Isabel Wilson

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Autobiographical Reflective Paper

I am Isabel Wilson and I am going to be a teacher. I always knew that I wanted to be a teacher in the back of my mind but other interests on my life distracted me. I realize now that teaching is what I am meant to do. I am only eighteen years old, so I do not have as much experience, but I do have reasons as to why I believe I am meant to be a teacher. This all starts based on my family and where I come from.

I am from a small town about an hour and a half southeast from Regina named Kipling. My parents have been married for twenty years and have two other children other than me. I have a younger brother who is graduating this year and a younger sister who is just starting secondary school in grade seven. My family has always been a big part of who I am and shaping who I have become. In my family I am very much a mother figure to my siblings because my mom is not. She is a big supporter in everything we do but she was never really a ‘mom’ type person. Both my parents work all the time in order to pay the bills and pay for all the extracurricular things we liked to do. My mom works at a group home for the mentally challenged and my dad works as a mechanic so there was never really lots of money coming into our home. It was always just enough. Since my parents both worked all the time I had to “grow up” early and take care of my siblings. This included getting my younger sister and brother up and ready for school, making meals like breakfast and lunch, doing all the grocery shopping for the family with the small amount of money my parents left on the kitchen table. Things like this forced me to be independent and aware that there were more people I had to take care of other than myself.

As early as I can remember I wanted to be a ballerina when I grew up. So, when I was two my parents put me in dance lessons. I grew to be a natural leader because of the responsibility I experienced with my siblings. When new kids came to class, I remember being the first one to help them out to catch up the best I could. One year a new boy dancer came to join our group. He was the first and only boy to ever join our group so, of course, it was out if the normal flow of things and it was unsettling to some people. He did not know anything about dancing. He came from a gymnastics background, so it was similar in some ways but different still. The other girls talked to him and everything but whenever he did not know something and asked for help, they would just laugh and make fun of him. I can not say I ever made a big effort to hang out with him outside of dance class or make close friends with him. In saying this though I never hesitated to help him through a difficult phrase of dance or help him understand what was going on. Throughout the years we became closer. We graduated from our studio last year together and he told me something I will never forget. He said to me “Izzy, we have had a lot of differences over the years, but I would consider us friends and without your help I would have quit dancing a long time ago. Thank you for the kindness you have shown me throughout our time shared here”. This meant a lot to me because it showed me that my kindness and ability to help him out was appreciated.

Dancing has always been a huge part in my life and has helped me decide that teaching is what I want to do for the rest of my life. When I was about eight years old my teacher suggested starting dance exams. These exams are training to become a dance teacher. Every certification you get, it means you are one step closer to being able to teach. I currently have my advanced jazz certificate but by the time I got to grade four I was already assistant teaching. My first month assistant teaching was hard for me because I was used to being in the student role. Once I became accustomed to switching roles, I loved it. The lesson planning, pushing the kids to excel every week, and building life-long relationships with them. So, since I liked it so much, I kept doing it. I upgraded to teaching my own classes with guidance from my teacher. Then, I moved to teaching my own classes independently. Then came independently running the Kipling studio. Finally, now I am independently teaching in Grenfell and have some students that I am also teaching to be teachers. I learned from all these kids in all these instances. Each time I taught in a different place they taught me something new because every group of kids is different. They taught me kindness, organization, patience, the importance of coming prepared, and the balance between strict yet fun learning. These are all values I will use and have continued to use in my day to day life. All of this is exciting for me because it has come pretty much full circle from where I started.

The teachers in my life have affected me and my decision to become a teacher as well. My dance teacher of course, has always been there for me and pushed me out of my comfort zone many times. At one competition I went to I had six routines in one day. This may not sound like a lot, but it is because you are going so full out all the time. The last routine I had to do that day was my solo routine and it was a high energy jazz dance. I remember laying on the ground backstage feeling like a ten thousand pound weight was on my chest because I was so drained but then my teacher came and looked over top of me and simply said “alright lets go girl, you can sleep when you are dead”. I went on stage and won the competition. I can think of two schoolteachers as well that impacted me in different ways. My grade nine math teacher was an old-fashioned sort of teacher. I cried every single day in her math class because I was just so frustrated and confused. She only taught the material one way and I just did not understand it. So, this was a bad experience for me but, it made me aware that different learning styles were serious, and it made me more open minded about the concept of ways to teach. My other experience with a schoolteacher that is memorable was with my librarian. Her and I got close over the years because she is not the typical librarian. She has this crazy and quirky attitude that makes her fun to be around. Before I came to university here, I was pretty stressed out about it and nervous that I was not going to be good enough in all my classes to make it through to the profession I really wanted to be in. She was good at calming me down and told me the cheesy thing that everybody says about being able to do anything you want if you put your mind to it. With her I could tell it was sincere though.

I grew up surrounded around a small group of kids. Since I am from a small town, and farming community everyone knows everyone, and all our parents were friends anyways. Since our parents were all close, we all became friends quickly as well. My friends and the people I surround myself with helped me choose what I wanted to do with the rest of my life. Before settling with education, I had a lot of ideas of what I wanted to do. They were all over the place. At first, I wanted to be a geologist, then a mechanic like my dad, then I wanted to be a marine biologist, then a welder, and finally I decided on a high school chemistry teacher. Without my friends help I probably would still be undecided. So, this is how I came to be in the education program at the University of Regina. Lots of little things along the journey of life that pointed me in this direction. Teaching is not always fun, and teaching is not always easy. I know this. However, the result in the student is so rewarding. The way I know this is because I remember the first time my Kipling girls were on stage dancing at competition when I was independently running that studio. They were having so much fun and killing every single step. It was a very proud moment to me because it was like “yeah, that’s right, I taught them that and they love it”. We remember these teachers and these moments for the rest of our lives. You will always remember that one bad teacher you had, and you will always remember the good teacher. These people that you learn from stay with you for the rest of your life. I would much rather be the good teacher that they remember as opposed to the bad. We need more good teachers.