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Self-evaluation:

One of the perks of serving as department chair for the last three years has been the interaction with the other academic departments on campus. That experience has reaffirmed my thoughts that the education department is unique when compared to the academic departments. Our department must balance the role of an academic department with the demands of licensing as established with the state of Indiana. Our education students expect an experience at Hanover that prepares them to be a highly qualified teacher capable of being licensed not only in Indiana, but other states as well. To do this, each member of our department must take responsibility for the dual aspects being both an active and productive faculty member and assisting with the procedures necessary for certification/accreditation. Each department member is responsible for overseeing, collecting data and reporting on one or more of the NCATE strands (our national accreditation agency). For state accreditation, our program must meet certain professional standards and carefully monitor student progress throughout the program. We must be able to verify that our courses meet certain criteria and provide evidence of student performance in this area. Part of our accreditation is dependent on productive fieldwork, or experiences in local classrooms so maintaining healthy relationships with local school systems is imperative. These fieldwork experiences are organized, supervised and evaluated by the course instructor and may be included in the course or be additional hours outside of class. Course instructors are responsible for recruiting local teachers for students to observe, provide guidance to the student throughout the experience and maintain a positive relationship with the mentor teacher throughout. Our schedule starts when the local schools start; this year we started an entire month before the Hanover campus started. Our department supervises our student teachers (seniors completing a semester of full-time classroom teaching). This requires numerous visits to the site and conferences with the mentor teachers and candidates throughout the experience. Each department member is responsible for contributing to regular student teaching seminars (sessions designed for student teachers to discus their experience and expand their content knowledge in certain areas). These responsibilities require much time in addition to the other actions required as part of the faculty of Hanover College.

 I feel I have been able to meet both expectations. I have been an active member of the faculty, providing a challenging enriching academic experience for my students, serving on various committees, and supporting various campus initiatives while serving my department in assisting with the various requirements for accreditation. I have tried to balance this in addition to being a mom, with children still living at home and active in many athletics teams and other school functions. In this self-evaluation, I wish to document my activities and goals in relation to my teaching, my profession and service to the Hanover campus and community.

1. My Teaching at Hanover:

My usual course load is in the fall, I teach EDU 221, EDU 201, and EDU 340. In the winter/spring terms, I focus on EDU 303 and EDU 304 and EDU 201. I also co-teach EDU 461 with Judy Roberts and supervise student teachers in EDU 456 both terms as needed. I have also led numerous directed studies and lead special topic coursework in the spring term. Below, I will summarize my goals for each class. In each course, I am constantly reviewing the course and willing to try new ideas to enhance the student’s experience.

EDU 221, Foundations of Education: This is an introductory course for those interested in possibly pursuing teaching as a career usually taken in the first or second year. As a department we have decided these introductory courses should be engaging, informational and inviting to welcome students into the field and future education coursework. This course exposes students to “the good, the bad and the ugly” about the field of teaching. Although students are involved in the educational system for many years prior to this class, it is my goal for them to experience life “on the other side of the podium”. It is important for students to be involved in the school system to carefully analyze and critically reflect to see if they see themselves in that role. Traditionally, the course has twenty hours of fieldwork observing in either an elementary or secondary classroom to gather data to answer a question the student may have about classroom instruction. In response to college student comments and feedback, I have tried to enhance this experience. To me, the interaction with students and the satisfaction of seeing the students learn something new (the “aha moments” ) is the most rewarding part of teaching. I wanted my college students to try to have this experience as well. In the fall of 2010, I was able to merge my course goals with a campus initiative (grant with Southwestern to help curb the effects of poverty) to require my EDU 221 students to tutor in the local schools. This allowed the students to work one-on-one with a student in language arts or math and seemed to be a rewarding experience for all involved. This spring I had the students lead a day long outreach event (environmental education theme) at a local elementary school. The students enjoyed the experience of actual teaching, but were surprised at the amount of time, energy and preparation it took for a small 20-minute lesson, an invaluable lesson for a prospective teacher. I have tried to add other aspects to the course, such as a teacher interview and a “teacher movie” critique that allows the students the opportunity to critically analyze and reflect on the profession, potential stereotypes and misconceptions of teaching and students and how different cultures and backgrounds enter the classroom and influence student performance.

EDU 201/301, Inquiry in Education: This course has undergone the greatest amount of change throughout my time teaching the course at Hanover. Initially, the Inquiry in Education courses (the -01 series) was three courses designed to discuss meet curricular topics and assist with portfolio development. Our department recently condensed the course to a two part series and combined both the elementary and secondary program students. With any curricular change, there is some confusion as students at various points in their educational coursework share a course. This was evident as this year a new EDU 201 course was unveiled. I had students in both elementary and secondary programs; some were sophomores preparing to enter the teacher education program and some were already teacher candidates at the junior level preparing to student teach in the near future. The course needed to be flexible to meet the needs of all students and give them the departmental information they would need to successfully complete whatever their next step toward licensure would be. As instructor for the course, I needed to blend academic content with preparation for the departmental expectations for certification. The academic content was a critically reflection and analysis of poverty and its role in the classroom. For the text, I chose a popular resource found in most K-12 classrooms, *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* by Ruby Payne, and contrasted her work with other authors’ views on poverty. I felt like it was important for the students to be familiar with a piece of literature they will professionally experience, and hear other arguments challenging the status quo. I supplemented these readings with participation in another campus initiative, Panther Packs, and had both my fall and winter groups (2011) help stuff food for backpacks for needy students at Southwestern Elementary, a perfect connection to their poverty studies. The students were required to participate in two Education Department sponsored activities, a Poverty simulation (students were required to role play a day in the life in a family in poverty) and attending a presentation by Dr. Al Long, who shared his experiences of an educator who overcame the effects of poverty. I tried to balance these activities with helping students start and expand their portfolio, a requirement for licensing, while respecting students’ time and work load in a 0.25 credit class.

