

Spring 3-2017

Ann Butterbaugh: Evolution of Views on Elementary Education and Its Profession

Madeline Oi

University of Dallas, moi@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.udallas.edu/oralhistory>



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Oi, Madeline, "Ann Butterbaugh: Evolution of Views on Elementary Education and Its Profession" (2017). *Oral History Interview Projects*. 20.

<http://digitalcommons.udallas.edu/oralhistory/20>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Education at UDigital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Oral History Interview Projects by an authorized administrator of UDigital Commons.

1. MO: Today is March 15, 2017 and I am here interviewing Ann Butterbaugh, a master teacher. So, uh Mrs. Butterbaugh, will you describe how long you have been teaching for?
2. AB: I've been teaching for 31 years officially at this school.
3. MO: And how.. What kind of grades? What age range?
4. AB: Uh First Grade, Second grade, third grade, fourth grade, a combination four-five, I've taught here a combination of two-three and this school is K-5 so I've taught every grade but K.
5. MO: Wow awesome! What would you say is your favorite grade?
6. AB: My favorite grade is... I would say third and fourth, but primarily fourth grade because they know their multiplication facts; they know how to read; they know how to write. They are still young enough to love school and just want to please the teacher still. Hormones haven't kicked in yet.
7. MO: How long in advance in your life did you know you wanted to enter the teaching field?
8. AB: I knew since as a young girl I loved being around little ones. When I was your age, when I was younger, I always loved it. And one of the awards I got when I was a lifeguard at the swimming pool was the "Mommy"... "Adopted Mommy" award. They made up this award for me because wherever you go the kids want to be. And so I wasn't even a teacher yet, but that's why the kids always follow me wherever I went and I actually prefer to be around little ones and to be teaching and playing with them than adults. And I had more joy and fun with kids so I know that was it even though my older sisters were in the medical profession.
9. MO: What other qualifications do you hold in teaching, you're bilingual I remember...
10. AB: Yes I have, I hold a bilingual credential
11. MO: Ok
12. AB: And I in 1985 I was hired at this school because I was bilingual. This school is an upper middle class/ high performing school, and when I was asked by my college professor to consider a job in this school district, Los Alamitos, I said, um, why would Los Alamitos need a bilingual teacher? And at that time the law said that if a third of your class is of a second language, you had to have a credentialed bilingual teacher. And so she knew that I would be the right fit for this type of neighborhood. And so I came to the school and I was hired the same day that I came and visited without really a formal interview.
13. MO: Wow!
14. AB: I toured the school and they said "we want you."
15. MO: That's amazing!
16. AB: I said ok, and they just had to make sure I could speak Spanish.
17. MO: Right.
18. AB: And I guess I passed that test!
19. MO: Umm Describe the... Please describe the pros and cons of having co-workers look to you for advice as an experienced teacher for having taught so many years.
20. AB: For them look to advice... ok... Teaching is an art in my opinion. Its an art. And so as long as anyone who has a question to me knows that I don't hold them to what I say

for them, the advice I give them. I give, share advice, I just did it with a co-teacher, I never expect the person to do, to take the advice, but I love sharing with people, "What's your take on it, why do you think that's a good idea" um "what don't you like about that idea," and trying just to get, and even like I am with students getting them to think for themselves about their responses and um... In my school almost everyone is a veteran teacher on this campus. There is very few teachers that even come into to this school that haven't already taught for a long time. But I have been master teacher for a number of teachers and I always love doing that. I love sharing the profession and watching other people, you know, doing what they do. So it's really not a burden at all to have people come to me and ask me what I think. And, again, as long as they know that I'm not the end all. Its much better to converse, share, get your point of view across, and listen to other points of view and move on.

21. MO; Great. Great insight. Um Having expectations before teaching and what you thought it would be growing up and going – before going into the field, was teaching what you thought it would be, or was it different?
22. AB: I think every, because of this field, every single day is a brand new day, even though I've been doing this for 31 years, I'm already excited about tomorrow! It's like "I can't wait to read the next chapter of the book that I love to read!" And I really believe from the very first time I walked into the classroom I had memories of those kids and I have memories of quotes that they said, and so I think it was more than I thought it would be. It's more exciting than I really thought it would be and it's such a creative profession that as long as you stay creative and try new things that you can – every single day is a brand new day and a fresh day. And when you have really rough days you that know when you lay your head down on the pillow and wake up again, the kids have already forgotten about whatever might've happened that was difficult, and you get a fresh start the very next day, to start new. And I don't know many profession where you have that type of opportunity to have such a brand new start every day because children are like that. They change every single day. And you watch them come to school, and if they are excited and you're excited, you know that magic is going to happen in the classroom. And that's from 31 years ago to – til tomorrow, I can't wait til tomorrow. I'm reading one of my favorite books with them and it's like these kids can't wait to find out what happens next. So it's--it's fun!
23. MO: Ok! Um... Could you pinpoint a time um... you felt you work was really rewarding?

