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KDP Biannual Convocation Reflection

When talk of Convo first came up during officer meetings, I was not interested. All I could think was, 'I will be student teaching and I don't want to have to worry about missing days and making them up and explaining why I want to go to Convo'. So, I just passed up what I considered an immense opportunity. Then towards the end of the semester just prior to Convo, my last semester in Cape, there was an opening for a presenter in the poster presentation and I just couldn't let myself pass it up. I just kept thinking to myself, 'I can figure something out with my supervisor and get information together for my cooperating teacher so he or she would know what an opportunity it would be'. Presenting at a professional conference is an experience you don't get just any given Friday. Especially presenting as a pre service teacher, that says something. Now, I will always be able to say that I have presented at a professional education convention, and I will be comfortable to do it again, if another chance arises in my future, very few first year teachers can say that. My mom used to make my brother and I read at church to practice public speaking, and I HATED it! However, she kept finding ways for us to public speak; she's a teacher, so she knew good and well what she was doing for us. I am so thankful now, that she did that especially when I get put on the spot to present in different situations. That is the way I look at the chance I go to present at Convo, the only way to learn is to actually do a presentation. The feeling of telling others about our Reading Is Fun project was one that can't be explained fully unless you experience it. I spoke to a woman from small college whose chapter was just starting to expand their programs and was absolutely thrilled with the idea. She was already thinking of resources in her campus community that she could utilize. I could see her wheels turning as we spoke and it reminded me so much of me when I come across something that makes my blood pump.

I experienced that same blood pumping feeling as that woman, when I came across the People to People table. People to People is an organization that facilitates learning for young students at the nation's monuments and exhibits in the Washington D.C. area. As someone who was about to be a fall semester graduate, who had plans of filling out applications and substituting during the spring semester I saw such a neat way to be working with students in an informal yet controlled situation. The program just screamed at me and I was so excited I called my parents as soon as I left the table, and the application was filled out the Sunday night I returned home from the trip. I am awaiting the next step in the application process.

During the rest of my time at Convo I attended some fantastic learning sessions. I love to see how other people do things and how different community factors affect a school. On my first day I attended a moving session about contemporary education in cities in New York and other impoverished cities on the east coast. The professors that spoke are currently working on a study on the various types of home lives and what it brings into the classroom. I always thought I had a good grasp on inner-city education...but I had NO IDEA! There are so many more factors than can be counted on than the fingers and toes of all of us who were in the session. Included in the session as a side note was an article that one of the professors wrote about her own experience as a parent, she gave us a copy of the article and it explained how her definition of 'developing' as a teacher and parent was very different from the definition of 'developing' that was given by her own child's psychologist. Her daughter has cerebral palsy. It made me think about how I use vocabulary without clarifying how I define it myself.

My favorite session of the whole trip I entered on accident. I had planned to attend another session at that time and the presenter never showed up, so I slipped into the room next door, and boy was I glad I did that! I entered a presentation on neurological research and learning. The session was based on all kinds of ways to use music in your classroom. I love music, and I love to

study and work to music, so it made complete sense to me why it would be beneficial in a classroom. I am currently preparing a play list for my i-pod to use on a small speaker system during the time I am in charge of the classroom for my last eight week placement. Music that has 55-70 beats per minute has been researched to help provide a backdrop for stability in children as they work. It not only works in children but all humans. What happens is your heart tends to follow the beat and when your heart is following a stable beat your body is stable, thus increasing the ability of the body to concentrate on the brain and the work it is trying to complete or take in. If all goes well I would like to continue to use music in my own classroom.

The final learning session that screamed at me was one given by second year teachers. They spoke about their first year in a casual and straight forward way. However, I enjoyed this more than I ever have any other presentation about first year teaching. The most enjoyable part was the fact that it was all positive. So many of the first year teaching informational sessions I have attended speak so negatively on what that year is like. These women were honest about the hardships that are there but they really gave examples on staying positive and coming out a better person.

The learning sessions I touched on were my favorite and most meaningful, but I gained tidbits from all of the other ones that I will be able to use as well. I am just so thankful that a poster presentation spot opened up and that I decided to risk missing a few days of student teaching!! I had an experience that changed me forever, in just a few days in Kentucky!