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Final Honors Project

“Student Teaching Observations and Reflections”

Dr. Miels

Spring 2003

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5/23/03
I completed my student teaching through Indiana University’s Cultural Immersions Program, as a guest student. Through the Cultural Immersions Program students can choose to student teach abroad or, as I chose, on the Navajo Reservation. The Navajo Nation is the largest Native American Nation in the United States. The reservation occupies a space roughly equal to West Virginia, in Arizona, New Mexico and southern Utah. Although within the borders of the United States, the Navajo Nation has a unique language, customs and traditions. At times it is possible for a person to think that they have traveled to a foreign country.

Education not only occurs outside of cultural influences. This web page is a demonstration of education techniques and practices across a wide geographic and demographic area. The same INTASC principles stressed at Ball State University are found in this rural New Mexico school. Each INTASC principle is illustrated with an artifact from our classroom and a brief explanation of its significance. Many of the artifacts demonstrate an attempt to bring culture to a place of importance within the classroom.

Considering culture and its influences, this web page is also to introduce the viewer to a few of the issues faced by Navajo families and educators. I am not attempting to be a definitive source on social issues. As any educator knows, each child, each classroom and each school is unique. They all have different personalities, different forces acting on and influencing them. What happened in one school, may not happen at nearby school, but is quite possible. These issues are intended to open a door; to cause the reader to contemplate an idea and follow up independently. To that end additional sources and documents are listed following each issue.
I would like to take a moment to thank the many people who have helped me along the way with this project:

Many thanks to the Honors College and the Whiting Scholarship Fund! Without this financial support I would not have been as able to expand my experiences past the traditional elementary education sequence.

Mr. Henderson and his 5th grade class for allowing me to learn so much about each of them and myself during the semester.

The Indiana University American Indian Reservation Project Staff for organizing such an incredible experience, and requiring me as a student to expand my boundaries and push myself.

Paul McDonald for his technical assistance. Without him this project would be in a 3 ring binder and the computer would have met a tragic end.

Dr. Miels for her support as a mentor for the project and her faith that I could complete this independently.

My family for encouraging me to reach as high as I can and for providing me with the support and resources to do just that.