

Learning Preferences in Elementary Education Honors Project
Journal of Progress
Samantha Boyd

Journal Entry #1

Monday, February 10, 2014

Since Maggie and I met last Friday, I have had the opportunity to get quite a bit done. I have reached out to my potential second reader and the last person I need on my committee. I sent her an email Friday, but she has not responded yet. I just got an email back from Kenn Baron after a week. It would be helpful to have someone not in the College of Education to give insight to my project, so I am meeting with him this Thursday at 3pm.

I worked hard this weekend on finding articles and books to further the research portion of my project. I used the JMU library search engines to find quality work. I used the keywords: "Kolb," "Multimedia Learning," "Multimodal Learning," "Multiple Intelligences," "VAK," and "Learning Styles." I also looked through the information Ms. Pat gave me. It is all about Multiple Intelligences and she let me borrow four of Gardner's books. I narrowed it down to 40 articles that I need to read and work through.

I planned on meeting with Dr. Almarode today at 9:30am. When I got there he was already in a meeting with someone else. Mistakes happen, so we rescheduled for 11:15am tomorrow. He is going to help me narrow my research down more and I have planned questions I need to ask him.

So my plan for this week is to meet with Dr. Almarode and Kenn, and narrow down my research. I will also have a rough outline to Maggie by Saturday. Hopefully I will have my last reader by the end of the week and I won't be quite as stressed about that aspect of this project.

Journal Entry #2

Monday, February 17, 2014

This week was supposed to be full of meetings, but thanks to the snow and scheduling conflicts that wasn't completely the case. I tried to meet with Dr. Almarode on Tuesday after the mishap on Monday, but he was in a meeting for assessment day. I was able to meet with Dr. Doubet on Wednesday though. She agreed to be a reader on my committee, so that completes my required members of my committee, which is a huge stress relief. She gave me some names of theorists to look up and emailed me articles and pieces of her dissertation to look over to help guide my research. I was going to meet with Kenn Thursday, but the snow didn't allow for that. I emailed him to see when would be good to reschedule, but he hasn't gotten back to me yet.

I sent my rough outline to Maggie on Saturday. It still needs work. I wasn't really sure what I was doing at all. I "googled" outlines to see what the norm was and tried to go off of that. Another reason there isn't a ton of information on it is because I haven't done a ton of intense research and reading. I also sent a rough timeline for my entire project to Maggie. When I get some feedback back I will tweak my outline and include more information as she sees fit. With regards to

research, I bought "How the Brain Learns" by David Sousa. It is on its way to my house as I bought it online.

This week I plan to get quite a bit done. I am going to try to meet with Dr. Almarode to go over my research findings. I am waiting on Kenn's response, but will try to meet with him to talk about motivation in regards to my project and see if he would like to be a third reader on my project. I have a meeting scheduled with Maggie for 1:30 on Friday. According to the deadlines I set for myself I am to have my purpose and objectives written by Saturday, February 22, so I will be working on that this week. Finally, I plan to keep reading and researching on my project. It really is difficult to do that sometimes because of all the other reading I have to do for other classes. I am going to block off a few hours this week to devote to research: Tuesday 2-3 and Thursday 2-3.

Journal Entry #3

Tuesday, February 25, 2014

After my meeting with Maggie on Thursday I am much more confident about this project. It is scary going into something completely blind, but now that I have a rough outline, a purpose, and objectives written out, I feel much better. I am still dealing with the frustrations of finding meeting times with my readers, but I have a feeling that's not going to get easier as the project progresses. We just have conflicting schedules often. I have set up to meet with Maggie next Thursday before TEACH, to meet with Dr. Almarode next Wednesday at 11am, and to talk over email with Dr. Doubet. We couldn't find any times that we were able to meet in person.

At our meeting, Maggie and I discussed my outline and changed it around quite a bit. She encouraged me to meet with my committee before break and not to send them my outline until later in the semester. I had originally planned to get it to them this Friday, but we decided it would be better to have it completely done before sending it to them, so I will update Maggie on its progress this weekend. We also worked on my purpose and objectives. I realized that when I wrote my first objectives I hadn't included anything about my personal growth with this project, so we added a few of those in the mix.