24. AB: I would say every day I feel that way. A little girl just came in today and said, "I just came in to give you a hug." I had her last year, so she just walked in my door and gave me a hug and I said, "How was your day?" "It was good" I would say, "I had a really good day too!" And she left. Little moments like that and another moment was when I was at restaurant. And the waitress came up to me and said, "you know, are you Ms. Richie?" (my maiden name) and I said, "yeah." "You were my second grade teacher" and she said "I want to tell you something you taught me" and I said, "Ok!" And I taught her a song, "You are more beautiful than gold, more precious than a diamond, that's what you are. You are brighter than the brightest star 'cause God made you and He made me too that way." I wrote a little song to this and um, she told – she goes, "and you told me I was more beautiful than gold and more precious than a diamond," and she goes "I'll never forget that." So with those little moments where you think, "will they remember what I did or said? I don't know" and then she came in and she told me she did. And she was a waitress at an Italian restaurant and I remembered her. I said, "I remember having you in my class." And I've been invited to weddings and, you know, different ways, like some students I've stayed in contact with. I don't do Facebook, so somehow it happens where kids come back and share that,...

25. MO: Wow!

26. AB: ...the impact.

27. MO: Um, Was there ever a time you spent a lot of time working on something that did not end up the way you wanted it to?

28. AB: Like a project?

29. MO: Like a project, or maybe a student who never really had – lived up to your expectations?

30. AB: Yes, I remember... I remember I had a very difficult um student and it was – it was over twenty years ago but I remembered feeling very very down about "I can't get through to this little boy." His name was ryan. And I do remember going to church. So I went to St. Hedwig's. I went to the Blessed Sacrament chapel.

31. MO: Mhm...

32. AB: And I went in there and I said, "I don't know if I'm getting through to this little boy. I really want to help him. And um... I really doubted whether I was and I

remember after praying I felt like there was a message saying “no matter what you – there’s nothing” – I felt like I had failed because he, like I said, was a hard student.

[Video cuts out from this part]

33. MO: What made you decide to teach in public schools, rather than private, religious-affiliated schools?

34. AB: I decided to teach in this type of a school – it really wasn’t my decision. The opportunity was open and when I found the door opening for me to have – I was twenty-four years old, I was young – and my college professor said – I was already hired where I did student teaching, they wanted me to stay there at Paramount, California and I was going to teach upper grade or whatever it was, but they actually hired me while I was student teaching to finish the year. And so they assumed that I would just come back and then my college professor, university professor, who said – she was my advisor, that there is nobody for you at this school, the public school. And so when the door opened I said I will take this job. But, um, it really – I really believe that when a Christian person works at a public school it’s good for the whole community because – especially you have to I realized that I’m not afraid back up who I am. I’m a believer, I’m a Catholic and I would teach in a public school and I don’t – I share that with the kids and, um, the first person who takes the Lord’s name in vain becomes a lesson because I say to them, “Were you praying? I heard you say God.” “No I wasn’t praying. I said that?” “You did, you said ‘Oh my’ and then you said God.” And so after they hear that – I said that “when you go talking to someone you say their name, so it looks like you might be calling God’s name because you said that.” And when they are aware that many of the other kids chime in they say “oh yes that’s called taking the Lord’s name in vain and that’s really not a good thing to do.” And so they all begin to teach each other, not even coming from me, that the Lord’s name is holy and that many people hold it in esteem and therefore you shouldn’t just say that unless we are talking to God that’s what prayer – you know – so you must be talking… Anyway, not being in a private school, but being in a public school is a great opportunity to share. Being a faithful, Christian person is not something you keep a secret. You don’t hold it under a bushel basket; you let your light shine! And

then it makes everyone feel safer when the person teaching is who they are therefore you can be who you are and there is no judgement.