EDU 340/303/304, Methods Courses: Early Childhood (340), Science Methods (303) and Math Methods (304) for Elementary Teachers: Methods courses are unique to an education department. The methods courses are the heart of the education program; they are taken by the students during their junior year to help learn how to best teach a subject matter to a diverse student population in preparation for successful student teaching and a teaching career. There is much research on the methods block. Research indicates that students wish to gain fruitful methods for teaching, the “how and what to do or not do” while professors tend to focus more on the educational theory of learning and practices. Preservice teachers will use “mental models” or what they experienced as good teaching, as a guide for their teaching; unfortunately, this perpetuates the cycle of existing teaching practices, many of which are not effective. To break this cycle, research indicates that a teacher must personally experience the new techniques. A good methods class must the academic theory base of learning along with student needs of introducing and modeling new ideas and techniques to be used in the classroom. This is my goal in the methods courses I teach. I model effective teaching strategies and debrief/reflect on how and why they work incorporating the current educational theory. What I find refreshing is that my students will do in their fieldwork many of the activities we do in class. After doing these lessons, they feel confident in these strategies and the content involved and are ready to apply it to their teaching. If the teacher candidates teach this way in methods, they are more apt to continue these practices in their future classroom. It is my goal to challenge my students to think about what “could be” instead of following the established techniques and routines; in other words, how they could be the agent of change to improve the current state of education. It is not easy and many students resist thinking beyond a simple textbook and worksheet lesson; after all, it worked for them. The students must at times relearn what they thought they knew and reflect on how and why it works or does not work. I challenge my teacher candidates must also think about various strategies to present the same material; what is another way one could present this material if a student did not understand. Again this is a challenge for many students to think in such diverse methods and is what makes methods courses difficult for some students. I have also found that it is important to clearly state why we do a particular activity in class; many students do not know or see the “big picture” and without explicit instruction on the purpose of the activity, it can easily be seen as just a fun or busywork type of activity. It is my goal to help my methods students see themselves as growing professionals in the field. I have high expectations for them regarding their performance in their fieldwork and I expect them to be familiar with professional organizations, publications and resources available for teachers of this age group in the various subject areas. EDU 340 centers on the early childhood learner with a focus on early literacy, math and general developmental trends for children ages 3-7. EDU 303 and EDU 304 are science and math methods courses to aid students teach elementary science and math.

 EDU 303/304: Science and math methods courses face an additional challenge; many students wishing to teach at the elementary level will openly admit they are not comfortable teaching these two subject areas. Studies indicate that elementary teachers, even at the preservice level, are more comfortable and feel they do a better job at teaching language arts and social studies than math and science. Another one of my goals is to help my students develop a sense of personal self-efficacy in their abilities to teach both science and math by teaching these subjects in field. Currently, in the wake of President Bush’s *No Child Left Behind* educational policy, science has become a non-existent subject with the primary focus on the tested subjects of language arts and math. Additionally my goals for this class center around helping students overcome many of the well-documented obstacles in teaching at the elementary level (lack of time, materials, and content knowledge). I focus on strategies to help students integrate science with math and language arts and build upon their existing content knowledge. Many of the inquiries I do in the science methods class focus on physical science principles since our students do not usually take a physical science content class and these activities build their content knowledge. I focus on measurement, geometry and algebra topics in the math methods course as these are not covered in the MAT 212 (Mathematics for Elementary Teachers) content course. In the science and math methods course, I focus on reformed teaching strategies advocated by the national organizations (NSTA-National Science Teachers Association and NCTM-National Council of Teachers of Mathematics)-problem based mathematics and inquiry-based science. I also focus on the nature of science, challenging students debunk their misconceptions about scientists and how they do their work. Course assignments reflect these goals as students are asked to create units and lesson plans reflecting these principles. The students will actually teach the three-day lesson series they have written, and analyze student learning based on their teaching. They are also asked to analyze, then rewrite published lessons to make more inquiry/problem-based, as they would be expected to do when in the classroom. The students are responsible for reading, writing and analyzing articles and literature about science and the advocated pedagogies. Half of the time allotted for this course is devoted to having the students teach in an elementary classroom on a weekly basis. It is important to critically reflect on their lessons and the feedback given to continue to grow as a teacher. It is also important for the methods students to analyze current classroom practices, such as classroom management, and also learn from their mentor teacher such skills as how to diversify instruction for various types and abilities of learners in the classroom. The students are to submit a fieldwork journal/portfolio detailing their lessons, skills learned, feedback from mentor teachers, etc. This is a significant part of the student’s grade as well. Copies of the lesson series guidelines, rubric and student work in included in the portfolio.

In EDU 340, the early childhood methods course, I focus on early literacy and child development. It is important for the students to pull information from PSY 244 (Child and Adolescent Development) and apply it to observations of this age group as they start forming developmentally appropriate lessons. I do spend time discussing how children learn. Initially when I began teaching these course the focus was very broad, with students observing in multiple developmental levels (preschool-kindergarten and first grade) for just a few weeks. Since our teacher candidates will be certified in kindergarten, I have adjusted the fieldwork to focus primarily on kindergarten. The students spend a few hours observing at the preschool level (also in PSY 244), but primarily, spend time working with children learning to read at the kindergarten level and observing developmentally appropriate classroom practices. They are expected to teach multiple lessons in this setting. The teacher candidates are expected to spend two hours a week in a kindergarten classroom in addition to the class time on campus. In class, we debrief about their experiences, and connect what they saw to learning and early literacy theory. In their field work, the students will journal responding question prompts about their experiences and integrate theory about early childhood and literacy development. I have found it is important to build their content knowledge about early reading and math strategies. It can be challenging for students to think about skills that currently so easy for them, such as adding two numbers or the sounds of various letters. I found our students do not know phonics so I have added an extended block of the course devoted to phonics and a quiz to measure student learning on this concept. The students are responsible for documenting a case study analyzing the literacy development of a student and then developing future lesson plans for further student growth. Guidelines and copies of student work on this assignment are included.