This week I plan to prepare for my meetings with Dr. Almarode and Maggie by reading a lot of the literature. I haven't been able to sit down and read a ton because of all of the midterms and other school happenings, but it is time to read more. I will also research some conferences. Maggie mentioned the VAECE conference and the VCLD conference during our meeting. I will have a revised draft of my outline to Maggie by Saturday. I will continue thinking about objectives and add to my list as I see fit.

Journal Entry #4

Tuesday, March 4, 2014

This past week has been full of midterms and papers, so I have not done a ton for this project. Maggie sent me an email telling me she liked my purpose and objectives and that she thinks I should wait to revise my outline until I have done a significant amount of reading. That being said, I am going to do a ton of reading

over spring break. I will finally have the time to do it. I am excited to get to read more and start to fully understand this project.

I have a meeting set with Dr. Almarode tomorrow at 11am to talk about my project and update him on where I am with it. I met with Dr. Kenn Barron in the Psychology Department about my project and about motivation. The meeting was a little frustrating because I didn't really get much out of it. He seemed to want me to turn my project into a research project to see how children respond to the unit plan. That would be great, but I don't think I have the time to do that. This project is a lot on top of classes, projects, and exams. He did show me one book and one article that may be helpful.

Over spring break I am going to do a ton of reading. Since I am not working over break, I will have 5 solid days to read and work on this project, which I am so excited about. In my last journal I said I would have a revised outline to Maggie on Saturday, but since I haven't been able to read a lot, I am going to move that to sometime during break. I am going to make sure to really organize my outline well so that I don't have to continue revising it.

Journal Entry #5

Monday, March 10, 2014

This past week was not extremely productive. I didn't meet with Dr. Almarode because there was nothing to talk about. I did meet with Maggie on Thursday though and she gave me some great advice. At this point I am not giving this project my all. It's hard and a lot of work on top of the other 17 credits I am taking, not to mention the extracurricular activities as well. I told her this and she seemed to understand. She explained that she did an independent study in college and that she put it on the backburner for too long and was unable to complete it fully when it was due. I don't want that to be me. I like to know that what I accomplish is to the best of my ability.

That being said, I know I need to put more effort into this project. It's time to really get to work. This week is Spring Break and while I haven't done any reading yet since I was traveling, but the rest of the week is devoted to work on this project. I want to have my outline done and be finished with reading, but I'm not sure that's completely possible. Number one is to get as much reading done as I can. When I get back to school I want to be able to tell Maggie that I have done a lot of work and I want to be proud of myself.

Journal Entry #6

Monday, March 17, 2014

I am so happy with how much I got done last week. While I didn't get to finish my outline, I did read so much and it has helped a ton. I read a lot about Multiple Intelligences, Sternberg, and Multimodal Learning. I am definitely leaning towards MI and Sternberg to focus on more. Dr. Almarode said early on that he wasn't interested in my project if I focus on MI though, so I hope he doesn't drop out if that's my focus. Many people told me that there's no research to back it up, but there is. I read an article by Gardner and he explicitly says there is a ton of research and experimentation to back up his work and that it is all listed out in his book

“Frames of Mind.” I have that book from Mrs. Pat and am planning on at least skimming it. I probably won’t have time to completely read it. She gave me four of his books that I want to look through.

I’m nervous that Dr. Almarode isn’t going to be on board anymore and I’ll have to find another person to be on my committee. That’s going to be extremely stressful if that happens, so I’m crossing my fingers that it doesn’t. As of now, I am working on finishing up some reading and plan to have my revised outline to Maggie by Sunday at the latest. I am going to do some research on how to make a solid outline before sending it to her. I don’t want to have to revise it a ton, but I need to get all of this to my committee and to everyone that needs to sign off on it as soon as I can. I am also working on the methodology right now and would like to have that to Maggie by Sunday as well.

Journal Entry #7

Monday, March 24, 2014

I have finally completed my outline and methodology, and have sent it to Maggie. I have asked her when she would like to meet and discuss them. I updated Dr. Doubet and Dr. Almarode on my project’s progress via email, letting them know I will meet with them once Maggie and I have met. I also emailed Dr. Carrington about the possibility of choosing my practicum placement grade. She told me that it is completely possible and to meet with her once I have decided. I told her I would have it all figured out no later than mid-April. That means I need to get to work figuring out what topic and grade I want to focus on with this unit plan. I will be looking up pacing guides and figuring all of that out over the next few weeks.

