

Haiku

Smiles and kind words  
Can improve someone's whole day-  
And maybe the world

Spoken Word

My name is Breanna Maureen Ardella Stewart and the title of my NIA statement is The Girl Underneath It All. It took me most of my 19-year old life to realize how beautiful I really am. My appearance changes on a day to day basis. Sometimes my hair is curly, sometimes it is straight, sometimes it has pink or blue streaks in it. I wear so much eyeliner occasionally I have been told that I resemble a raccoon, and other times I only put on chapstick. My clothes vary, too. I'll wear anything from pajamas to sun dresses to all black and skulls. I suppose it is all a part of my artistic expression-along with my writings. There are a couple things that never really change about me, though. I wear my heart on my sleeve, and a smile on my face for as much of the time as I can. My morals are high and deep-setted. I most value knowledge, adventure, honesty, having an optimistic outlook, creativity, collaboration with others, strength, respect and courtesy for others, love, intimacy, and affection, parenthood and family, and personal drive and self-fulfillment. I have strength in my voice, love in my heart, knowledge in my mind, and a twinkle in my eye. And, those are the things that make me genuinely beautiful. All I want to do is change lives. Some of my professional role models are also part of the reason I want to become a teacher. I look up to Ron Clark because he encouraged his students' self-esteem and believed in them, and as a result, they began to think of themselves as intelligent and capable of anything. I admire Erin Gruwell because she improved the multiracial relationships among her students and she developed their abilities to create. She gave them the tools to write their story, express themselves, and be heard. I also hold Confucius in high regard because he believed in the good of people, encouraged his students to treat one another with kindness, and develop their own characters with morality. In my life, I want to do all of this for myself and others: family, friends, and students. My dream is to be an inspiration, or a bright part of someone's day, or the hope and faith that gets a person through a hard time. I have, and will continue to, live my life to be true to myself and to give back to others. If I can accomplish that, then I will consider myself happy and successful. I plan on doing this by being the best daughter, sister, friend, wife, mother, and teacher that I can be. And now I hope you've caught a glimpse of the girl I am underneath it all.

Educational Autobiography

A. Ecology and Standpoint

From the simple race-class-gender perspective on cultural identity, I am nothing special. I'm Caucasian, I'm from a middle-class background, (most likely I will pursue a career that will keep me in this socioeconomic status from the remainder of my life), and I'm female; see, mundane. However, using Dr. Evan's S.C.A.A.A.A.R.R.S. view of cultural identity, I suddenly transform

into someone interesting and colorful, with many different facets. I am a heterosexual female. I am a citizen of the United States, and although I have not ever gone hungry, my parents and I have always had to work hard to provide the things in my life. I have held good jobs and have attended good schools, despite growing up in a very poor neighborhood for younger part of my childhood. I am eighteen, nearly nineteen, a first year college student, and part of the “new generation”, as we like to refer to ourselves. I have no physical abilities whatsoever, unless of course you count being accident-prone and clumsy...but, I am a terrific learner. I thrive on new information, education, and books. At all schools I have attended, I had pretty terrific teachers and I always achieved highly, getting many different awards. I have weak religious and political ties, but very strong familial, community, and school ties. I was born and raised for most of my life in Ypsilanti, Michigan, and the remainder in Ocala, Florida. So, I suppose my relationship to land and geography is pretty diverse as I've been on opposite sides of a spectrum. I am a petite, blonde, blue-eyed, fair-skinned girl. My clothing style is so different depending on the day, even I have trouble keeping track. One day I could wear pajamas to school, the next a chic sundress, the next I could be decked out in all black. I suppose it is all a part of my artistic expression...along with my writings: poems and short stories. I also wear my heart on my sleeve and a smile for as much of the time as I can. I have deep-setted morals and values, and adhere to them as strongly and truly as I am able. I am white: non Hispanic (as marked on nearly every government and school document I have ever come across). However, I have a very rich ancestry as being part German, part Native American, part Italian. Puedo incluso hablar un pedacito de la lengua espanol (translation-I can even speak quite a bit of the Spanish language). I have a healthy body image (even though I pig out on sweets!) and a fairly reasonable amount of self-confidence.

## B. Questions, Values, and Philosophy

My top ten values, in increasing significance, are knowledge and expertise, adventure and excitement, honesty and ethics, optimistic outlook, creativity, cooperation and collaboration, strength, respect and courtesy for others, love, intimacy, and affection, parenthood and family, and personal drive and self-fulfillment. Adventure and excitement is important to me because it is where I get a lot of my inspiration from. Honesty and ethics are important because I always try to stay true to myself and what I believe in. I believe that it is important to have an optimistic outlook on the world because it helps me stay sane; there is always a silver lining-look for it! Creativity is really important to me because it is one thing that makes everybody unique and extraordinary; it helps people find the thing they are most passionate about. Cooperation is important because two eyes/hands are always better than one...everyone can benefit in numerous ways by working with others, and together we can accomplish great things. Strength of a character is a very significant value for me because I have worked my whole life trying to build up my courage, self-esteem, and confidence. It has helped me overcome a lot of adversities in my life, and I hope to help others do the same. Respect and courtesy for others is also a very great value in my opinion, and one that is often overlooked. I feel that we should all be kind and polite to each other, and that everyone has something to give back. Love is one of the most important parts of my life, as is family. I have always had a big, loving family around me; and currently I am engaged and am planning to have a family and become a mom. Lastly, the value I find to be most significant is personal drive and self-fulfillment. You have to respect, love, and help yourself, and be happy with who you are before you can ever expect to do the same for another human being. My educational beliefs are that great teachers can make a colossal impact

on their students' lives, they can teach a whole lot more than just a simple subject, and they can be the person that turns a child's life completely around...for the better. Based on the above values and philosophies, my main question about education concerns application and life implications: How can teachers relate school-work to things that interest youth and what is going on in their own lives? Because another of my opinions is that if teachers can do that, then they can really reach their students to make an impact on their learning, and developing characters.

### C. Academic and Professional Goals and Competence

Just by reading the last few sentences in the previous paragraph, it shouldn't come as a surprise that my major is Education, and that my professional goal is to become a teacher. I want to teach at low-income schools in inner-city neighborhoods, and positively influence the lives of "at-risk" children. Three of my professional role models (and part of my inspiration and reasons for choosing to become a teacher) are Ron Clark, Erin Gruwell, and Confucius. The first two teachers, Clark and Gruwell are somewhat similar in their teaching objectives. Both worked with inner-city students in an effort to improve their lives. Ron Clark worked with middle-schoolers and primarily encouraged them and built up their self-esteem so that they could start thinking of themselves as intelligent and pass standardized tests. Erin Gruwell taught high school students, but she focused a lot of attention on building and improving on their relationships with each other to stop racial violence among them. She also concentrated on developing their abilities to create, tell their story, and speak their voice and be heard.

Confucius, obviously, came from a completely different era than the previous two, but I still think he was a good teacher. He put great emphasis on personal morality, and believed in the good of people. He encouraged people to deal with one another with fairness and honesty, and

to build their own characters. I hope to take methods from each one of them and combine them with my own ideas when I work with my future students. Ultimately, I hope to encourage “at-risk” youth to develop effective ways of dealing with adversity, empower themselves, and have social mobility.

### Bibliography

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