EDU 461 Senior Seminar: When the elementary education major was reinstated on campus, EDU 461, the senior seminar course, was added. It was our departmental goal, as well as my personal course goal, to fill in gaps from the existing program; Judy Roberts and I share the course and teach to our strengths. Judy teaches the segment on children’s literature and I challenge the students to deepen their understanding of assessment, multicultural diversity and differentiation of teaching strategies. The major course project is an inquiry project in which the students are asked to research a topic they wish to know more about in classroom teaching or in educational policy in general. This is a semester long project with presentations the last week of the term.

 I also in this course I coordinate a program, FIT KIDS, an outreach program in conjunction with King’s Daughters Hospital. KDH requested help in presenting a program on healthy eating and fitness to the local fifth graders and we delegated this responsibility to the senior seminar class. Students are trained in the curriculum and present seven weekly lessons to the fifth graders at Southwestern Elementary School. It was our hope that this program would help our seniors stay active in teaching during the semester they are not student teaching. This outreach program was worked better with some groups than others and Judy and I have evaluated this program and the role it has in our program. We would like to continue FIT KIDS as it adds a great deal to our program and helps meet various teacher standards, but feel it will need to be modified in the future and are working on the best way to incorporate this program. Throughout the summer, Judy and I have been evaluating our education program coordinating it with the new teacher education standards and licensing requirements in the state. When going through this review, we realized that the content of the senior seminar course will need to be changed to have more of an advanced reading methods focus as our program is lacking in the amount of coursework expected in literacy instruction.

EDU 455/456 student teaching courses: Seniors may chose which semester (Fall or Winter) and location (Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Louisville, Philadelphia or locally) they would like to student teach. After student teaching selections are made, our department decides on who will be the supervisor for each student teacher. Most of the placements are assigned geographically so since I live in Columbus I usually supervise the placements in the Indianapolis area and in the local area when needed. The number of student teachers I supervise vary from term to term (fall 2009/winter 2010 8 student teachers; fall 2010-winter 2011-5 student teachers). The difficult part of observing student teachers is usually one or two days a week are spent away from campus. With my commute to campus, it is very hard to travel to Indianapolis to spend time with a student teacher, then travel to Hanover for a meeting or class, so some days I am limited in my participation of campus events due to student teaching obligations.

My goal for my student teachers is to assist them in successfully completing their student teaching placement. To meet this goal, I work closely with each student teacher and their mentor teacher, visiting the classroom numerous times and observing the student teacher teach at least three times. I also help troubleshoot any problems that may arise in the classroom, with fulfilling expectations or in communication between the mentor and the student teacher. I have worked with four student teachers that have struggled and require more site visits and overall general support. Our department also requires student teachers to attend seminars to strengthen their student teaching experience. Each department member takes leadership of organizing the various seminars.

Special Offerings/Directed Studies (DS): In the spring of 2010, I led a course focused on developing environmental curriculum. Students developed environmentally-based curriculum to be used by the Rivers Institute for their field trip program. The students led various field trips on campus and developed water-themed outreach day at one of the local elementary schools. This class gave the students experience in designing curriculum and coordinating outreach events, in addition to teaching various topics and ages of students.

When asked, I have supported various directed studies with students. Many times, these are a result of scheduling conflicts and the class is offered at a different time on a one-to-one basis. I have sponsored projects to broaden a student’s particular interest in a particular topic. Such directed studies have been in curriculum writing and in reading and reflecting on various literature about different educational philosophies and techniques. I have also worked with a biology student who for her IS wished to probe and develop science curriculum for an elementary classroom. I am currently mentoring an academic internship; the student is working on developing an outdoor lab and environmentally based curriculum for a local elementary school. I feel these help me to broaden my knowledge in certain topics and help the student to pursue a topic of interest to them.

B. My Strengths and Weaknesses as a Teacher:

I think my biggest strength is my enthusiasm and passion for teaching. I love teaching and I think that is conveyed in my lessons. I am excited to be there and want my students to be the same. I try to model good teaching strategies and am not afraid to try new strategies in the classroom. I connect theory to practice. I offer my students ideas and activities they can take directly into the classroom, and many do. By taking risks and demonstrating willingness to try different strategies in the classroom, I hope my students will do the same in their future classrooms. I try to establish an open and relaxed atmosphere where students feel comfortable to share their thoughts academically in a class discussion or personally with questions or concerns they may have. I try to be approachable and a good listener as I think this important in establishing a good student/teacher rapport.

I have tried to work on two weaknesses in my teaching during the last year. The first, academic rigor of my courses, was mentioned in my last FEC review; the second, possible busywork in assignments, came from a student who decided to change his major from elementary education. I made these two weaknesses my goals for this academic year. With regards to academic rigor, I have changed expectations in some courses. For instance, in the past in EDU 221, I had most of my assessment strategies as written papers. After reflecting on the goals of this foundation education course, I realized that there were key concepts and terms that were needed for future classes and I doubted whether my strategies and paper prompts were effective. I felt I could more effectively assess these key concepts more effectively in a different type of assessment so this fall I implemented a paper/pencil midterm exam with a variety of multiple choice and short answer questions. I felt like this was more effective and modified the format during the EDU 221 section I taught in the spring term. I still require papers over some topics (philosophy of John Dewey), but like the mid-term/final exam philosophy. I heard some seniors in education discussing another class in which they were preparing for an exam. They laughed, “in education, we do not have exams” and I responded, “yes, now they do”. I still want my students to see value in alternative type of assessments (performance based, portfolios) and even different formats in paper and pencil type assignments (concept maps, papers) but I think this change helped the students really focus on the key concepts I wanted them to be accountable for in future classes and helped me better measure the student’s understanding.