35. MO: Really inspiring. Um definitely something I want to think about in my teaching career. So, did you have any concerns going into teaching, like politically, morally, and kind of sway other way because of... ?
36. AB: – Right, Politically, morally no. Because I was twenty-four when I went into teaching, I didn't have much of a – strong opinions about things. Uh and that was in 1985. And morally, I've never really compromised my morals as a teacher. I think it's beautiful to teach elementary if that's your calling because you are dealing with really innocent, young children. And, um, many people who I work with are Christians and practicing ones, different affiliations, different churches but, uh, it's – it's really been easy for me to be the moral person I am in this particular environment, in this school. I just know it gets to be a little more difficult when they get to middle school and high school 'cause things tend to be a little more – they talk about more things than we do down here in elementary.
37. MO: Right.
38. AB: But I never felt like I have had to compromise myself but in the case where they are asking me to teach something that's not moral, I don't think I will. I'd rather not have to do something that would compromise my faith in God and compromise my morals. I won't do it and I'll cross that bridge when I get to it.
39. MO: And it could be a choice – a judgement, profession, like a professional judgement choice.
40. AB: Yes.
41. MO: Please describe the evolution of bilingual programs in California because I know they have been kind of for bilingual, against bilingual. Um, why do you think California voted to get rid of bilingual education in schools in 1998 with Proposition uh, 227, and now, just recently, they are voting to nullify this act with another law, Proposition 58?
42. AB: Ok Propostion 58 nullifies it so now they are about to have bilingual education, where before they thought it was a really bad – a good idea to have it – and they thought it was a bad idea, and now it's like whatever you want to do. And, uh, I think the last of the three is a better way to go because it frees local patrol back to every district to, um, educate the children the way they think is the best. And, um, I really believe the number one priority as educators in the state of California is to educate them first in English and making sure that they understand that their primary

language and the language of the country and the area, but if you could also introduce – able, if you're able to communicate with kids in their primary language, that's only going to enhance them learning English. And so I think the more we allow local control with school districts to present the best education for their children, the better education they are going to receive. And I was able to communicate in Spanish with the children's parents when I was first here with children who were Spanish speakers. And even that in itself is such a huge benefit to be able to communicate with a parent in their own language, which brings them into their child's education a lot more intimately and that they listen better too because you can speak their language. So now that it's kinda back, they can have immersion in Spanish, or whatever language it might be, as long as the primary language is always being enhanced first.

43. MO: That's amazing. After all these years, what is the best advice for someone who is in the middle of their first year of teaching, overwhelmed with state testing and student achievement, um, benchmarks and feeling discouraged about their chosen career?

44. AB: If you're in the beginning of your career and you feel all the pressures of testing – when I came into my profession, testing was not – standardized testing in the state or nation was not present in the school. And so it's – when I went into teaching, they just trusted you with here are the goals, here are your materials, there were a few assessments to choose to see how the kids are learning. And they just said they trust you to teach the kids. And so now it's all about standardized testing coming, dreadfully if you do Common Core which we do in California, and I'll tell you it has drastically changed, excuse me, the approach to your responsibility to make sure they perform well on the test. And I think that is unfortunate because it has put a whole new twist and the pressure is on the teacher to make sure that their kids are prepared for a test and that they perform to their best ability. If you're new in the profession and you feel the pressure, I would just say, “you know what, do know the test well. Do know how to prepare well without losing the excitement, the joy for teaching amidst it.” I think you have to balance it, knowing that “No, I'm not just going to be a test-prep teacher.” You have to be who you are as a teacher, put the kids first, but also to make them comfortable, we do a lot of preparation so that you

can make it fun with the kids and bring them into the style of questions they might receive, and the responses they might grade you on and turn it into something more fun, like a game, if you can. Also, don't let the results be your deciding point whether you are a good teacher or not because it takes a long time for a veteran teacher to feel prepared for these types of tests. So do your best and work your craft every year to improve on it but never let that be the forefront of your mind if this is why I'm teaching, just to make sure I do well on these tests. So you have to really have a strong focus on what's really important, that's the kids.

