2010 Experiential Education Award Statement: Amanda Muti

My senior year student teaching field placement entailed working directly with 28 multi-ethnic fifth grade students, many of whom were first-generation Americans and economically challenged at Hudson School in Union City, New Jersey. This experience required planning and facilitating lessons in social studies, language arts, science and mathematics. I also modified and accommodated lessons for classified and 504 students, as well as participated in parent-teacher conferences, attended weekly faculty meetings, and planned and implemented the Veteran’s Day School Assembly. This experience enabled me to recognize the abilities of my students and develop lessons that catered to their various learning levels.

Having had an active role in planning, directing, coordinating, and implementing the fifth grade Veteran’s Day Assembly, I learned how important it is to communicate effectively the tasks that must be accomplished in order for a project to succeed. As I organized the Assembly, I assigned the students tasks that included learning/singing patriotic songs and researching and finding pictures on various wars. The research and pictures were then transferred onto display boards and were also used to create poems, which were presented throughout the Assembly. The history of Veteran’s Day was conveyed through a skit that students put on for the audiences. My role also consisted of organizing five performances for the administration, faculty, students, and parents to attend. This helped me improve my time management skills since I had to plan around many schedules. As a culminating activity to the Assembly, I created various grade-level packets for the students of Hudson School.

Currently, I am also volunteering once a week to teach my fifth graders ballroom dancing. This has allowed me to continue to interact with my students while experiencing a variety of ethnicities through different forms of dance. I have been working closely with a representative from the New
Jersey Performing Arts Center to work on various dances (i.e. the waltz and foxtrot). When working on each of these dances, I act as a model to demonstrate the appropriate moves and techniques.

I believe a servant leader is a person who has the ability to shape minds and be a role model for others to follow. A servant leader is not via strict measure, but is a person who displays integrity, passion, competence, social consciousness, and is reflective upon their experiences. Through my student teaching placement and my other four field experiences, I have grown to become a servant leader, not just for my students but for others in my profession. I have recognized how teaching is not just a skill that comes naturally, but thrives on devotion and the need for knowledge. Each classroom experience has shown me what it means to be in a professional atmosphere where I am not just seen as a teacher, but as a role model that is passionate in what I teach. I have learned to be aware of my students’ various backgrounds and apply them into each day’s lessons. Every lesson may not go perfectly to plan; however, it is what I make of it and how I grow from that experience that counts. As a servant leader, I believe in creating a classroom atmosphere that is welcoming, nurturing, and enthusiastic, so that my students know that I am not only a teacher who cares, but also one who is preparing them for a continuous journey. Teaching for me does not end the moment I walk out of the classroom door at the end of the day, but extends into my community as well.

Upon finding a teaching position, I hope to return to graduate school to pursue my Masters in Administration and Supervision. By obtaining this degree I will be able to reach my ultimate career goal of becoming an elementary school principal. This goal has been shaped by the experiences I have encountered with each field placement. Each placement has exposed me to a variety of diverse backgrounds and learners. As a principal I would be able to take my passion for working in the education profession and work with an array of students and faculty who have the ability to shape the minds of the future.