This week is going to be dedicated to compiling my bibliography and continuing to read. I don’t think the reading will ever end honestly. According to my timeline I will have my proposal submitted to my committee by April 1. From there I will meet with each member and will discuss any changes they see fit. Once discussed with them, I will revise if necessary and send it back to them and to the rest of the people I need signatures from. My proposal should be sent to the Honors Program by April 14th.

Journal Entry #8

Monday, March 31, 2014

I am happy to say my proposal is almost done. The methodology, timeline, and purpose and objectives are completely done. I am sending draft 4 of my outline and my first draft of my bibliography to Maggie to review along with this journal entry tonight. My next step is to get my proposal to my committee. According to my timeline that is supposed to be tomorrow. Hopefully it stays that way, but depending on Maggie’s feedback, it may be later this week. I hate missing deadlines, but sometimes that’s how things go with these big projects that take unexpected turns. While my project is generally the same, the idea for the research portion has changed a few times, so it’s been hard to nail down the outline.

Once I send my proposal to my readers, I will set up meetings with them so they can give me their feedback. I’ll tweak my proposal if necessary and get it to the rest of the department to sign off on it. It has to be signed by the Department Head

(Nancy Barbour) and the Dean (Phil Wishon) along with my readers and Maggie. The proposal should be to the Honors Program by April 14th.

Journal Entry #9
Monday, April 7, 2014

After 9 weeks of drafts, my honors proposal is finally finished. While it may need to be tweaked a little, it is generally complete. The only missing element is what grade and subject I will be doing my unit plan with. That piece will be done no later than Wednesday. I will be looking at pacing guides and determining that final component during the next two days. I sent my proposal to Dr. Kyger, Dr. Almarode, and Dr. Doubet on time on April 1st, which I am very happy about. Dr. Doubet is in Thailand currently so I am unable to meet with her until Thursday. Dr. Kyger and I are meeting on Thursday as well. Dr. Almarode never responded to my first email, so I am a little concerned about getting his signature as a reader. I sent him another email today expressing my concern and attached the proposal again. Hopefully he responds quickly. If he doesn't, I'll go to his office hours.

My hope was to have the proposal to Dr. Wishon and Dr. Barbour today so that I could get their signatures by the end of the week. Unfortunately that isn't possible because Dr. Doubet is out of town and I haven't heard back from Dr. Almarode. Once their signatures are on the proposal I will get it to Dr. Wishon and Dr. Barbour. I have sent emails to Dr. Barbour and to Dr. Wishon's assistants about the best way to get their signatures. Dr. Wishon's assistant responded telling me to leave the application for him to sign on Friday since he will be in Richmond on Monday. My desire is to have all of the signatures by Monday, April 14, and to turn it in to the Honors Program that day. I set my deadline a week earlier than the actual deadline so I would have time to fix issues if anything came up. I'm glad I did that because Dr. Doubet is in Thailand. Thinking ahead is always helpful!

Journal Entry #10
Wednesday, April 16, 2014

Since last week I have not done much reading at all truthfully. I have two huge papers due this week as well as some other assignments, so they have taken over my time. I plan on starting my overview before the school year ends, but it likely won't be until next week. The end of the semester is so busy and stressful and since I will be working so much over the summer I am devoting my free time now to the classes I'm enrolled in currently. Also, I want to wait to hear back from the Honors Program before I start working on my overview to make sure it is approved. I turned it in today after picking it up from Dr. Barbour. They told me it should be a week or two before I hear back from them. While I was two days late on my personal deadline with getting it turned in, I was early by the Honors Program's deadline.

I have decided I will be doing my unit plan on third grade. I have emailed Dr. Carrington and Dara Hall to let them know so they can place me in a third grade classroom for my practicum next semester. I am so excited to have pinned that down and to get to work. I was able to meet with Dr. Almarode and Dr. Doubet last

week. They gave me great advice on how to make my proposal more professional and gave me resources to check out over the summer.

Throughout this semester I have learned a lot with regards to professional projects. While I haven't been able to dive into the reading as much as I had hoped, I have begun to understand the process of writing a professional piece and am excited to continue learning. With respect to learning preferences I have come to understand that there are tons of theories that are backed by very little research and tons of theories that are put into practice incorrectly. Most were not meant to be used in the classroom, but are still wonderful elements to add to enrich a classroom if used correctly.