45. MO: So, Mrs. Butterbaugh, if you had any other advice for starting teachers, um, based on their fear of tests, the tests – student testing, what would you say to them?
46. AB: Yes I would definitely have to remind any teacher that the most important thing about what you are doing with children will never be seen on a standardized test. And the most important part of your teaching is what you do with children is in their hearts and their lives on a daily basis. And so never allow the fear of the test keep you from following your heart if you want to become a teacher if that's your calling and you know that's your calling and you know you have the skills and the gifts to do it. Don't let the fear of tests keep you from doing that. And the most important thing is the relationship you have with the children in the classroom is something that will never show up on a test, even if you have the most outstanding scores it doesn't mean you have – you're the best teacher because you and your relationship with a child is the most important one, and that's a quote from John Paul the Second. Um, John Paul the Second said that the most important thing in education is the relationship between the teacher and the student. He didn't say the most important thing is measuring how much they "learn" but the relationship and if you look at Christ, his relationship with his apostles through the power of the Holy Spirit took them from being scared followers after His death to absolute fearless leaders of the faith regardless what happened. And that – I think could have only been energized by the relationship they had with Christ. And when they were infused with the Spirit of God, there was nothing they could do to stop them from what they were called to

do and that was the preach – the Gospel of Love, Mercy, and Forgiveness to the world who needed him. And so you just can't let fear – as easy as it sounds to say – keep us from following our calling. And if your calling is a teacher is to go into the world, into teach children in this profession, we have to remember that that's the relationship is much more valuable and important than the results of tests which you have to deal with.

47. MO: Great insights. To our next question. Having experienced school administration workers over the years what areas were your administrators successful in giving support to you as a teacher and what areas did they fail to support you.

48. AB: Supporting as a teacher is – I had my first principal is the one who first hired me, here, and she was very strict and very very – she was also silent. She would walk into the room and you wouldn't know she would be there for ten minutes or fifteen. And you would look up and there she is watching you teaching. But, um, as much as she kinda had an aura of authority and a little bit of fear you would have with her, she also was extremely supportive and when there were any issues with the parents doubting whether or not you were doing the right thing, she always had your back. And she would present before the parents who might have been concerned in nothing but support. When the parents would leave she would talk to you humbly and just say, "Tell me what really was happening and is there anything I could support you with?" So she would never allow our – if there was a weakness to be discussed in front of the parent if there was. But when the doors were closed with just the two of you, she'd just – she was supporting me. When there was any concern whatsoever. And so that in that way administrators who appreciate the pressures you even have on you by your dealing with these people's – families' most precious treasure, their children. And those pressure are great and you don't want to do the wrong thing but there's – you can't be perfect all the time; you can't always make the right choices. And so administrators always support you, you always feel like I'm going to be supported by my leader. And I've had many different principals here, but I've always felt very supported by them and the one we have now is always, "What can I do to help you? How can I help you? What do you need" And anytime I've asked for anything, she's always been there. So I feel very fortunate that I've had

nothing but really good administrators who really cared about children and when you have people who – that’s their primary concern is the child, then you have a good leader, you have a good supporter.

49. MO: Ok great! Is there anything else you can talk about, maybe your first principal and any advice she told you?

50. AB: Yes. One time I was in a meeting and she, um, we were asked questions and I was a very young teacher. And I shared something. And she said to me, “Ann, you’re using a very soft voice, nobody can hear you.” And I remember thinking, I was really embarrassed because she said that in front of the whole group that’s at this inservice. And later on she, um, I think I went to her personally and I said “You know that was really embarrassing how you said that I was using a very quiet voice.” And I said, “I’m new to this profession. I’m a little nervous, and um, I was a little bit afraid. And then later on in the career with her, she said, “I think you have very strong leadership skills.” I remember being shocked. And uh, she said “I really believe that you could be a leader in education and go in different fields and be the leader of different departments if you want to.” And so I really feel like even in her own leadership she saw something in me that was very weak and timid, yet there was a voice in there she felt like needed to be heard. That’s what I think she saw in me. Like, “you have good things to do, you do good things in your classroom, you are a good educator” but I think it was her own way of building me up and not tearing me down. And later on in my career I was – I would – I was not afraid to stand up for teachers who I thought were being treated unfairly by administration. And so I got a phone call and the phone call said “We understand that you are not afraid to speak up to principals.” And I said, “No, I’m not afraid.” “Um, we think that you would make a good union president. I said, “I’ve never even been to a ‘rep council meeting’ or I don’t even know what the union does.” And as it turned out I became the union president that year because the only reason was because they found out that I will stand up for people, I’m not afraid of what administrators say. I would like to communicate with them as they communicate with me, it’s just a different position in my estimation, principal to teacher. And so, I had to be voted by the teacher, the group of teachers over three hundred because our district is unified so it’s K12. And I