As part of our data collection for national accreditation (see section C), I did a grade analysis of our candidates that graduated in 2008, 2009 and 2010 in their key content area courses and methods courses. What was surprising and somewhat distressing is that my EDU 303 (science methods) course had the highest average gpa for those three cohorts in all courses. There are many logical responses for this; the students are performing and heavily invested in their chosen major in this course, these courses (EDU 303/304) are in their second semester of methods with many of the major assignments and requirements being repeated from the first semester, and a small cohort size to allow for individual conferences and assistance. What was interesting that as I continued my analysis for the 2011 cohort I found the average gpa for this cohort was lower and more in line with other methods coursework on campus (even though more of the students in this cohort received college academic awards). Although not perfect, I feel I am making progress in this area and will continue to encourage academic rigor in my courses. I have tried to set clear guidelines with higher expectations for an A. Now, I am learning how to distinguish between two good quality pieces of work and how one must really be excellent to deserve the grade of “A”. I have learned to adjust my philosophy; I believe in balancing the types of assignments given, but have placed more value on the assignments that require more thinking, analysis and performance instead of what may be seen as busy work. Also, after correlating the courses with the state teacher standards, all three methods courses will need to be tweaked and assignments modified.

My second goal was to focus on the concept of “busy work. This came about last winter, when the student noted in his exit interview from the education program the busyness of course assignments in many education courses, that really made me stop and think. Why did he think this was so and was he correct? What was really hard was that he was enrolled in one of my courses (EDU 340) at the time. I could not change the syllabus at that time, but for the winter/spring of this year, these questions really challenged me. Previously students comment that I often am slow at returning assignments, and although I can agree to some point, I have tried harder to stay on top of my grading. At the end of the fall term, I honestly looked at my EDU 221 grades. I was amazed at the number of grades I had for each student-easily in access of twenty. I have always had the philosophy of having a variety of assignments to accommodate each type of learner, but by taking so many grades, I was diluting the importance of the major course assignments. This made me reflect on the assignments I had given (their purpose and quantity) and wondered if that as seen as busywork by the students. When reflecting on these issues, in the spring term, I changed my approach. Instead of reading reflections on each chapter (used to ensure reading was accomplished), I required papers that incorporated concepts from various chapters. I liked this approach, but the accelerated pace of the spring term made it difficult to compare. I would like to try this style again this fall when I teach EDU 221. I would like to incorporate and require the readings but not collect reading reflections/chapter summaries as traditionally done in this course. I plan to try different techniques to check for student understanding and completion of the reading (like collecting question slips about the chapter to spark discussion) and having short quizzes every other week to emphasize key concepts /philosophies required from this course. I hope this reduces the feeling of busyness and that by reducing the number of assignments I can focus on grading and providing feedback on the more substantive assignments. It would also connect more to the textbook, another suggestion from students.

I still feel like I over plan for each class session and must quickly move through each class session to accomplish my goals. I feel pressure to cover as much content as possible and rushed throughout each class session. Our education program is very condensed when compared to other education programs. This is apparent in the upper level methods courses and gives the appearance I am very unorganized. One of my future goals is to slow down, and take the time to allow each student to process the information, ask more productive questions and allow more time for debate/discussion of certain topics. I need to somehow reduce the number of concepts, but want to make sure I am providing all necessary material for the students. Each assignment improves with each administration and over time, but I would like to have a clearer list of expectations from the beginning. Many of my assignments are open, with numerous ways to complete the assignment. I need to communicate this more so the students can feel comfortable with that format. I also want them to become more independent and think of certain situations/assignments like a future teacher would and this requires some open-endedness. Many times assignments might be adapted for varied grade levels and students must select appropriate techniques for different grade levels.

The EDU 340 course, early childhood development and literacy, was initially a stretch for me with my science background. I felt I was weak in teaching certain aspects of this course. I played to my strengths and focused on cross-curricular connections between subject areas. Over the years, I have worked hard to increase by knowledge of early literacy topics. Through additional personal research, I have realized that science and reading build upon the same set of foundational skills and by explicitly teaching these skills, whether in reading or in science, will help students in both areas. I try to explicitly teach these skills to my preservice teacher candidates and model strategies for effective literacy teaching.

C. Use of laboratories/computers

My course, EDU 303, is a science methods course and, as mentioned earlier, it is important for the students to experience inquiry style learning and teaching. This requires a laboratory-type setting, but these facilities are not available in Newby Hall where the course materials are kept. Luckily we have been able to improvise and I have been able to place many materials we use on a regular basis on a cabinet in the room and use the sinks in the lobby and restrooms. The inquiries I model for my students are appropriate for their future elementary classroom so safety concerns with chemicals or other techniques are minimal or nonexistent. I implement the safety guidelines as established by the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA).

It is a goal of our department to increase the use of technology in all courses. It is becoming a larger part of the curriculum even at the elementary level. I require students to use computers/technology in many assignments. For instance, students are required to demonstrate their knowledge of geometric terms by developing a powerpoint from pictures (scavenger hunt) around campus. Many key articles and policy statements are available on-line from various professional agencies and are used in all of the courses I teach. Students are required to effectively use technology in their lesson plans and units and plan how to incorporate technology to improve student understanding.