Journal Entry #11

Monday, April 21, 2014

While I've been doing a little reading, I haven't been able to get started on the overview. Truthfully I'm not sure it will get started more than just continuing to read until summer begins. Also, I don't plan on starting to work on my paper portion during the summer until I get back from vacation on May 20th. It's not that I am not committed to this assignment, it is just that I don't want to work on it while I'm taking a break from school. I also am not comfortable truly starting to write until I know that my proposal is approved. I should know that within the next few days.

Since I have decided on third grade I have been looking through the pacing guides. I am a little disappointed that simple machines isn't taught until the end of the year because I think that would be a neat subject to work with. I have been leaning towards math and science because those are not my strongest subjects. I am concentrating in Humanities and Social Sciences for IdLS. By working in a subject I am not concentrating in I am able to broaden my appeal to future employers because I'll have a strong background in multiple areas.

In looking back at this semester and this past week I have already learned so much about learning preferences. I came into this project only knowing about Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory because I learned about it in ELED 308. Since it was so interesting to me I dove into this project and learned about many other theories. I'm excited that my project is not only a review of the many theories, but a compilation of them in a way. I really hope that this project will help me not only learn about these theories, but become a better teacher as well. These theories are constantly changing and being tweaked based on the new social research being conducted. It is important for me to keep up with the trends as I become a teacher.

Journal Entry #12

Thursday, May 1, 2014

I was saving this journal in hopes that I would get a response from the Honors Program letting me know if my project was approved. Since that hasn't happened yet and it is Thursday, so I figured I would go on without it. I did email them asking if my proposal had been misplaced because I turned it in over two weeks ago, but they said they had an enormous amount of applicants this year and it is just taking longer than usual to process them all. They also said that if I did need

to change anything that I would have the opportunity to do so without being penalized in any way.

This week I read over a long PowerPoint that Dr. Doubet sent me. It was created for her EXED 520 class and is about differentiation and Learning Profiles. It brings up a good point that I didn't include in my outline: cultural background/gender. I have always thought about the cultural differences, but for some reason did not include that in my outline. I think it is a worthy topic to explore and fits well with this theme of learning preferences. Is a child's preference impacted by their prior knowledge and gender? Does the culture they grew up in change their likelihood to lean toward a specific preference? It's something worth exploring for this project and I have a feeling I will come across that a lot in my further research.

Journal Entry #13

Tuesday, May 20, 2014

My proposal was approved by the Honors Program! I am so relieved. I wasn't all that worried I suppose, but it is still nice to know it is officially on its way. I just got back from vacation yesterday, so I haven't done a ton since my last complete journal entry. I have created a summer timeline for my project. I realize that I may not stick completely to the timeline, but it gives me a good outline of where I should be throughout the summer. I work well with deadlines, so this helps me a ton.

I would like to have the first piece done by the end of May. I have started looking up "learning preferences" and seeing the different definitions of them. For my project I plan on explaining why I chose learning preferences as my term and what I mean by that term. This may mean I sort of create my own definition based on the many I am finding. It is interesting to see that there are so many ways to define the same term, and so many terms to describe the same idea. It has taught me that it is vital to read the piece of these articles that explain their terms. I have read a few to see how they are organized, so I can figure out how to word that section of my project.

Journal Entry #14

Monday, May 26, 2014

I have been working on the first piece of my research portion of this project for about a week. I have been struggling with time management because of my work schedule and everything, but it is getting done. My goal is to have it done by May 31st, but I think it will take a few days longer.

Here's some of what I found that I thought was interesting:

- Aristotle noticed that children possess special talents as early as 334 BC, so this is by no means a new theory or idea.
- Carl Jung in 1927 was the first written theory about learning styles.
- Gardner seems to be the most popular theory based on internet search results.

- The research done on learning preferences often was not intended for classroom settings, but has been tweaked to help teachers understand their students better.

Journal Entry #15

Monday, June 2, 2014

I hate to say it, but I feel like I may have set myself up for failure in trying to get this project done over the summer. It is difficult to manage my time while I'm working so much and have a lot of other stuff going on. At school it is much easier to get things done because I don't work. My whole purpose at school is school. At home it's not that simple unfortunately. I have not met my deadline for the first portion of my research project and foresee my deadlines needing to be bumped back. I'm not completely sure why I thought it was a good idea to basically finish my project over the summer when I have two more semesters to work on it. From the people I've spoken to, I'm one of very few that is working on the project at all over the summer.

