

Semester Reflection

I. Introduction

This semester, I learned a lot about what it means to be an effective teacher. Through my standard 9 self-assessment and priority areas chart I could see the areas where I believe I am doing well, and areas where I believe there is still some work that needs to be done. I worked with two wonderful P-12 Clinical Educators and students who pushed me each day to be better. For the first 8 weeks of my clinical experience, I worked at ___ School in a 5th grade reading class. I had a very easy time bonding with the students and enjoyed teaching the content that they were learning. My P-12 Clinical Educator helped me through each day and gave me feedback on things that I was excelling at as well as things that I could improve on. For the second 8 weeks, I was at ___ School in a Kindergarten class. While I was worried about going from 5th grade all the way down to Kindergarten, the students and the teachers in the class made the transition very easy. I was welcomed into the classroom right away and enjoyed watching as the kids made amazing progress throughout the 8 weeks.

II. Interactions/Collaboration related to Diverse Students

During my time at ___, I had the opportunity to work with many diverse students. In my first 8 weeks at ___ School, I was interested to see how there are many students in the 5th grade who cannot read or write. This was something that I had never experienced before. These students needed a lot of extra attention and interventions to help them pass the 5th grade. Since these students could not read, I had to plan lessons that these students could understand and assessments that they could complete. Standard 2 is the teacher designs and plans instruction. In order to meet this standard, I designed lesson plans that were appropriate for all students in the classroom. I needed to make sure I could reach all of the students in the class. I had to make

sure I had an alternative plan, just in case there were students in the class who either did not understand the material, or students who needed something a bit more challenging. I created many of these differentiated lesson plans during my teacher work sample.

Something else I witnessed in the 5th grade were a lot of social problems. There were students who did not get along well with anyone else in the class, so it was important that those students received attention from the teachers. To meet standard 8 (collaborates with colleagues/parents/others), I worked with one student who needed some extra collaboration with a teacher. This student had problems in the classroom socially. When things did not go the way they wanted, they would shut down and refuse to do their work. If they were then redirected, there were times that they would leave the classroom and cry in the hallway. I worked with this student on some calming tricks. When they got upset, I would have them count to ten and then back down in their head until they calmed down. Another way they calmed down was by taking a 5-minute break in the hallway, I would only let them do this if they could do it quietly. In the artifacts section is my collaboration log that I filled out with examples of how the student would behave and things I did to turn it around.

In the Kindergarten class where I was placed, there were many diverse students as well. I was working with some students who had never been in school before, which was something that I had also never experienced. These students did not know how to behave in a class and some of them have a hard time completing tasks. For these students, it was important that I maintained a positive learning environment so that they would feel comfortable with what we were doing in class and they would enjoy school (Standard 3: the teacher creates and maintains learning climate). I made sure that the lesson plans that I created were fun and engaging. During my math lesson with the Kindergarten class, I had them play a game with a partner to learn math. This made the learning fun for the students and allowed them to understand the

concept in a way that was familiar to them (Standard 4: the teacher implements and manages instruction). To meet standard 1, the teacher demonstrates applied content knowledge, I designed and taught lessons for the students in the class. I would teach them in a way that all the students in the class, those who have and have not been to school, could understand and complete the lesson.

Another way I could reach the students who had trouble learning through paper and pencil was by incorporating technology in the classroom. (Standard 6: the teacher demonstrates the implantation of technology). During my TWS, I had a day where I did centers with the students. One of the centers was the iPad center. While they were on the iPads they were on a school program called Lexia. Lexia is a reading program where the students play games that relate to reading, phonics, and grammar. They move from level to level through their years in school. This allowed the students to have a fun way to incorporate reading into their day. I also would post the stories that I was reading on the board so the students could read along with me, or I would use the document camera to display the worksheet we were completing so the students could see an example. Working with diverse students this semester taught me a lot about who I am as a teacher and the steps I need to take in order to teach a class to reach everyone.

III. Impact on Student Learning

Through my Teacher Work Sample, I had the opportunity to assess my students often (Teacher Work Sample; Standard 5: the teacher assess and communicates learning results). Each day after I taught my lesson and assessed the students, I would look at the assessment data and decide what would be the best next steps to take the next day with the students. If the data was poor, I would start the next day with a refresher of what we learned about the day prior before I

moved on to the next lesson. Each day after I taught a lesson, I would fill out the post-observation reflection form to reflect on my lesson for the day. (Post-observation reflection; Standard 7; Reflects on and evaluates teaching and learning). After I reflected on my teaching, I could take the things that I needed to improve on and change them for my next lesson, and realize the things that were working and continue to use them throughout my teaching.

IV. Professional Collaboration and Co-teaching

During my 16 weeks of clinical experience I got the opportunity to co-teach in different ways with both of my P-12 Clinical Educators. In my first 8 weeks in 5th grade, we taught 3 groups of the same reading class. My P-12 Clinical Educator would teach the first group so I could see an example of how the lesson was intended to be taught, and then she would allow me to teach the other two classes. She would chime in when she felt it was appropriate, however most of the time she would allow me to take control of the class, make mistakes, and move forward to fix them. After each class, she would give me feedback on what I did right, and things that I could fix for next time.

In the Kindergarten class, co-teaching looked a little different. Since we had the same class all day long, I couldn't watch her teach a lesson once before I would teach the next one. My P-12 Clinical Educator would allow me to look over the lesson plans while she was teaching part of the lesson, and then she would turn it over to me. She would chime in when she felt appropriate, however, like my 5th grade teacher, she would allow me to take full reign of the class and give me feedback when the lesson was over. I felt that both ways of co-teaching were beneficial and helped me to become a better teacher.

For my leadership project, I had the opportunity to collaborate with my P-12 Clinical Educator and the other Kindergarten teachers in the building (Standard 10: Provides leadership

within school/community/profession). For my project, I volunteered at the family fun night at the Primary School. The night consisted of a Thanksgiving dinner for all families that came, and going around to all the classrooms for an activity. I planned the station that happened in our classroom. I knew I had to do a math activity and that it had to do with making 10s because that was what we were learning in class. I worked with my P-12 Clinical Educator and the other Kindergarten teachers to make sure my activity would line up with the standard and that it would work as a game to send home with the students. Taking this small position of leadership in the school was very rewarding and I was happy I had the opportunity.

V. Conclusion

Overall, my 16 weeks of clinical experience were amazing. I had wonderful P-12 clinical educators, students, and administration that I had the opportunity to work with. I learned a lot about myself as a teacher and how I would like to run my classroom in the future. Through working in both ends of the spectrum in regards to the grades I will be able to teach, I learned which grades I think I would enjoy teaching in the future. I enjoyed my time in ___ and feel that working with the diverse group of students that I had helped teach me valuable lessons every day about how school is important for these children and how one good teacher can change a life.