

Autobiographical Paper: My Journey to Education

Britton Perkowitsch

Faculty of Education University of Regina

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Julie Machnaik

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Determining my field of study for university was a difficult task. I am quite indecisive, and what I wanted to become when I grew up remained inconsistent. My options ranged from a stay-at-home mom to a pastry chef, performer, nurse, and the list goes on. A part of me always knew I would end up teaching despite the wishes of my mom to stay away from that career path. She used to be an elementary school teacher, and her warnings about the challenges I would face were partly the reason I attempted to pick a different option. Inevitably, I was drawn to studying education. This was influenced by my family's genetics, work experience, and educational background, which shaped my identity.

Personality traits are often passed down from your parents. My mom and I are similar, which gives me a reason to trust that teaching is my ideal choice. Examples of our likeness early on are evident in a few instances from when I was a child. One of those includes when I visited my mom in her classroom at night. Around the age of four, I walked into the room and there was a rush of excitement through my body. I had plenty of things to explore and observe and felt just like my mom when I walked between the rows of desks. Near the end of my visit, I distinctly remember sitting on her desk with my legs dangling. I was eating a package of nibs, filled with the sensation of safety and contentment. I viewed the space as a whole, which appeared large in my eyes, and it instantly initiated my eagerness to learn. In a child's eyes, everything is brighter and new, which is exactly how I saw my mom's classroom. This moment in my childhood is important because it is something I can recall clearly to this day. I believe it is what established the environment I want to spend my time in. My mom's space was open and inviting, which pushed my desire to learn. This aspect that she subconsciously taught me is what I plan to achieve in my own classroom.

My parents have frequently told me I am “good with kids”, which impacted the job choices I made. This work experience brought to light the passion I have for teaching and the evidence of why it is a strong fit for my career. Dancing was the main activity I was involved in, and during the summer of 2018, I was offered the chance to apply as a teaching assistant and worked for two years before COVID-19 hit. This opportunity gave me a sense of what my strengths are. I felt confident in the dance room and could lead a class if needed. I also connected with the children easily, which reinforced the comment my parents made. Dance assisting opened me up to the rewarding aspects of what I imagine teaching comprises. It was evident my help worked when I saw a child's face lit up because they figured out the step they were struggling with, and the giggles and smiles that appeared after comforting a crying student were infectious. These memorable occurrences guided me to my current job as a lifeguard and swimming instructor. This was a step up from my first job because I am in charge of the entire class and plan what needs to be accomplished using a curriculum. I also keep note of each child's skill level to write a report card. This job is essentially a preview of what the education journey entails, and I know I am exactly where I need to be. Although there are days I dread working, time passes fast and my energy level stays high when I am there because of my students. They continue to push me to improve my own abilities. I learned how to teach the same skill using different methods to accommodate each individual, which I believe is a crucial part of education.

Everyone's school experience is different as the number of positives to negatives depends on what each person underwent. I know for a fact that every person has had at least one teacher who impacted their life. My own school experience was fantastic, and it encouraged me to study education. The main reason I chose the secondary program with a major in history is because of my history teacher. His style was lecture-based, which properly prepared me for university. I feel

it is valuable as a teacher to set up students for success by introducing aspects of their future into lessons. It was his choice to make the assignments manageable and creative, the tests difficult, and tell the historical events like a story. I learned how to take efficient notes, and although he primarily talked for most of the classes, he kept them engaging because he was passionate about the material. My history teacher made an effort to build relationships with his students, even as far as assisting us with our papers by providing beneficial sources if we needed them. Students usually dread history classes, but I found a love for them while being in his class almost every year. My history teacher inspired me to choose history as my major and I plan to use his style of teaching but add my twist to it.

My choice to study education was formed through important people and experiences I encountered, but I did not know the level of impact these factors would have on leading me to where I am today. My teaching personality, instructor-like jobs, and history teacher shaped the values and beliefs I have for the education system. What I have learned about my perspective on what being a teacher means and should look like, I plan to incorporate into my own classes when the time comes. These key pieces of my identity will grow as I continue my path of becoming an educator, which I think is the perfect career!