Since I did already decide that I would do it over the summer, I'm going to. It just will be done later than I first imagined I'm sure. I have a feeling the unit plan won't be done right when I get back, but will be close. I don't think that's a problem though because I didn't plan on teaching it until later in the semester anyway. My new plan is to try to set aside a day each week when I'm not working to go to the library and work on my project. This week I am going on Friday because I don't work Friday. I would work on it on the weekends, but I work all day Saturday and Sunday is pretty much family day. I don't see this being an easy summer and I kind of am upset with myself for putting so much on myself over the summer when it is my last summer that I won't be in school or "the real world."

Journal Entry #16

Monday, June 9, 2014

Now that I've had time to think rationally about this project, I have different feelings than those described in the last journal entry. I don't think I set myself up for failure at all. I think I just have had a lot on my plate recently and that's why not much has gotten done thus far. My motivation needs to come from me. I know how I work and having other people push me just makes me shut down at times. I just needed to remember why I wanted to do this in the first place. I am almost finished with my first section though and hope to have it completed by tomorrow. If it's not done by tomorrow, it certainly will be done by Wednesday when I have a day off. That is also when I plan on working on section two.

Maggie and I are going to plan on meeting once this summer in order to talk about my research portion and once again when I get back to school to talk about the unit plan. The only real struggle I am having as I'm writing this research portion is figuring out the length. I don't think that it needs to be dragged out and made long for no reason. If I find later that it's not explaining what all needs to be explained I can add more in. My due dates for the summer have been pushed back 5 days so that I will finish the project on June 25th instead of June 20th. I think this is a reasonable goal for myself.

Journal Entry #17

Wednesday, August 20, 2014

This project has not gone as planned in the slightest because life has not gone as planned in the slightest. This summer was full of setbacks in my success. I genuinely did not have time to do this project over the summer. There were moments when I thought it would be possible and worked on it, but there was so much else going on in my life that I had to worry about that this project took the backseat. I don't think it is going to mess me up on my overall plan though. Yes, the research portion and unit plan will not be completed 100% by the time school begins, but that doesn't mean I can't complete the rest of my project. This is the bulk of my project and expecting myself to be able to complete it during the summer when I work 40 hours a week was really just unrealistic.

I will still provide my unit plan to professionals when it is ready for them to look over. I will be lining up those professionals once classes begin and after it is written. I have kept in contact with Mrs. Pat Kennedy and will still be teaching a lesson in her ELED 308 Child Development class. I do not know my practicum placement until next Friday, but will be working with my practicum teacher to be able to teach part of my unit in his/her classroom.

So while this project has not gone as planned, I do not feel that I have failed in any way. I failed myself in placing all of the work on my shoulders during a time when I should have known it was nearly impossible to get done. There were more bumps than normal in my life this summer and those did not help my success. That being said, I am still looking forward to moving on with this project, completing it, and being proud of the work I have accomplished.

Journal Entry #18

Wednesday, September 10, 2014

I'm excited to say that I've gotten almost half of the written portion done. I finished section 4 today. I still have sections 5-10 until the written portion is done. I've learned a lot from my research and am excited to share it with Mrs. Pat's Child Development class in the future. We are currently setting up a time for me to teach it. Unfortunately her class meets on Wednesday when I have practicum, but I spoke with my cooperating teacher and he said it would be okay for me to come in on Thursday the week I am teaching to Mrs. Pat's class. I'm so glad he's so flexible. Unfortunately I don't think I will be able to teach my unit in his class though. He isn't very keen on me even teaching my lessons for class because it is his first year in third grade. I will probably need to get in touch with some other third grade teachers in the area. I do know of one that would probably be fine with me teaching in her class.

My short-term goal right now is to set up a time to work with Mrs. Pat's class. My long-term goal is to finish up the research portion of the project. It takes much more time than I anticipated it would. I wish I could just jump into the unit plan, but the research needs to be done first I suppose.

