Untitled Photograph

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high school — weren’t they the ones who not only had an innate love for the subject they were teaching, but lived it and breathed it as well? Weren’t they the teachers who could share obscure yet enticing facts about their subject? Weren’t they the ones who knew the information so well already that they could shape it and share it in such a way that you not only enjoyed learning but actually retained the information?

It frightens me that I have to take the NTE in my subject area in order to gain my teaching credentials, when I have not previously learned much of the information I will be tested on. Standardized tests required in professional programs should be reviewed and studied for in great depth, but after 4+ years of higher education, I should not have to learn new material in order to pass. But I will.

Why do we continue to insist on more and more education classes which seem so far removed from actual classroom experience, when our Secondary Education students could benefit so much more from increased time studying their respective subject areas? I, personally, have taken a British Literature class. I greatly enjoyed studying British works in high school, and this was part of my motivation for choosing Secondary Education Language Arts. However, I have been unable to "fit" one of those classes into my schedule, due to the plethora of ed classes which have occupied my time. According to the school, I took Shakespeare, so that is all of the "British experience" that I need. That is incredibly naive. I am doing my future students no good whatsoever if I have never heard of Byron, or cannot distinguish a Canterbury Tale from a fairy tale, but I can certainly tell them all about their mental and moral development at this time in their lives.

Yes, I have been given the tools to seek much of this information out on my own, but if that is the case, why am I paying to be educated by others? Why spend two hours studying for every hour of class, only to spend another twenty hours a week reading works like Wuthering Heights in my spare time? (Although I have done that, and it was well worthwhile)! Should we ignore the schools surrounding us who have gone to a five-year education for teachers for similar reasons? Indeed, it is beneficial to start your teaching education early on, but shouldn’t we reevaluate the types of classes we are using in this training?

I am writing all of this for public consumption not only because it is a subject which is sincerely aggravating me at the moment, but also in response to rumors I have heard that more and more English classes are being removed from the English department and being handed over to the Education department. This notion deeply disturbs me, and as a member of a community that encourages challenging the status quo, I implore you to rethink this decision. I am not the only Secondary Education major who feels this way, but perhaps I am the only one who has taken the time to put it in print. PLEASE look at the way we are training our teachers at Concordia. Ask students their opinions on their education, and they will gladly share. Seek out the “raw data” available in excess here before you look to more theoretical tools. We, the students of Concordia, have been taught to think, and our brains are prime for the picking. Use us as tools, not only to be the best teachers we can be, but to aid in training future educators as well.