D. Teacher outside the classroom:

I try to be a positive role model for our teacher candidates both inside and outside the classroom. One way is to be a resource for them about the education department, certification and the teaching field in general through advising. Currently I have twenty-four advisees and this has been roughly the average for the last few years. Once candidates are admitted into the teacher education program, they are divided evenly between the three faculty members in our department with advisees. I usually work with the candidates seeking elementary education but also assist many in the secondary programs as well. My advising role has increased since I started teaching Foundations of Education, the introductory education course. When these students wish to explore their future in the education program, they wish to speak with a “familiar face” and most often will work with the instructor they had for an introductory course. I work with these students advising them on how to enter the program and next steps. Many students have questions about exploring education, so I meet with various students and respond to various emails for numerous students with questions. I try to be available for all students to stop by, talk , seek advice or simply to share pictures and their travel experiences. I also try to become involved in various campus activities in which they are involved. Although this can be difficult commuting to campus and having children with activities of their own, I try. I know it means a lot to the students to watch them participate in an activity, or support an activity they have helped organize or do something simple, like stopping by their sorority house for dinner. As my own children have grown older, it has become easier to participate in many activities here on campus. I usually have an elementary candidate for numerous courses and the added touch of supporting them outside the classroom helps develop a positive rapport with the students.

Other ways I try to be a positive role model is through my activities on campus and beyond. My current committee assignment is through my Directorship with the Rivers Institute. I am in charge of Educational Programs and Outreach, so in many ways, I have become the face of science education to the community. The students see my excitement in this venture and my passion for environmental education and efforts to have all students, regardless of age, excited about science. I have included my students in many projects of the Rivers and this outreach; I feel it adds something unique and special to their Hanover experience and to their resume as they prepare for the future job search. I have worked with students in developing the curriculum for the elementary field trips, and have recruited and trained many of our teacher candidates to lead these experiences. The teachers that visit the campus on these science/environmentally themed field trips are very impressed that the students developed and lead the experience.

I also introduce students to professional development opportunities and help them become familiar to the organizations which will assist them in their future teaching. I am a Board member of HASTI, the Hoosier Association of Science Teachers Incorporated. Each February, the HASTI sponsors a state wide convention in which teachers and others involved in science education share effective ideas for the classroom. With the professional development funds available through the Rivers Institute, I have helped with the cost to attend the conference and the first year membership fee. In the past three years, I have helped over thirty teacher candidates attend the conference. This is a wonderful opportunity for the students to see the wonderful ideas shared about science, how teachers integrate science in various aspects of their curriculum, and the value of a professional network and resources available.

E. Student evaluations:

As I look over course evaluations, I focus primarily on the student comments. Sometimes the students’ comments and my thoughts on my strengths and weaknesses agree and sometimes the students add something unexpected. For the most part, the student evaluations reflect my strengths as a teacher. The students comment on the welcoming atmosphere on my classroom and my enthusiasm regarding teaching. I am glad students perceive me as fair in grading and willing to listen. I use the student comments to see what added insight the students have and why that may be so. Many times, their comments are very helpful. In EDU 201, one student mentioned that it would have been helpful to have individual conferences over their portfolio instead of a general last class session. I agree. I did have conferences with the juniors preparing for their Decision Point II interview, but I did not for the sophomores. I think that would have been helpful for them as well and plan to add that aspect to the course this fall. One student mentioned that EDU 340 should be a sophomore level course, something that our department has pondered and discussed at great length. Sometimes, the comments represent something that may have happened once (hopefully my speech pattern) or at the beginning of the term instead of throughout the term. While I agree with the students on these points (e.g. maybe spending too much time discussing field work experiences at the beginning of class), I often become uncomfortable with things as well and make the necessary changes accordingly. Some sections/years (EDU 303/304-2011) have numerous comments, while others or the same course (EDU 303/304-2010) have very few, so the student body at the time does make a big difference.

It does appear that the special things that I have organized for my courses (tutoring at Southwestern Elementary, participation in the PantherPack stuffing sessions, Science Day at E.O.Muncie, Water Festival and field trip teaching, fishbowl discussions) are beneficial for the students. Many students commented on how these experiences were helpful for them in considering teaching as a career or building their self-confidence in teaching certain subjects (student comment: I now feel like I can teach science in the future). The students agree with me, especially in EDU 221 about the busy work feel of certain assignments, and I plan to address that this fall.

There were some themes that are repeated in various courses and things that I must address. Sometimes the small changes I can do will help make a course better and less stressful for the student. One theme that reoccurs in my course evaluations is my organization, or lack of it, and not following the course syllabus, according to my students. This seems to occur more often in the methods courses (EDU 340, 303 and 304) than the introductory courses (EDU 221, 201) that I teach. Even though I always try to carry the syllabus with me and follow it, evidently by the repeated nature of this comment, I can do better. Some syllabi contain more detail than others, even listing smaller homework assignments. But so often, I will alter my plans. As I get to know my students, find a new article or activity or think of a better way to present the material, I will, at times, slightly alter the syllabus. The big assignments are still there and do not change, unless decided by the class as a whole. It is hard for me to know exactly what I would like to do on the second week of November when planning my syllabus in August. I do respect the fact that many students do take this very seriously, and in order to manage their time well, will do assignments ahead of time. I think I need to find a compromise to better coordinate the students’ need for structure and my need for flexibility.

 In EDU 221, during the fall terms, students liked the organization of the course. Students also reaffirmed the positive organization in the spring term course EDU 260 (Developing Environmental Curriculum). That was refreshing as I tried new techniques in both courses-the fishbowl discussion, tutoring at Southwestern Elementary as part of their fieldwork assignment and guest speakers. In EDU 221 in the spring term, students liked the new things I tried, like more teaching opportunities in the field, but they commented that I deviated often from the syllabus. I think much of that occurred because of the fast pace of the spring term and the idea that I over plan as explained in my strengths and weaknesses section. I set the time block for a daily two hour time block in the spring term while I realize now I should have allowed for a three hour time block. I will do that in future spring term classes. One student mentioned that the spring EDU 221 course overlapped greatly with the EDU 230 class. I will agree that both introductory courses do have some overlap. Usually students will take EDU 221 first, then add EDU 230 which will go into more depth about many more topics.