Journal Entry #19

Monday, October 7, 2014

I finished part 5 this week and am officially 50% done with the research portion. I'm glad I'm making progress. I am so excited to say that I am going to be teaching Mrs. Pat's Child Development class about my research on Wednesday, October 15th! I am pretty well prepared right now. I am going to talk about Gardner, Dunn & Dunn, and Sternberg because that is what she requested. I will have a handout for them and a PowerPoint that I will go over as I'm lecturing. I am a little nervous to be lecturing to a class full of my peers. They're only one year younger than I am, but it is also a really extraordinary experience that I doubt many college students can say they've done. I am so thankful that she is letting me lecture to her class.

Journal Entry #20

Thursday, October 16, 2014

Yesterday I got to lecture to Mrs. Pat's Child Development class. Since I've been preparing for that so much, I haven't gotten to finish up the research portion yet. My plan is to have that done by the end of the month. Working on all of this in conjunction with my ELED semester is difficult, but I'm getting it done. I think that since I'm not rushing through it too much it will turn out better anyway. The lecture went great! I taught for about an hour. I started off introducing myself and letting them know that I am no expert on this, that I am still learning through this project. I began the content by having them complete a KWL. They worked in small groups to come up with some Knows and Want to Knows. Once we wrote some on the board, I began teaching them about learning preferences.

I introduced my definition: "Inclinations a student has toward a particular way of learning," and let them know that this includes grouping, using certain senses, subjects, behaviors, and intelligences. After a little more introduction to learning preferences I asked them what they prefer and wrote some of their answers on the board. Some responses I got were, "art," "kinesthetic learning," and "writing while listening." I then made sure they understood that just because a child prefers something doesn't mean they can't learn in other ways. We all learn in all ways. They are not exclusivities.

We had a nice discussion on labeling children before getting into the theorists. There are pros and cons to labeling students. We can tell them what they seem to be good at, but don't want to tell them that that's the only way they can learn. We need to label them to get some resources at times, but don't want them to know their labels. It's a sticky subject, but we had a great discussion about it. We moved into talking about theorists, which is of course not the most thrilling aspect of the lecture. They responded well though through my discussion questions and the PowerPoint, which had some visuals. After hearing about the theories, I had them try to match up their preferences to the theories we just discussed. They did pretty well with it. Finally, we talked about motivation and finished up our KWL chart with the Learned section.

I had them fill out an exit slip with gems and opportunities in order to see how they thought I did with the lecture.

Here are some gems I received:

- I did well getting the group to discuss the topics
- Great public speaking/ relatable
- I was able to articulate well enough that they understood
- The visuals provided were helpful
- My PowerPoint was well done with a good amount of information on the screen
- Included how to apply the theories to the classroom

Here are some opportunities I received:

- Include an activity, maybe something to see what their preferences are
- Hand out the handout at the beginning so they can follow along
- Include movement somehow
- Include videos

These were really helpful and I'm so glad I had them do the exit slip. Next time I will be sure to pass out the handout at the beginning. My fear with that is that they won't pay as much attention because they have it in front of them. Including an activity and more movement is also a great goal, but I'm not sure how to incorporate that in a lesson like this. It is something to look at going into the next presentation.

I was on top of the world when I left that classroom. I was so excited that I had just lectured to a room of my peers and they responded so well. I realized there was some stuff I could improve on, but that's with everything. I am going to use their feedback to structure my presentation with the Honors Program.

Journal Entry #21

Friday, November 28, 2014

I have worked a ton on my project over break and am almost done with the research portion. I have finished everything up until I talk about the common features. I did take one common feature out because I felt that it was redundant. While it certainly hasn't gone as planned, I am glad I waited to do the unit plan until the end of this semester. This semester my classes were all methods classes, so I learned how to really create meaningful lessons for my students. If I had tried to write a unit plan prior to having these classes I'm sure I would have redone the whole thing and been frustrated from that. I now feel that I am prepared to begin to delve into the unit plan over Christmas break.

Journal Entry #22

Monday, December 8, 2014

I have finished my research portion finally. It took a while, but it is done and I'm proud of the work I've accomplished. I sent it to Maggie tonight to read over and make suggestions on how I can improve it. I have also created a timeline for the rest of my project.

Spring 2015 Honors Project Timeline

Paper

-12/8: Send you my paper.

-Whenever Maggie gets feedback back to me (hopefully by 1/1): Send my revised paper to Dr. Almarode & Dr. Doubet.

-Whenever they get feedback to me (hopefully by 1/17): Edit it again and send it back to the committee for final edits to be made.

