masters program and hope to have an opportunity within the county to be working within this field.

My philosophy of teaching is simply to keep it fun and exciting! Outside of school, there are a lot of activities and stimulating forms of entertainment for children. It is critical to provide positive learning experiences that are also fun and exciting so they do not loose interest in school. Teaching needs to be hands on and children need to be involved or they will not make the connections in order to be academically successful.

In conclusion, it is important for me to become more knowledgeable with technology so I can continue to make learning fun, exciting, and hands on!

Christina S. Wilson

In the early '90s, Christina Wilson, or Christy as her friends called her, sat on the stage at her high school graduation listening to a speech based on the book *Oh, The*



Places You'll Go! by Dr. Seuss. Little did the girl from the small Virginia town of Staunton realize just how much that speech and book would come to mean to her. At eighteen, Christy thought she had her life figured out. But, all these years later, oh the places she has been!

Christy began her adult education at Mary Baldwin College while studying Chemistry and carrying the hopes of one day becoming a pharmacist. While Christy enjoyed her science classes, she also enjoyed sleeping and going out with her friends a little too much. Needless to say, common sense did not prevail, and, after two short years, she left college to join the United States Marine Corps.

The Marine Corps was an eye-opener for Christy. She learned a lot about herself and her ability to accomplish anything she wanted. She was also able to travel to South Carolina, Tennessee, Florida, Maine, and California. During the course of all of this, Christy had the opportunity to receive a great deal of training that eventually led her to become the first female crew chief in the Marine Corps. Her aircraft was the CH-53E. In all, Christy spent six years serving her country before she was honorably discharged in 2000.

Although Christy left the Marine Corps, her husband remained on active duty, which allowed Christy's travels to continue. In 2002, Christy and her family moved to Duluth, Minnesota. This is when Christy decided it was time to return to school. She began to pursue a degree online with the University of Maryland University College in Information Systems Management and Computer Studies. She fell in love with the classes and did well in college the

second time around. Finally, after two more moves to Fargo, North Dakota, and then back to Stafford, Virginia, in May of 2006, Christy graduated from the University of Maryland with her undergraduate degree. She was very proud of herself and so was her family. But she decided not to stop there.

In that very same month, just 10 days after graduation, Christy began the Master of Education program at the University of Mary Washington College of Graduate and Professional Studies. Upon completion of her degree in 2008, Christy hopes to find a job as a Computer Science teacher in a Department of Defense high school. Christy greatly enjoys helping others and hopes that teaching will be the perfect way to combine that love with her love for technology. She also sees teaching as a way to give back some of what has been given to her.

As a teacher, Christy hopes to personally connect with each of her students while fostering a sense of community in her classroom. While her teaching philosophy is broad, it is based on a desire to demonstrate to each student that they are not just individuals but members of a society that relies on each member to grow and prosper. Additionally, Christy hopes to work as an agent of change in areas where changes are needed. She looks forward to taking an active role in her school and educational community by providing a voice for her fellow teachers, students, and her own personal beliefs.

Without a doubt, there is one thing Christy knows better than anything: life can and will take you lots of places if you let it. Christy hopes her journey is not over yet. She hopes to continue her education by eventually completing a Doctorate of Education in Instructional Technology. She also plans to help her four children and loving husband to pursue whatever dreams they might have. She knows she can and will succeed if she just keeps that Dr. Seuss story in her mind - *Oh! The Places You'll Go!*



I was born and raised in rural Kentucky. After graduating from Eastern Kentucky University with a Bachelor of Science in chemistry, I began my career in the Marine Corps. My primary occupation in the Marine Corps has been aviation and I have flown over 2,500 hours. My most interesting flying job was in the Presidential Helicopter Squadron, flying the President, Vice-President and visiting Heads of State. Service in the Marine Corps has been a wonderful experience, and I plan to retire in 2007 after twenty years of active service.

I have been married for fifteen years, and we have two children, a cat, and the newest addition to our family, an

English Springer Spaniel named Peter Parker.

