

older students. It did. By the time I left that position both I and the kids were crying. It was a very good experience."

Because she's been teaching for so many years, Hanson has seen cultural changes that impact her students. In most households, both parents work outside the home, which gives Hanson reason to believe that she needs to make every effort to make her students feel valuable and important.

"Even though parents work hard at nurturing their children, when they're working 40 hours a week their time is limited. To me that means it's more important than ever for me to help fill that gap," Hanson says. "I can be one more adult in that child's life that lets them know they're cared for and loved."

In addition to her students, Hanson makes an effort to connect with parents to let them know that she wants to give their children her very best every day.

"I rarely have a bad day, I just enjoy working with the kids so much," Hanson says. "I feel like all the kids are my own, and that's how I approach my job."

Hanson does appear to have a gift for making others feel at ease in her presence. She also has the ability to deeply touch the students in her care.

"When I taught choir, we took part in music competitions. When we got up on stage, I'd be standing with my back to the audience and I'd stick my tongue out to make the kids smile and relax," Hanson says. "I also told them, when they were competing, to sing from their heart because that was where the best music came from. One of those students has commented that they never forgot those instructions."

One of the moments Hanson will always remember is the compliment the principal of her hometown school gave her on her

teaching skills. He made it clear that hiring a hometown teacher wasn't always a wise move.

"He said hometown teachers were the hardest to hire and fire," Hanson remembers. "He wasn't certain I'd work out in the school, but when I left he told me I made it. I'm very proud of that."

Even though every day brings reward to Hanson, she's also found challenges in her work. She takes advantage of ongoing learning opportunities to ensure she has the best to offer students. Although she was reluctant to embrace emerging technologies at first, she has also found the value of using new education tools.

"Smart boards seemed like a foolish idea to me at first," she says. "One of my principals encouraged me to at least try a smart board and now I wouldn't be without it. We're one of the few preschools using the smart board. I still get excited about new education discoveries and am sometimes surprised at the simple changes that can make a big difference in a child's learning. I also learn a lot from my students. Some of them are a whiz on the iPad."

Although she has many years of teaching behind her, Hanson expects to continue teaching as long as she finds a need she can fill.

"I have so many friends who are wonderful teachers," Hanson says. "I think we all realize that showing our students we care is what makes it all work. I firmly believe God gave me the gift to teach. My sisters are teachers, my grandmother was a teacher and I will teach as long as I possibly can. My fondest hope is that my students remember me for being a good teacher."

■ by Loretta Sorensen

Every Child Should Have a Chance to Hear



Technology is everywhere. But I bet you didn't know that with advancements in technology, infants less than a day old can be screened for a hearing loss. Audiologists are using Early Hearing Detection and Intervention to detect hearing loss and fit infants with hearing aids. Through this early detection, infants are receiving the care they need to ensure proper speech and language development. If you or someone you know is about to give birth, make sure they have their infant screened. For more information, contact us.



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