-By 1/31 - Have final edits made to my paper and be finished with it. :)

Unit Plan

-12/31 - Have a rough outline created for my unit plan & send it to Maggie for feedback.

-1/24 - Have a rough rationale submitted to Maggie (how each theory is exemplified in the unit plan through the common features)

-Meet with Maggie, Dr. Doubet, & Dr. Almarode to develop the unit plan fully

-2/7 - Complete unit plan sent to Maggie

-2/14 - Complete unit plan sent to Dr. Doubet & Dr. Almarode

-2/21 - Send unit plan to professionals/in-service teachers and professors for feedback

-3/4 - Have feedback back to me

-3/18 - Send Maggie the final unit plan revisions & rationale for any changes made

-3/22 - Send Dr. Doubet & Dr. Almarode the final unit plan revisions & rationale for any changes made

-3/26 - Have unit plan & rationale done & sent to committee for final edits

-4/8 - Final edits made & it's done :) - FINAL DATE TO SUBMIT TO HONORS

COLLEGE

Other

-1/17 - Submit a petition to the Honors Program since it is a "creative" project

-Present at the Honors Symposium sometime in the late spring

-4/8 - Submit completed project to the Honors Program & the library

Journal Entry #23

Wednesday, December 10, 2014

I'm glad to say I've started my unit plan. I know that I am going to focus my unit on third grade SOL 3.2, simple machines. This semester has been all about methods and I've learned a ton about lesson planning. While I don't have much experience planning an entire unit, I have professors on my side ready to help me. Dr. Almarode and I met today after my final and he asked me to come in on Friday so we could discuss further how I am going to format my unit plan. I'm trying to decide how exactly I should do it and how detailed it should be. He has tons of resources he is going to share with me.

One thing I do know how to do in regards to unit planning is unwrap the standard in order to see what exactly needs to be taught and in what order. When teaching elementary students we work from simple to complex and concrete to abstract. In breaking apart the standard I followed this procedure and created a concept map based on the nouns in the standard. I also pulled out the skills and matched them with Bloom's Taxonomy levels. These will be my "do" objectives.

The next step is to figure out how I'm going to organize the unit plan. On Friday I will walk through Dr. Almarode's suggestions with him. He is a science education professor, so he is the best resource for me with regards to this part of the project.

Journal Entry #24
Thursday, January 1, 2015

I have been working on my unit plan the past few days. I started with unwrapping the standard and have sent that back and forth with Dr. Almarode as he is helping me a ton with this part. I am stuck on the essential questions and big ideas, but have sent him a few emails to clarify. That part is pretty much finished, but I am still trying to tweak it to make it the best it can be. I have also done my rough draft of my unit plan. It is rough for sure and I am still trying to figure out the activities and everything, but I have sent it to Maggie to review the sequence. I have done my best, but I haven't seen simple machines taught before.

As of now I am waiting for Maggie to send me the revisions for the first draft of my research portion of the paper. She said she will have it to me in a few days. I'm excited it is all coming together.

Journal Entry #25
Friday, January 9, 2015

In the past few days I have received feedback on my first draft of my research portion from Maggie, revised it, and sent it to my readers Dr. Doubet and Dr. Almarode. Maggie had a ton of comments on it, which I am very happy about. They were positive and helpful. I had to go through and fix a bunch of citations because I hadn't done them correctly. I didn't realize I needed page numbers for each of the quotes I used, but I went through and fixed them. I sent the readers the revised copy before I had finished the citations, but asked them to ignore that part of it since it is being fixed.

Beyond the research portion, I have decided not to teach part of my unit plan in last semester's practicum placement because I didn't have enough time to prepare. My cooperating teacher and his switch teacher offered me the opportunity to teach part of my unit plan to their classes, but their simple machine unit is taught in January. I have a lot of my unit plan together, but not enough that I would feel prepared to teach so soon. I would have to do it the first week of classes back at JMU and that is just too quick of a turn around. They completely understood and still offered to read over my unit plan once it was completed, which I am very thankful for.

Now I am waiting for feedback from my readers on my research portion and starting to work more in depth with my unit plan. I'm so glad everything is coming together.

Journal Entry #26
Monday, January 26, 2015

After meeting with Maggie on January 16th, we set up a meeting schedule for the rest of the semester as follows:

- February 6th at 2:30
- February 20th at 2:30
- March 19th at 4
- April 3rd at 2:30

At these meetings we are going to discuss my progress as well as look over anything I have questions about or am struggling with.