 I think I allow for more flexibility in my upper level courses and this may also contribute to the feeling of disorganization. I try to treat them as upperclassman and allow some student input into the course. I also know methods is a very stressful time for the students. Our program is very streamlined; we offer the bare minimum number of courses for certification. In order to do this, we must cover numerous concepts and standards in these courses. They are very busy and a lot is expected from the students. It is at this time in the education program were they are expected to be a professional in the field, not simply a college student. The education courses should be a full credit in value; they are currently a 0.5 credit. This is to keep the requirements for licensure included in the major and equivalent to other majors on campus. Many times I will be flexible with deadlines to accommodate students’ schedules, especially in EDU 340 as many students are enrolled in their first semester of methods (EDU 302/305) at that time. But, by giving them more ownership and flexibility, things are often changed on the syllabus and that creates a feeling of disorganization. I need to cognizant of this and try to coordinate due dates with Judy Roberts, the instructor of EDU 302/305 ahead of time. (note: I have tried to devise a plan to raise course credits for the methods course but ran into some roadblocks-it is one of my goals to somehow provide equality for those courses.) Also, I realize that because the methods block is so busy and stressful, I need to be clear on the syllabus when and what things will be do. I have one student in EDU 340 in the fall and 303/304 in the winter that was very upset with me and my teaching style. I will work with this student again this year in the senior seminar and may even mentor their student teaching experience. It is important for me to be aware of this situation and work to make it better. For my fall syllabi, I plan to use more of a general framework of topics and larger projects instead of listing specific details and will include an introductory paragraph that indicates small homework assignments will be given throughout the course.

Another frequent comment in the upper level methods courses are the overlap in material with other methods courses, especially EDU 340. At least one student claimed the course was redundant with their language arts methods course (EDU 305). Many students will take these two courses (EDU 305 and EDU 340) at the same time; both are only offered in the fall. For years, EDU 340 did not have a “home” in the timetable. Despite numerous attempts, the only time we could find for the class to meet is an hour after their morning methods block. There are similarities in content between EDU 305-Language Arts methods and EDU 340 –Early Childhood Literacy and Development as they both focus on literacy-EDU 340 more at the beginning stages (preschool and kindergarten) and EDU 305 during the primary grades. With the courses being in close time proximity to each other, these similarities are accentuated. Also, I have changed the focus of EDU 340 over the last few years. It previously was a general overview to this particular age group and their special developmental needs; now it focuses more on early literacy. This change was guided by the state teacher education standards push for literacy. One thing I think will help the situation is the work Judy and I did this summer. We worked on a curricular alignment of our program with the new teacher standards. In doing so, we identified where and how all the standards are met. In this process, we identified what must be taught in EDU 340 and what is taught in EDU 305, so hopefully that will reduce the content overlap (although some concepts are definitely worth repeating!). In doing the curricular alignment, I realized that I must expand the scope of the course. I need to expand the amount of time devoted to observing the physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of the students in their field work and to embellish the curriculum mapping assignment. I think this will help students see the value of this course and not consider it “a waste of money” (that student comment hurt!) or simply a duplication of EDU 305. The only way to successfully do this is to carefully plan the course and to share the rationale for the course, the assignments and what they are to gain from their experience in this course.

I am a very big believer in having clear expectations. I learned the value of this aspect when attending a workshop at Alverno College a few years ago. I try to give the students clear guidelines and guidelines for “A” work. But, unclear expectations for assignments were commented by numerous students, so it is an area I still need to work on. Again, sometimes other factors, such as adapting an assignment for various grade levels or varying fieldwork situations (different mentor expectations, different class schedules, different topics) can lead to modification. Knowing students feel this frustration is very helpful; now I know how they feel and can clarify the expectations and polish rubrics.

F. Future Development:

It is my goal to remain active in my field. I think it is imperative that I do so to prepare my teacher candidates for their future classroom. When I accepted my position at Hanover, my advisor at Indiana University openly stated that it would be the death of my career if I accepted a position at a smaller liberal arts college. I think I have enough “attitude” to prove her wrong. There are times I will admit that I have been overwhelmed with campus activities and teaching and have not had the time to research, write and publish as much as I would like. I have a “to do” list of many possible articles that I would like to complete and publish. But, what I have found, is that my experiences here at Hanover have enriched me in so many ways that I did not think were possible; actually, my experiences here have expanded my research opportunities. By teaching the early literacy course, I have expanded my horizons and engaged in a new research field of interest-the connections between literacy and science. The same as occurred with teaching math methods; I have been introduced to a new discipline and through the connections I see between science and math, I can help my students see the same patterns and connections. I have researched the literature in both math education and early literacy, purchasing resources from their associated professional organizations, NCTM (the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics) and NAEYC (National Association for the Education of the Young Child) to support my teaching in these fields.

I feel I have stayed active in my field of science education. I do a variety of things to help remain active in my field. Some are small, like belonging to NSTA (National Science Teachers Association) and their list serve. I do this to stay in touch with inservice teachers (teachers currently teaching in the field) and the issues they face. Many of these issues will be similar to the issues my teacher candidates face and help keep me updated on new trends in the field. Some things I do are larger, like belonging and participating in state and national organizations, such as HASTI (as previously noted), ASTE (Association of Science Teacher Educators) and NARST (National Association of Research in Science Teaching). I actively support these organizations and attend professional development opportunities with these organizations. I wish to continue in many of the activities I am currently engaged in; these are explained in more detail in the next section.

2A. Professional Activities and Development:

Since my last evaluation, the article Darrin Rubino and I wrote, *CSI for Trees*, has been published in one of NSTA’s journals, *Science and Children*. I have also continued my relationship with my peers at Indiana University and have two articles published focusing on professional development with elementary teachers. Copies of these articles are included. This summer I have been working on an article connecting literacy and science and hope to submit it to the HASTI journal later this fall.

