**Reflection**

The Teacher Interview Assignment is one of my first assignments in SPED 730, the introductory course for the KU Master’s Degree in Special Education. This assignment was an opportunity to enhance our emerging understanding of various topics by interviewing a highly skilled teacher in the field. Through this assignment, I built upon my knowledge of specific research based strategies for the classroom in terms of academics and behavior. Further, I was able to demonstrate my understanding of the material covered in class by asking what the professor deemed to be “highly quality questions.”

The purpose of this assignment is to connect with a teacher who serves as a mentor, who is an exemplar, or who is someone that holds what I aspire to do in the near future. My assignment involved asking them about their position, about how they serve those with disabilities, about how they perceive special education, among many other questions that support the foundational purpose of this course. This interview is extremely helpful and allowed for me to connect discussions across the semester.

　　 My reflection of this assignment revolves around the questions I asked and the information that was provided to me which allowed elements of the assignment to present themselves as outcomes. This was the first chance I had to sit down with another educator and really ask them a series of questions that are pertinent to my interests. I was able to use this assignment as an excuse to ask someone I see as a mentor and friend how they became accomplished at the very craft I am hoping to become successful in. There is so much to learn from others, especially those who are deemed experienced or even experts in our field of education. This particular educator I interviewed urged me to observe others in my area (since I travel full time currently) so that I can learn from examples of what is possible around the country.

I have learned the importance of using my time efficiently, such as using planning periods to visit other classrooms and take in all that my fellow teachers have to offer. For example, from taking a back seat in neighboring environments, I can see how others are structuring their classrooms, engaging their students, creating opportunities for learning, and (especially for a fresh out of college teacher) how they are managing the behavior in their classrooms. This last part, classroom management/behavior management, is critical to me and to the foundation of my profession. I have witnessed how this can be a challenge with the structure of classes as well as the strategies to addressing behavior. My interviewee taught me that I could view this as an area that needs improvement or a limitation, as perspective guides our instruction. I should view each day as an opportunity to get in class, watch others teach, and learn what is possible.

As a result of my hard work and dedication, I received full marks on the assignment with positive feedback from Professor Sean Smith. There was not feedback to improve or work on my final paper, so I chose not to revise. I did, however, review again for grammatical and structural errors. There were none, and though there were also no revision recommendations, I made sure to examine the assignment carefully to determine if there was any other changes I wanted to make that might improve the product.

This interview inspired me to think outside of the box, as I learned much about myself as well as how this experience contributes to my development as a special educator. I thought deeply about what I learned from the first semester of this program and how it applies to current practice. I processed what I was hearing and what I was discussing with my peers as I reflected not only on what was shared but also what the literature talks about, what takes place in the classroom, and what is not taking place in our schools. From this assignment, I learned that there is ongoing consideration and review of our field. Students with disabilities are in dire need of various supports, and the efforts change from person to person, since we each hold our own perceptions and understandings.

Overall, this assignment was insightful and empowering. As a special educator, I now know that I need to continuously reflect on who my students are, what their needs require, what can benefit them, what challenges we may encounter, and how to best collaborate with others in order to support the outcomes we seek for all learners, especially those with disabilities.