I met with Dr. Almarode on Tuesday and he gave me lots of revisions for my paper, but they were so helpful. I finished those up today except for one. I am still working on beefing up the differences and similarities section of the paper because it should probably go more in depth. We also worked through my essential questions and big ideas and got those squared away and finished. Finally, we looked over the unit plan and changed some objectives. He said the unit plan looks great, but had me add a cross-curricular connections section for each day. He doesn't think I should make lesson plans besides the one I will helpfully be able to teach. That is an extraordinary amount of work that isn't necessary to understand the unit plan as a whole, which is the objective of this project.

I haven't heard back from Dr. Doubet, so I emailed her again today with the revised research portion. Hopefully she will get back to me this week so I am able to continue and make progress according to my timeline.

In looking at the timeline, I was supposed to have the rationale for the unit plan yesterday, but I don't know why I put that before completing the unit plan because that wouldn't make sense. I will get the rationale done after the unit plan, which is due February 7th to Maggie. My research portion is supposed to be done by January 31st, but that all depends on if Dr. Doubet gets back to me, so hopefully it will stick.

Journal Entry #27

Sunday, February 1, 2015

I have completed my final draft of my research portion of this project. I just sent it to my committee to read over one last time to make sure there are no glaring holes. I am so glad I have been able to stick to my schedule so far this semester. Since the research portion is completed, I am going to be moving on to focus more on the unit plan. I plan to have a solid draft to Maggie by next weekend and a draft to the rest of my readers the weekend of Valentine's Day.

Journal Entry #28

Monday, February 16, 2015

After getting back feedback on my research portion from Maggie, I am making edits on it and getting it completed. I need to work on a few portions of it to clean it up and then put in the pieces required by the Honors Program. I completed a first draft of my unit plan and sent it to Maggie last week. We meet on Friday to discuss some of the research portion and the rationale for my unit plan that needs to be done before I send it to the teachers to review. I have sent the unit plan to Dr. Doubet and Dr. Almarode to review as well. I am hoping to get some feedback from them soon so I am able to work on it and have it sent to teachers before spring break.

Journal Entry #29

Sunday, March 1, 2015

This past week I met with Dr. Doubet who gave me some great tips on making my unit plan even better. Dr. Almarode and I have been talking over email about my unit plan and how to make it more professional. Because of the snow, some meetings I had planned with them had to be pushed back. Today I finished the unit plan, rationale, and survey for teachers. I just sent those three times to Maggie, Dr. Doubet, and Dr. Almarode to review one more time before I send it to practicing teachers. I am planning to send it to three practicing teachers to get their feedback this week before spring break begins. After I get their feedback I will make revisions if necessary, type up any reasons for why I changed the unit plan if necessary. After that just need to make sure everything looks and sounds great before I turn it in to the Honors Program. I am so glad this project is almost done, but I have learned so much from it that will help me as a future educator.

Journal Entry #30

Wednesday, March 4, 2015

I am proud to say I am almost done with this project! I just sent three local teachers my unit plan, rationale, and a survey to complete regarding the unit plan. Once I get feedback from them, I will review it and write a small response to the feedback I received and any changes I made to my unit plan because of what they had to say. I am excited to get feedback from current third grade teachers to see if they think it is appropriate and reasonable. For the research portion, I have formatted it as the Honors Program wants it formatted, but I am still working on the acknowledgements page. By the end of the week I plan on sending it to them to see if they approve of the formatting.

Journal Entry #31

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

My project is done! I can't believe it. I got feedback from two of the three teachers I sent my project to. It was very helpful and I wrote a reflection on it for the last piece of my project. I didn't feel that I needed to change anything in my unit plan based on their feedback. The Honors Project approved the format for my project and suggested I add my unit plan, rationale, and feedback reflection as appendices, which I have done. I sent my final project to Maggie, Dr. Almarode, and Dr. Doubet for one more lookover before I turn it in. I am setting up times with them to get the title page signed by them in order to turn it in soon. I would love to have it done sooner rather than later. As of now, I just need to focus on the Honors Symposium poster presentation. I will be attending a workshop on that next week. I'm so proud of myself for all the work I have put into this project and am so glad to be done finally.