Penny Smith
Personal Narrative

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I grew up in a small town about fifteen miles from Conway. Where I grew up, everyone knew everyone. Going to a small school during my early elementary years was a really good experience, but moving to Conway in fourth grade was an even better one. I am so very lucky to have had great experiences throughout my school years. I have had many memorable teachers throughout the years that have made huge differences in my life. In high school, I was in the Conway High School marching band, a member of the yearbook staff, and the Beta Club. I was very busy, but academics were always very important to me.

During my senior year of high school, I planned to attend the University of Central Arkansas starting my freshman year in hopes of obtaining a degree in pharmacy. Shortly after I started college, I had a change of heart. The moment I changed my mind about my career choice was in the middle of a chemistry class my second semester of freshman year. I realized that what I was doing in that class was not what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I had always thought about becoming a teacher in the back of my mind, but at that moment it was at the very forefront.

I have been working with children at my church since I was fifteen years old. Working there for so many years has given me an enormous amount of experiences that have helped me through the education program at UCA. I started the program with a very positive outlook, because I have seen how teaching changes lives. Even though I only see these children once a week, I can tell I'm making a difference in their lives, and that is truly amazing to me.

While I have learned so much content in my education classes to prepare me to be a teacher, my favorite part has been working with students through various field experiences. I have spent time at the UCA Child Study Center, the Boys and Girls Club, Amboy Elementary School in North Little Rock, and Vilonia Primary School. This wide range of experiences with students from preschool through fifth grade has really helped me learn strategies that will help me regardless of the grade I teach.

The field of teaching is a very rewarding field. Teachers get opportunities to not only change young children's lives, but create meaningful relationships with them along with way. I believe that a positive relationship with students is the best and only way that teachers will able to teach. Students respond to positive relationships with their teacher. They want their teacher to know them and they want to know their teacher. Creating a friendly environment in the classroom is so important to me. I know getting to know my students will help me to teach them in the best way possible. I also love trying new things. I think it is very important to keep things updated in your classroom and always try new ways of doing things. The world is always changing, and so the way teachers teach should be changing with it.

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I am overwhelmingly excited about teaching. I think I can bring a lot of things into the classroom. I am very relatable. I feel as if students understand me and truly believe that I understand them. I am great at taking the lead in situations. And I am not afraid to voice my opinion to better a child's education. I am a very hard worker. I almost always go above and beyond what is required of me. I want everything I do to be my very best. I also take criticism and feedback extremely well. I love to hear ways I can improve what I am already doing. I know this helps me grow into a better teacher. Even though field is exciting, I cannot adequately express how excited I am to have my very own classroom someday! I look forward to starting my career in the best career I could possibly imagine.

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