became the union president with – never having been to a single union meeting in my life. And so I did it for two years. And those two years were another area of huge growth for me because I had to meet with the superintendent. I had to meet with the executive board. And I had to lead the meetings with the representative council and the executive board. And I think back to that first principal when she said “You’re using a quiet voice, speak up.” What she was – what she was saying I think “If you have something – You have something to say don’t be afraid.” And so she gave me the strength not to be afraid to even communicate with her. That carried on with all my other principals, um, to be a good communicator and so I did. I stood up for teachers when I think things aren’t correct but I don’t yell and scream. I just try to bring out facts in a respectful manner and I’ve been able to support the teachers and so those two years as the president of the teacher’s union were exciting and very rewarding and it was years of growth and I’m glad I did it.

51. MO: How long were you in your teaching career were you got that opportunity to become the president of the teacher’s union.

52. AB: Ah, yes. I think I was already a teacher for maybe – let’s see – over ten years, ten, fifteen years, I think. I don’t know exactly the year or the date, but, um, it was a big shock to me that I was able to do that, but I mean it’s was – it’s was a little further into my career, middle of the career. And for me I was teaching second grade, like twelve years at the time. And so after ten years of second grade I was kinda ready for a new challenge and being president of the union was a great challenge. The meetings were in my classroom, so high school teachers were coming down and sitting in the little chairs and looking at the world of a classroom teacher on the primary level. And so it was, um, it was at least fifteen years into my career when I did that.

53. MO: Um, Ok! What are some concerns you have for the future of education?

54. AB: Yes. Since I’m in my thirty-first year, my retirement is within from a year to five years I have that window left. But, um, my concern for the future of education is that our country is embracing – embracing values that do not necessarily go along with the Christian foundation because I know our founding fathers started this country on life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. And they also made sure that in our public

we would have not freedom of religion, but a freedom to worship and be who you are in your religion. And but not that the church and state would be separate, but's it's not that you would be force to separate God from public life. And I feel like that's what's happening in the future, and they are going to – I feel like it might becoming like a wave towards edu – public education. Where now the values are somewhat gray. Christian values here; worldly values here. Well they look at the Christian values as too pushy – you know, on the mainstream culture. So I'm afraid that with leadership that's not sound in the founding father's vision of the founding of our country. We may have a country where the values of the world are now promoted in the public square, and the public square includes public education. And so will they teach alternate lifestyles to kindergarteners, to first graders, to second graders all the way up to twelfth grade? And that is seen as un – it's just not the way a Christian would want their child to be educated and being taught these things. And so I think that that's the future that's going to be hard for Christians in public education to deal with. Because they might say here's your curriculum and you will teach it. And you say "well I can't teach alternate lifestyles. I don't believe in it. And it's part of my faith and my religion and say, "well I'm afraid that might be a real crossroad that many young teachers like you might have might have to cross with – "but I can't do that" and do we stand together and united and say "this is not the place to teach things that are very controversial in public education so why don't we leave those teachings to the family to teach what they believe is right and let public education be about reading, and writing, and arithmetic, and literature that is appropriate for the age you teach, and curriculum that is appropriate for the age that we teach.

55. MO: Ok, uh. Who influenced you to become a teacher?

56. AB: Yes. It definitely wasn't my oldest sister Carol. She was six years older than me when I told her I wanted to be a teacher, she said, "don't be a teacher that's for people who don't know what they want to do." And I can remember hearing those words and I asked myself, "I don't think that's me, I don't think I want to be teaching because I don't know what else I want to do." So I had to stand up strong even to that having an older sister who was strong and influential. I had to say, "No, that's