After retirement, I want to serve the community by teaching in the public school system. Children are in need of good role models, and teachers have the opportunity to make a tremendous difference in the lives of many children. By investing in the lives of children, I can play a part in shaping the next generation, and this excites me!

Society has changed much during my lifetime and children are faced with more challenges and distractions than ever before. Particularly during the school years, children are impressionable and teachers have a great opportunity to assist in building character and reinforcing other core values. Although school should be focused primarily on providing the basic knowledge and skills necessary for higher learning or other

employment, teachers demonstrate character and good citizenship in the classroom everyday, and these are essential for every child.

Almost every adult can recall a particular teacher who came into his or her life at a critical point and took the time to make a difference. For this reason, teachers are key figures in the lives of our children. In the information centric, networked world we live in, children need teachers that will look them in the eye and demonstrate concern for their welfare.

My teaching philosophy will be centered upon the idea that children need to be valued in the classroom, and should be given the opportunity to take ownership over their education experience to the maximum extent possible. Children are not obstacles to teaching the “perfect class,” they are the reason we educate. It will be easy to

focus on delivering instruction rather than taking the time to care for students, but in the end, caring for students and treating them with respect will make any instruction more interesting and relevant. Finally, the instruction must matter to the students. This is accomplished by explaining why the subject is important and relating it to their world. Most important though, I want to make a difference, and teaching is one of the most direct and rewarding careers to ensure I accomplish this goal.



bio2_lyang
LUCIA YANG
ITEC 501 ONLINE

My name is Lucia Yang and I have been living with my husband Robert, our two small children Matthew (4 years old), Christina (2 years old) and our dog Patches (1 year old – border collie) in Stafford County since February of 2001.

I have decided to break this autobiography in five parts: a brief passage about my background, what I am doing at the present time, what I expect of the future, a short description of my learning philosophy and a conclusion.

BACKGROUND

I was born in Brazil and I'm daughter of Chinese parents. My oldest brother and two sisters were born in Taiwan; by the way I'm the youngest in the family. My native language is Portuguese, English is my second language and since Portuguese and Spanish are quite similar I'm able to communicate in Spanish too (I don't dare to say I'm proficient in Spanish). I can only speak Chinese. I regret deeply when I had the chance to learn how to read and write in Chinese but I didn't. Maybe at that time I was young (10 years old) and I wasn't interested in

foreign languages at all. I hold a bachelor degree in Computer Science and two master degrees (Computer Science and Information Management). The latter I studied in the United States.

After my master degree I went to work in the information technology department of a French bank in New York City for eight years and half. I married and moved to Virginia where my husband got transferred from his job. I worked briefly as software engineer in a start up Information Technology Company in Reston (Northern Virginia) then decided to quit to become a full-time mother. Five years have gone by without pay. This is when I have decided to switch careers.

PRESENT

I have given it a lot of thought in what I want for my next job with the following assumptions: I need to interact with people, a job physically close to my

house where I can be there for my children and something related to mathematics. As you can see (in this case read) I'm pursuing my initial teacher licensure program with emphasis in grades 9-12 math. I'm not working yet and I have zero experience as a teacher. I volunteered for about three months at the math department in a high school here and it gave a superficial view of how a school works. I'm on a substitute teacher list but no phone calls so far.

FUTURE EXPECTATION

Sometimes it gives me chills of thinking about to be in front of thirty students in the first day of class and how to give a good impression. On the other hand, this is what I want to do and it's a challenge. My goal is to get my teaching license, work in the field and someday fulfill my dream of getting a Ph.D. in Education with emphasis in mathematics. I have a long way to go but

I'm a Chinese descendant and I'm very patient.

LEARNING PHILOSOPHY

Since I'm not teaching my learning philosophy is we learn better if we like what we are doing. Each of us has a skill, ability, and affinity to something, so if I can pass this idea to my students someday and they can achieve their potentials I would think I made a difference. But in order to achieve an objective one needs to learn a little bit of every subject like it or not.

CONCLUSION

I'm looking forward to starting teaching and many challenges will come with a new profession but nevertheless it's exciting meeting people with different perspectives.