I have been an invited speaker in various arenas in the past two years. I was asked to speak at ORBCRE, the conference focusing on the Ohio River Basin when Hanover College hosted the conference in 2009 speaking on ways to promote the importance of outreach education concerning the Ohio River. Last year, Daryl Karns asked me to speak at the IACTB conference to introduce college biology instructors to the new changes in Indiana Academic Standards and what to expect from their incoming biology students in the next few years. Angie Tilton, the director for Project WET at that time, asked me to speak at the National Project WET conference when it was hosted by the state of Indiana. I spoke about the needs of preservice teachers and how to best reach that audience to effectively use Project WET resources.

 I have tried to become very active in the Project WET/WILD organization at the state level. I am a trained facilitator for Project WILD, Project WET and Hoosier River Watch. These educational programs provide key resources for educators in the area of environmental education. Through by involvement in the Rivers, I hope to connect Hanover College to those involved with environmental education. I have assisted with many special projects of these organizations. I worked with area librarians for the past two years to use the resources from Project WET to connect with children’s literature for the library’s summer programming. I am in the process of becoming a trained facilitator for a new venture-Healthy Water, Healthy People, a program advocating clean water and emphasizing the connection between clean water and disease. I bring these resources to campus and try to provide WET and WILD training to the preservice candidates on campus, something rather unique to teacher education programs. I was also asked to be a reviewer for the new and revised activities for the new Project WET GEN II manual (national publication) to be introduced this fall.

I am a Director-at-Large for HASTI, the Hoosier Association of Science Teachers Incorporated. I ran for this position to help fulfill my goal of helping teachers teach science better. This organization is very active at the state level and provides a network for teachers to help in science education. It helps me stay current on the changes occurring in science education especially at the state level. I lead a workshop at HASTI this year for science teachers at all levels on inquiry teaching and how to transform their lessons to become more inquiry based. I coordinated efforts to create an elementary share-a-thon session at HASTI and had local teachers share their ideas on how they incorporate science into their classroom; approximately ten of my Hanover students were also participated in this presentation as well. I have been active with the ISTEM (Indiana Science Technology Engineering Mathematics Initiative) here in Southeastern Indiana and was asked to serve on the board and assist in coordinating activities for local teachers in these areas. I have been active at the state level in working with Jenny Hicks, the state science coordinator, to select curriculum for the state’s list of recommendations for school districts to use.

I have tried to stay active at the national level as well. I belong to three professional organizations, ASTE, the Association of Science Teacher Educators, NARST, Association of Research in Science Teaching and NSTA, the National Science Teachers Association. For the past few years, I have reviewed workshop and presentation proposals for the ASTE annual conference. I also submitted a conference proposal for this year’s conference, but have not heard back whether it has been accepted. I try to attend the conference each year to stay up-to-date in my field of science education. As mentioned earlier, my connection with NSTA, also helps me to stay current in my field and the issues occurring in K-12 classrooms. I served as committee chair person for NARST, leading the committee to select the most influential research article published in the association’s journal, JRST (Journal of Research in Science Teaching). I was asked to be a reviewer for the Journal of Technology and Science Teaching selected as an expert in the area of nature of science research and teaching.

Two of the projects I am very proud of are leading the field trip program and the Teacher Academy at Hanover College for the past two years. I think these endeavors are very important as they help bring Hanover College and the local community closer together. I believe the more we can promote positive experiences for the local communities (both teachers and students) with Hanover, more positive talk and excitement is generated about the campus. Maybe this will help encourage local students to seriously consider Hanover as an option for their college choice. Currently, the field trip programs are environmentally-based, using the area by the Outdoor Environmental Center (the old YMCA building). They have been written by the Hanover education students and are led by student volunteers.

The Teacher Academy, supported by the Rivers Institute, has invited local elementary teachers to engage in a year-long project to enhance their science content knowledge and teaching abilities. Last year, July 2010, we had our pilot group of ten local elementary teachers. The theme was water and I was very lucky to have the support of Daryl Karns to help with the science content. Daryl and I worked with these teachers for a week during the summer and for five workshops during the school year (September, November, HASTI, February, April). This pilot was very successful, as all ten teachers returned for the second year and recruited their fellow teachers to join them. I was able to visit the participating teachers’ classrooms (and was even invited to teach in one sixth grade classroom); it was very refreshing to see the teachers start to change their science teaching strategies. One teacher with over twenty years of experience greatly changed her teaching-she was admittedly a textbook/worksheet science teachers and changed her style to become more inquiry-based using student journals. She recruited six teachers from her building to join her. In this year’s Teacher Academy we had forty teachers attend, with a waiting list of six teachers at one time. The theme was plants and animals and again, with the support of the biology department, Darrin Rubino, Daryl Karns and Walter Bruyninckx, we were able to provide the teachers with both content and pedagogical knowledge. The first school year follow-up workshop will be held on September 10th. This is definitely a win-win situation for all involved. The teachers are enriched with the relationship with Hanover College and its resources and I benefit from listening and observing current trends in the local classrooms. This also assists our department as we build closer relationships with area schools and teachers so, in turn, the teachers provide high quality field placement sites and supervision for our candidates. The teachers and I have jointly submitted two conference proposals, one for the NSTA’s annual conference to be held this year in Indianapolis and one for a literacy conference; both proposals focus on the shared connections between literacy and science.

2B. Connections between projects and content/style of my teaching:

As I stated, I feel it is important for me to stay current on current state trends, changes and expectations so I may best prepare our teacher education candidates. As I work with local teachers , they look to me to help keep them informed of changes occurring at the state level and new ideas in science education. I hopefully challenge both my preservice and inservice teachers as to what can be instead of continuing the status quo and assist them in making the change. To do so, I must model effective practices. For many students and teachers alike, they must experience the new ideas; hopefully then they can see merit to the ideas and place the ideas into practice.

