After my 30 hours of service learning was completed at Settlers Point Elementary school, I felt a sense of sadness. I was touched so much this semester while working with the students in my mentor teacher’s 1st and 4th grade resource class. This experience has triggered my passion and desire for becoming a teacher, and I am anxious to get into my own classroom and start teaching.

My service learning schedule was a little different this semester because my mentor teacher only saw her students for 2 hours in the morning for math and reading, and one hour in the afternoon for writing. Her students were resource students, and they were pulled out of their regular classroom at the times when their regular teachers would be teaching math, reading and writing. This worked out well because I was able to be in the classroom at various times of the day, and was able to help the students with the different assignments they were working on. Getting a glimpse of every aspect of my mentor teacher’s day really gave me a real perspective into what the day-in-the-life of a teacher is like. I realized how important it is for the teacher to be organized with lessons planned a day ahead at least if not more. I saw that grading papers immediately after the students turned in their tests or assignments was important not only for the teacher so she doesn’t get back logged, but also for the students benefit. It is important to show the students their errors, as well as how well they did on their work before moving onto a new subject.

I was very involved in helping the students practice their multiplication tables, as well as learn their new spelling words and vocabulary words for that week. Their teacher kept telling her students that studying, repetition and memorization of their multiplication tables was how they would learn them and remember them. I know as a future teacher that I need to set the
ground rules of the classroom from the first day of school, and those rules need to be visible in the classroom so the students can see them, and refer to them throughout the school year.

In working with special education and learning disabled students, I learned that students learn and work at a variety of different paces. I need to pace my classroom to fit all their levels and needs so no one is left behind. I saw the importance of meeting with parents periodically to update them on their child’s progress. I was able to attend a few parent teacher meetings, more specifically, two separate Individual Education Program (IEP) meetings where parents came in and met with the students regular teacher and the special education teacher so they could review the students program to make sure it was right for them, and to make sure they were improving, and on the right track.

I knew before my service learning experience how challenging becoming a teacher was going to be, but after my service learning experience I am more equipped with tips and resources to help me become a quality teacher. I also now know that patience is something that a teacher needs to have at all times, and that learning as much as possible about each student and their individual needs is a great way to help those students grow at their own individual pace.