not why I'm becoming a teacher. I think I'm becoming a teacher because I love kids and I always wanted elementary, I never wanted middle school or high school. However I have taught high school kids and I love that too. And so, um, in junior high – not junior high – in elementary school, I went to Catholic school K through 8 and I was in seventh grade and I became friends with my teacher. Her name was Sister Ann, she was the foundress of the whole school. She was a Presentation sister from Ireland and she liked me for who I was. I didn't think she was a very great teacher, she was elderly at the time when she taught this rather unruly seventh grade class. I don't remember too much about the learning but I was humiliated by her. She announced very loud across the room, "Who wrote 'right' when it should be 'writ' and then she looked and it was my name on the paper. And I remember being mortified again. I made a silly mistake. But it didn't matter to me that she said that to me, I loved her. And I still – I remained friends with her all her life. She died in her 90s and I was able to go to her, um, funeral, but I would visit her all throughout my life and talk to her. So here's the secret there, she loved me for who I was not because I was – I wasn't a very stellar student. Obviously, I didn't know how to spell 'write' correctly, but, um, because she loved me and I felt that love from her, that I loved her. And that was the main attraction that I remember about her that she had an appreciation for who I was. And it was more like for my soul – my spirit. And I don't know if everybody gets that feeling from a teacher or not but I always wanted to try to share that with kids. Another story, I was in junior high, public, I transferred I didn't even graduate from St. Irenaeus like all my siblings did. I had left in eighth grade. Much to the chagrin of the school that I was leaving. And I went to Orangeview Junior High and public classrooms, different teachers, everything was brand new. So I had a history teacher and he announced your grade out loud with a number. You had a number and a grade. And so he said my grade and my number and I was disappointed. I said, "I don't – I didn't think I had that grade." And I wasn't afraid to go up to him and say, "Could you please check my grade because I don't think that's the grade that I earned." And he looked in his book and he said, "I'm sorry that's your grade." And he was a gentleman who wore a suit and a tie everyday

and he was elderly also. And there I was on a completely different part of the campus apart from his room and he was seen walking amongst the halls there and he was looking for me. And he said, "I was looking for you." And I said, "Why?" You're just a little junior high kid and this gentleman, this teacher in his big suit and tie and he says, "because I really went back and checked your grade and you were right. That wasn't your grade. You really received this grade. And I wanted to come find you." I had tears in my eyes thinking about "wow, he didn't have to do that, but he did it." There's another special connection. And the last one is my college professor. She was in charge of the bilingual department at Cal State Long Beach. And I had already taken the bilingual test once, twice, and three times. I passed three out of the four parts every time. But you have to pass four out of four to get the credential. The last part that I could not pass was the written. You had to write an essay in Spanish. And I became very nervous every time I had to write in Spanish. And I fumbled it every time and I didn't get a passing score. She called me again, personally, into her office. And said, "Ann, your essay is not very well written. But I believe you, I believe that you can pass this test. And so here's your test. I want you to go into that room and I want you to rewrite it and correct all the mistakes that you can, because I believe that you'll make a great bilingual teacher and you can't have this credential without passing this test. So there I was, not in the classroom, not on the testing scene, outside of everything. I go in the office. I rewrite my test. I hand it back to her. Weeks go by the results come in the mail. I pass the test. If people don't treat every person as individuals you'll lose the beauty of what you can do a person. Everyone of those people treated me special. Not because I was special, but because they saw something in me and I felt it and I was reciprocating, obviously, that type of rapport. But I think all the stories are really special that teachers went outside of their comfort zones to approach a student, which happened to be me. And the impression they made on me is forever. I will never judge a child by their test score and I'll always say to them, "I believe in you and you can do it."

57. MO: Ok. How would you describe your philosophy of education.

58. AB: That's a big question. People evolve their philosophies over a long time. And it does take time to realize what is important, and what you think might be important

one day in the classroom it may not be important the next day because maybe something didn't quite work but the philosophy I think about education comes from my stories of the three people that had such an influence on me, is to do your best, to treat children with respect. And respect doesn't mean letting them get away with what they want to do all the time. But really being the leader, to give the children parameters, safe boundaries, firm rules, firm approach to what you expect and what you don't expect, um, for them to do, and giving them the parameters to do what you'd like them to do without being ultra controlling about everything that is expected. And so really my philosophy is to love the child, but love is hard work. Love is not mushy, sweet – you know – affection. You know, feelings or something like that. Truly loving someone is a – really a commitment. And when you're a teacher you're committed to them as long as they are in your room. And you show them that commitment by believing in them. And guiding them in their development as a human being as a person with good character by displaying your good character to them with respect. And so, and I also have another way to look at it, and that is like an artist. Because if what you are gonna do in your life, you know, as your vocation, it's your calling. And therefore you are given unique gifts of how to do it. And your gifts are different than my gifts and my gifts are different than the teacher next door's gifts. And there was a time when I wanted to be just like a teacher who I thought great. I looked at everything she did and I thought she should tell me everything she does and I'll do everything she does. Well that was a complete failure. I couldn't do what she did because I don't have the gifts she has. And I had to develop into the person that I was meant to be as a teacher. And it's a little bit different than anybody else. And that's the beautiful thing that you're going to find. Your being you will come as you are around the profession long enough to try new things and things that you are comfortable with and are successful with the person next door may not be successful. So I always, when I compare it to an artist with palette. If Van Gogh is drawing a picture and usually his pictures came from his heart completely and no one could tell him how to draw, how to paint. And no one could tell Picasso that you should never develop into a cubist because that's not popular,

