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Romain Rolland once said, “If a man is to shed light of the sun upon other men, he must first of all have it within himself.” I find this statement enthralling when I reflect upon paths I have taken thus far in choosing my career. Rolland reflects upon the idea that in order to share gifts with others, one must find what contributions he or she has to offer. When reflecting on what contributions I have to offer, I remember a life-changing event that drew out my passion for teaching. Throughout my journey, I found the gifts within myself and a “light” to share with others.

Like most seniors in high school, I spent a lot of time thinking about what I wanted to do after graduation and what career I wanted to pursue. I knew I wanted to make a difference in people’s lives, so I declared my major as nursing. Surely a nurse impacted lives on the daily. As my freshman year of college came to a finish, I realized that nursing was not my vocation.

The following summer, while caring for four children, I did a lot of soul searching. It didn’t take long to realize how full my heart was being surrounded by these kids. Being a nanny was not only the best summer job I’ve ever had, but it was beyond rewarding. The summer of 2016 was eventful, hectic, inspiring and had forever changed my outlook on life. I knew I wanted to make a difference in people’s lives, I knew I loved working with children, and I knew I had to find a way to blend the two of them.

I continued to reflect on my life and figure out how I was going to blend these two passions. Growing up, I always enjoyed going to school and loved my teachers. I

always thought how cool it would be to teach students but also how challenging it would be at the same time. As I entered my final year of high school, I signed up with the Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Sioux Empire organization where I was matched with a “little” sister. My little and I have bonded and formed a friendship that will last forever. I have had the opportunity to mentor and impact this little girl in so many ways. This made me think, what a better way to impact a person, a little person, than to be a teacher? That’s when I knew that teaching was my calling.

I have built my mentorship with my little on the foundation of chasing your dreams and never giving up. Not only was my little encouraging me to pursue my passion for teaching but all of my family and friends were extremely supportive as well. The thought of being able to make a difference in young learners enlivens me and I cannot wait to become a teacher. Although, I know it will not always be easy. It is important to understand and acknowledge the hardships a teacher may endure, such as: the influence of politics, lack of parental involvement, and opinions. With that, I am still glad I changed my major to elementary education and look forward to the day when I step into my very own classroom for the first time.

In my time spent studying teaching, I have discovered many different teaching philosophies and concepts that I believe in and plan to bring into my classroom. As a future teacher, I believe that students and teachers need to learn the importance of considerate behavior and communication and the importance of respecting yourself and treating others with respect. I believe that students treated with respect develop a stronger self-esteem. Under this philosophy, disciplinary rules and actions need to be implemented by teachers using critical thinking skills. Lastly, I believe that teachers need to examine

how their own social and instructional actions may trigger misbehavior. I plan to model both the constructivism and humanism teaching styles into my instruction. To do so, I will incorporate problem-based learning whenever I can and my curriculum planning can be based in the environment. Also, I understand the importance of taking required content and individualizing it to the learners because everyone learns differently.

I plan to let my students' voices be heard and create a space where all are comfortable to learn. By developing a "community of inquiry" I can help create an environment in which students listen to one another with respect, build on one another's ideas, challenge themselves to supply reasons for their opinions, assist one another in drawing inferences, and seek to identify one another's assumptions. To do this I will create learner-centered power styles allowing my students to become people who are verbally active and seek diversity in learning. Learner-centered power styles encourage the active participation of the learner in exploring learning and helping to determine the extent of which he or she will engage in alternative approaches. Since learning is very diverse, these power styles tend to recognize differences in learning, individual interests, and higher order learning.

Overall, I am filled with hope, anticipation, and enthusiasm for the journey ahead. Thus far, I have learned so much and have a set of my own teaching philosophies I plan to use. I have been inspired to better myself each day and strive to be the best educator I can. I have found the light within myself and I am ready to, as Romain Rolland says, "shed the light" I have found within myself on my students to inspire, create, and teach.