UNH graduate in secondary science Taylor Langkau Planz has just been named a winner of the prestigious **Maitland P. Simmons Memorial Award for New Teachers** from the National Science Teachers Association (http://www.nsta.org/about/pressroom.aspx?id=60210). Taylor graduated in 2012 with a BA in Earth Science: Oceanography, then completed the Accelerated Masters program in Education and graduated in 2013 with a MAT in Secondary Education.

How UNH Faculty Helped Me

I received generous support from the Robert Noyce Scholarship Program my senior year of college and during my student teaching. If it weren't for the financial support that the Noyce program provided to me, I may not have been able to get a graduate degree in teaching.

I am extremely thankful for that opportunity and for the engaging professional development sessions I was fortunate to attend as a student at UNH. **Joe Onosko** was my ED500 professor my sophomore year of school, and he played a pivotal role in my decision to become a teacher. He listened to my uncertainties and helped me realize that my heart really was set on teaching. I am very thankful for his listening ear and supportive advice.

Tim Churchard helped me understand the emotional side of teaching. He also helped me form a more realistic view of teaching and the challenges educators face. I will never forget one of his group projects he assigned in his Human Development course. We were challenged to go out and learn something new and to document our experience. My group met up with a local beekeeper, and we learned the art of beekeeping. It was a wonderful learning experience, and the best part about it was that it was part of our grade!

Eleanor Abrams provided support and advice specifically focused on science teaching. In my career so far, I have worked with more male science teachers than female, so it was nice to gain her perspective as a female science teacher. She was someone that I looked up to and hoped to emulate. She helped "push" me into a leadership role through one of her assignments in Methods of Science Teaching. We worked in groups and taught a lesson to our Methods class. The lessons were based on instructional strategies, and we had to teach for about an hour if I remember correctly. It was the first time that i was in charge of planning an hour's worth of activities, and it was a challenge!

Finally, **Bruce Turnquist** was my supervisor at Deerfield Community School when I student taught. I couldn't have asked for a better supervisor! He organized helpful sessions with our intern group, and he helped me become more comfortable with watching video observations of myself. The supportive role he provided helped me thrive in my first experience as a full-time teacher.

My Work With Students

I'll keep this section shorter! My goal in science education is to spark students' curiosity. I know that if they are interested in something that they will naturally be more engaged. I try to relate everything we learn back to real life and my students' backgrounds.

I've been actively working toward using the 5E method to write my lessons. Some days we start a new topic by going outside and looking for it. For example, I taught an Ecology unit with my 6th graders this year and we started the unit by recording all of the signs of wildlife found in our school yard. I also started a new elective at my school this year called Reading Buddies.

I fund-raised enough money to buy 8 - 10 sets of various science trade books. This year, we went to 1st grade classrooms every week and taught the students science concepts by reading the books with them and practicing the new words found in the text. We taught students this year about the Weather, States of Matter, and, Seeds. Seeing middle school students connect with 1st grade students and teach them science was absolutely magical. Next year I am hoping to reach a wider variety of grades.