but his cubism became his paintings compared to his beginning. And someone looked at George Seurat and they said, "You know, why are you painting with dots. Don't you know that's not a good way to paint?" All he used were dots of color and if you stood back the yellow and the reds turned into orange by your eyes, and the blues and the yellows made green, but he didn't use green, he just used the blues and the yellows. And to look at an artist and say, "You shouldn't do that," we would never have, you know Saturday a Walk – I think the name of his painting is A Saturday in the Park with George. I think it's a huge painting and it's in Chicago. Can you imagine if we told all these great people we know to be artists how they should draw? How they should paint? How they should create? Then we wouldn't have what they were. They would just imitate who came before them and were not using the gift that they really had to be who they were. So I have to say that I really believe teaching is that way. It takes a little while to get the confidence to be the artist that you are. It take practice. And it's like anything that looks like it's done with ease and is wonderful and beautiful, it probably took them the most difficult and hard work of anything that you see. So to see someone in their craft, being the artisan and developing into the artisan that they are has to be the philosophy that I appreciate from the artist and the teacher. To use the tools that you have but embrace them as your own. And I think the artist that you are with children learning then [inaudible]

59. MO: Ok Mrs. Butterbaugh. Was there anything you want to add to wrap up?

60. AB: To piggy back on my philosophy about being an artist as a teacher and having confidence in the moment to. I'm a teacher who responds to the moment. I have plans, but I don't always go by those plans. When I see an opportunity I try to grab it. And so one year it was raining outside so much that the kids were stuck inside for recess. And they were getting a little antsy about what to do next. And so I said, "Why don't you get some sheets, bring some blankets, brings some markers and little tools and you can create a fort." And so when it was raining so much, I said, "go ahead. Go into your little fort and, um, and go in there and write—do whatever you really want to do." So it was writing workshop time. And they asked, "Can't we just keep our forts and do our writing under our blankets and our little area?" And I just thought, "I'm in charge, I can just let them do that. There's no rule that says you can't write under a desk or under a blanket. And so all these little girls had these very organized neat compartments to their writing workshops under the tables. And so they went under there and then I let them do free write. You can write a poem, you can write anything you want. Whatever inspires you. And so this girl came out and she handed me her writing. And—and so to end this I'll read her—I'll read a poem that she wrote after—I think it was second grade the year I

had her, or third it was one or the other. And because of all the rain was happening, she had an experience that she remembered in the rain. And she turned it into a poem—this poem called Rain Stain, by E.D. McConall.

Have you ever been swimming in the street?
Have you ever felt the silver rain leaving your memory with a stain?
It also felt like heaven's touch. It was loving, very much, very much.
Did you ever hear the rain's cry sounding like a lullaby?
There were no cars, no nothing there.
It was peaceful everywhere.
Dad was watching, of course I was only three.
Wind blowing, bird singing. It was quite a peaceful evening.
Such fresh water to drink.
Would it taste good, do you think?
It left my memory with a stain.
But you my friend have you ever been swimming in the rain?

And that would exemplify my own artistry as a teacher allowing children to do things that may be completely out of the ordinary. But you get the most out your children, I think, when you just allow them to be who they are with their loving parameters, with a firm, yet loving hand. Giving them a feeling of safety, it's wonderful. And truly a belief of they can do anything [inaudible]

61. MO: Thank you Mrs. Butterbaugh.

62. AB: You're very welcome! It was a pleasure.

63. MO: On behalf, um, of the UD Education Department we thank you for all your insights.
[inaudible]

64. AB: You're very welcome!