



COE Bear Tracks



COE Bears Make an Impact and "Leave Our Mark"

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Joshua Tracy, 2015 Early Childhood Education Graduate

Joshua Tracy, a 2015 graduate of the Early Childhood Education program at Missouri State, was named one of five recipients for the Turner Award for Excellence in Teaching Reading in the Springfield Public School District. Mr. Tracy teaches first grade at Bingham Elementary in Springfield.

When Mr. Tracy was asked about his favorite literacy lesson, he responded:

“My favorite literacy lesson... that’s a difficult question. There are so many, I LOVE getting to read the Pigeon Series by Mo Willems. The student’s get a kick out of the funny voices I come up with. Another lesson that the kids and I both enjoyed was learning about non-fiction stories. Students were allowed to read about whatever animal they wanted but had to write at least two facts down that they read or heard about their animal. My students loved sharing their facts with each other and loved getting to teach me something about their animals. I think my favorite literacy lesson I teach is when a student comes to the teacher table and says they’re scared about reading or tells me that they can’t read. I have a few books that are fairly easy to read that I stash behind my table for just this moment. I get the book out and let them start reading it. When they get to the end, I make sure to point out the fact that they just read - so maybe they can read. I also let them know that I’m here to help them read better. That moment usually results in a big smile on their face or a hug. Seeing the confidence as they walk away and brag to their friends about how they just read a book by themselves is one of my favorite literacy moments.

Mr. Tracy’s “word of advice” is to “develop a sense of humor. This job is a lot of fun if you can find humor in the difficult situations. I would also add that my success with my students is by making sure I treat each day like a fresh start for everyone in my

classroom. By doing this, and making sure to be present in the moment when I'm with them, leads to us building meaningful relationships. Once I've established a trusting relationship with my students, that's when I can start teaching them. Students WON'T learn from teachers they don't trust or like."

Joshua Tracy is an example of one of our exemplary teachers. The ECE program faculty are proud to have been involved in his preparation. Congratulations on being recognized for this honor, Josh!

