

The two poems, “The Road Not Taken” and “Autobiography in Five Short Acts,” we were assigned to read hit home for me. Talking about different influences, things changing, learning from your past and not always following what’s laid out for you; it’s all something that I have dealt with before I found the BIS degree. I especially liked the ‘Five Short Acts,’ because in that poem the speaker goes over the same spot a few times before they realize what to do. They try different things till they get the outcome that they are looking for. My road to the BIS program is somewhat like that poem. I tried several times and ways to get into the program I want, but things kept changing and I have had to go the same route in different ways to get where I am. My goal is still the same, but my path has changed.

For the first part of my ‘influential’ academic career I was told that I wanted to be a lawyer. Not just any lawyer, no that would be easy. I had to be a corporate lawyer. As I was sitting and thinking about how to write this paper I realized that the one person who kept telling me this was never really in my life after I figured out what I really wanted to be. This person was supposed to have a great deal of influence on my life and I remember her always saying that things were rough trying to raise my dad, and she didn’t want me to be another ‘girl’ from our family...She wanted me to have what my parents couldn’t... every parents dream right?

However, I knew I wanted to be a teacher from the first time I babysat. I even became the youngest Sunday school teacher at my mom’s church to further my ‘studies’. I loved writing the lesson plans and decorating the classrooms. It’s also when I found out I didn’t want to be just any teacher, I wanted to be a high school English teacher. I wanted nothing to do with middle-schoolers, but decided that if I couldn’t make it as an English anything, which I will explain later, I would do preschool. I was prepared. I read up on what I needed to do and when I got into high school I started researching what I would need to do to become a teacher. I took extra

classes, and even joined an outside program where I was able to capture the full experience of being a preschool teacher. I received my daycare license while still in high school (as a backup plan), and started college classes my sophomore year in high school. I was even able to become an understudy to a professor and ended up teaching his classes for a semester. I loved it; I had everything laid out. I would graduate from high school with only two years left in college and then I would graduate with my degree and move to Georgia to start my career and get ready to settle down in a few years.

I had my ten year plan laid out and I was ready to go, head on. That's just not how things work though. After high school graduation I went and talked to the school district in the area to see about getting a job after I graduated; I missed the step of needing money to move 😊. However, after I got into our meeting I quickly learned that they thought I was too young and that I would most likely not get the respect that I would need to run a classroom. I would also be younger than some of the students that I would be teaching, which also didn't help my case. One school I went to substitute at assigned me a body guard so that if need be, he could keep the class in order. That hurt that they didn't think I would be capable of running a classroom. I still hadn't graduated yet, so instead of dealing with more situations like the previously mentioned, I decided that I would slow down and graduate a little later. Then I came to another fork in the road.

I married my high school sweetheart three years after we graduated, and he needed me to move to Kalamazoo with him so that he could finish his training and schooling. I agreed and then went and talked with some of the teachers I would be taking to go over what I would need to do being two hours away. They were willing to work with me when I moved to Kalamazoo. My last semester finally came and I was excited that I would only need to take my student teaching course. I was ready to finish, but was a little afraid of teaching in Kalamazoo. However, I signed

up for my class, called the school I was going to be working with, and started to prepare. Then I found out that the teacher that was willing to supervise me the previous semester was no longer willing to do so, and I was unable to finish my degree, so I was stuck. With the classes that I had taken there was only one thing that I could do; start all over. The one program that may have been able to work was shut down the previous semester; I had no idea what to do. By this time I was pretty discouraged. I became pregnant a couple weeks into that semester and was so sick I ended up needing to drop out for the next two semesters. When I was able to go back to school, my military husband, was stationed to Georgia, so I had to decide to either change colleges or do things online. If I switched schools to a closer one, I found that I would lose most of my credits. My mom helped a lot at this time and told me about the BIS program that she had just graduated from. After looking into it further I realized that it would be perfect for me. I would be able to finish all my classes online to complete the degree, and then when the time came I would be able to take that final teaching course. I was accepted into the program and now here I am.

It's funny after writing this paper, to look back and see all the paths I needed to take just to get where I am today. I'm still not a teacher, but I made it to Georgia and I have a beautiful family. My husband deploys next year, and though my path may change, right now the plan is to finish my teaching degree while he is away. However, like the '5 autobiographies' poem, I may have to try several times before I get to that path.