My research can best be described as action research into my teaching. I like to try new things in my classroom and throughout my short time at Hanover have introduced the following changes in my courses: outreach “science days” at local elementary schools, fieldwork journaling, fishbowl discussions in my introductory foundations course, tutoring in my introductory course, having students create and implement field trip curriculum and participating in FIT KIDS program, a partnership with Kings Daughter Hospital. With any change, one must look objectively to evaluate the change. Some changes are small and others, like participation in the Science Days at a local elementary school, are much larger and take time and resources. Many of my research projects reflect the evaluation of these endeavors-I need to know if they were worth the time and effort expended, if it truly met with my course goals and if my students truly benefited from the experience. Being at a small school allows me flexibility in certain aspects and by exploring, and eventually sharing, those unique approaches may assist others in their science education programs. One question I currently have is the value of having the students teach during the introductory Foundations course. I did this during the spring term with my Foundations course; it went well and I am trying to devise ways to incorporate this experience into the fall and winter term courses.

One advantage I have at Hanover as compared to other campuses is a close working relationship with my colleagues in the science department. Many of my peers have openly voiced their frustration with working with other disciplines. Through this close relationship, I have realized that we have many of the

same goals for our students. For instance, in the BIO 165 course syllabus, the nature of science is discussed; that is one of my course goals as well. I would like to track the students’ views of science to see what changes occur and what makes a significant impact on those changes.

2C. Scholarly goals: My scholarly goals for the next two or three years would be to complete many of the projects I have started. I would like to write more and have more articles published. As my children grow older, it is becoming much easier to devote the time away from campus to academic pursuits. Much of my summer this year was devoted to the planning, preparing, and leading the Teacher Academy and to the accreditation projects within my department.

I would like to use my experiences with the Teacher Academy for my future research projects. I tried something new with this year’s Teacher Academy and preliminary evidence seems to indicate it had positive responses. I would like to seek IRB approval and explore this topic further with the participants in this year’s Teacher Academy. I would also like to deepen my understanding of how science can support literacy skills and vice versa. Ideally I would love the opportunity to work with area teachers and investigate this connection in practice and how it impacts student learning. Passing on this information on trends in the classroom can help our preservice teachers to be better prepared for the job market and be effective elementary teachers.

I would also like to explore the impact of environmental education outreach program on both our preservice students and the K-6 grade students that visit. At one of the conferences I attended, a colleague was discussing the value of similar outreach programs offered on their campus; I think we do something unique and wonder how it impacts the various groups that participate.

3A and B. Community Activities:

I have tried to serve the Hanover campus community and my department in various ways. To balance academic and state/licensing requirements, our department has many roles and titles. The Director of Teacher Education and the Title II/Licensing Officer are jobs within our department that are directly accountable to the state and various licensing agencies. Kay Williams and Judy Roberts held these roles and recently our department realigned to have Jonathan Dee taking lead in these administrative roles. To assist our department, I stepped up to serve as department head and will be continuing in this role again for the next three years. The education department is experienced rapid growth in enrollment the past two years and this has created many stressful situations. Even though we are a small department (four members currently with the addition of Jonathan Dee last year), each of us handled these stresses differently and had various views of handle the emerging situations. It was my job as department chair to help mediate the various ideas and working styles to help our department operate as cohesively as possible. I have tried to be a good listener and “sounding board” when needed to all members of our department and negotiate and synthesize ideas.

As mentioned earlier, there are many tasks to are unique to the education department. Each department member takes on these responsibilities in addition to the roles described above. I am currently in charge of NCATE Principle I (our accreditation agency), which focuses on student and their progress in the program. I am responsible for student performance and documenting student difficulties between Decision Point I (entrance into the education program) and Decision Point II (entrance into student teaching). This time spans throughout usually spans throughout their junior year when the candidates take methods courses. After completion of the Decision Point II interview, each candidate receives a personalized letter, documenting their weaknesses to work on during their student teaching. This information is based on their performance in methods, feedback from their cooperating teacher, the results of their interview with two department members and the status of their teaching portfolio. I am responsible for collecting the data, scheduling the interviews and generating the letters. I also oversee the administration of the departmental comps for the elementary education majors. I lead a minor search for our new department member and will be a vital part of our national search for a associate professor in education.

During this summer, Judy Roberts and I have spent a great deal of time aligning our curriculum with the new teacher standards expected from the state of Indiana. This was an important project as our program will be reviewed by the state of Indiana in the spring of 2013. Three years of data of the performance of our students is expected at that time, so any changes to our program need to occur as soon as possible. Many of our courses will need to be tweaked in content, title and description as the information posted in the catalogue is important; curriculum proposals will soon be submitted for approval. Judy and I have also sought national approval for our elementary education program prepared and are planning the finishing touches on this document (due September 15th). This required documenting our student’s performance for three years to see if our candidates perform satisfactorily with regards to the national standards for elementary education. These reviews were vital as our department must constantly both state and national standards or risk losing our status as a licensing agent. It is also important as our department changes faculty. Judy Roberts, the senior member responsible for elementary education, is retiring after this year and I need to be prepared to guide this program in the future.

I have also been involved in many of the campus community. My committee assignment was serving on TEC (Teacher Education Committee) and I now use a directorship at the Rivers Institute in charge of education/outreach activities as my committee assignment. I take my assignments seriously and try to be an active member of each committee. For the Rivers, I oversee the field trip program (curriculum developed for k-6th grade students in environmental education) here on campus and teacher professional development activities, such as the Teacher Academy. I have participated in many activities for new and prospective students, such as LEAP advising, speaking to students on campus visits, representing our department in admission sponsored events, and interviewing for the Global Scholars Program. I am a member of the Environmental Study Group/Task Force (derived from the vision plan). I received training to be a member of the Harassment Hearing Board. This year, I will be a leader in the Common Reading program during the August Experience. I worked closely with Geoffrey Weiss, the campus grant writer, to try to secure a grant from the EPA and currently for the HHMI grant.