Final Reflection

Through my field experience in a 6th grade classroom at ____ School, I have grown significantly in my professional development, impact on student learning, and interactions with students. This semester, I showed sufficient evidence of Kentucky Teacher Standards, taught a variety of lessons, and collaborated with classroom teachers, co-teachers, and diverse middle grades students. I have grown more this semester more than any educational experience I have had thus far.

Professional Growth as Teacher Candidate and Impact of Instruction on Student Learning

In my method's courses, I learned pedagogy and strategies that I will one day use in my own classroom. In Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum, I designed a demonstration lesson for pre-service teachers and middle grades students for a during-reading strategy called text-on-text annotation. As shown in my demo lesson artifact, I created an activity in which the students monitored their reading by combining pieces of annotation, sketching through a text, written discussion, and a gallery walk to create meaning through reading. The instructional strategy I taught involved higher order thinking because students were required to comprehend the text, write their opinions/feelings/responses, and then respond to others without discussing the content out-loud (KTS 2.5). By teaching this strategy, I contributed to a literate environment by facilitating higher-order thinking through written and oral discussion, so that they comprehended the material on multiple levels.

Also in my Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum Class, I had the opportunity to create a Literacy Action Plan. In the plan, I not only discuss my plans for a literate environment,

but I also plan a safe environment for learning (3.5), which is backed research and theory. There is evidence for this in the physical layout of my classroom within my LAP. In the layout, I show whiteboard space for students to reach and work together, designated places for students to gather away from their desks, group work tables, makerspace, supplies within student reach, comfortable throw pillows and flexible seating, a classroom library that is culturally competent, and ample access to technology. These choices are developmentally responsive to student needs and display my ability to provide an emotionally and physically safe environment for students. In the same LAP document, there is evidence of my ability to describe, analyze, and evaluate student performance data (5.4). I was given student Vocabulary and Informational Text MAP scores. I used this data to create a histogram to analyze trends, themes, and gaps in the data. I then used student performance (below, at, or above grade level) to decide on instructional strategies that would best fit the class. Furthermore, in the LAP, I also analyzed STAR Reading scores of my own students. I used this data (Novice, Apprentice, Proficient, and Distinguished) to best fill achievement gaps in my three observed lessons.

In my Fundamentals of Middle Grades Education class, I was given collaborated with my colleagues in a Multidisciplinary Unit Plan. In this plan, I worked in a group of teachers from social studies, math, and language arts content areas, which shows my ability to design a plan to enhance student learning that includes all parties in the collaborative effort (8.2) and implement planned activities that enhance student learning and engage all parties (8.3). There is proof of this in the Multidisciplinary artifact. In the artifact, our goal was to create a unit revolving around the theme of "culture." In the unit, we engage all parties (students, teachers, families of students, and the community) by using service-learning, field trips, funds of knowledge from families, and cultural celebrations to teach the theme. In addition to shared activities with other content areas, I

also created my own five-day social studies lesson plan that connected to state standards and other content areas (2.1).

In my Inclusive Middle Grades Classroom class, I used data to reflect on and evaluate instructional practice (7.2) for my Lesson Adaptation assignment, which is in my artifacts. In this assignment, I evaluated my own instructional practices based on two student's present levels of academic performance and yearly goals on their IEPs (data located in artifacts). I analyzed how accessible my lesson was to both students and made changes to my lesson based on that accessibility. For example, when data showed that a student struggled with communication status, I changed my lesson so that the student would not have to communicate with others for the entire class period, but still communicated with others enough to work toward his yearly goal. Also, in my EDS class, I had the opportunity to co-teach a student-choice strategy with one of my colleagues (Evidence in Co-Teaching and UDL artifact). We designed a plan that valued and supported diversity and addressed individual needs (3.3) by using Universal Design for Learning- Visual, Auditory, Read/Write, and Kinesthetic activities in our lesson to our colleagues. We also rationalized every single decision we made regarding how to best reach our students. For example, we chose team-teaching instead of parallel teaching or other forms of co-teaching. In our co-teaching lesson, we showed clear knowledge of the needs of all learners as well as their individual needs. Also in this class, I demonstrated my ability to design a plan to enhance student learning that includes all parties in the collaborative effort (8.2) by creating an parent IEP Meeting Handbook (evidence in artifacts). In this handbook, I use parent-friendly language to help with the IEP process and help parents to understand their rights. By including parents in the IEP process, student learning is enhanced when all parties collaborate in decision making.

Over the course of the semester, I taught many lessons that my cooperating teacher planned, but I also planned three observed lessons. To effectively teach lessons above, I spent significant time planning and aligning objectives to state standards. For my first lesson, which was aligned to 6th Grade Kentucky Language Arts Standards W.6.4, W.6.2b, and L.6.3b, I created the learning objectives: "Students will be able to use conventions to identify informal writing" and "Students will be able to produce formal writing that is consistent, appropriate, and purposeful" (2.1 and Lesson Plan 1 Artifact). To effectively plan for my observed lessons, I considered the context of the students I was teaching (2.2 and Lesson Plan Artifacts). For example, one lesson was taught to a class with a context of racial, ethnic, and SES diversity. The class also contained 7 ELLs and 3 students with IEPs. Another class included 2 students with IEPs and 7 gifted students. Although the context between different periods of observed classes were different in terms of whether the class was "advanced" or "inclusive," I knew that my students needed material that was relevant to them. Therefore, my instructional strategies and activities addressed standards for all students (2.4). This can be seen in my use of Universal Design for Learning (Lesson Plan 1 Artifact) throughout lessons. In my lesson plan artifacts, it is obvious that I make it a point to consistently meet the needs of exceptional learners through proactive strategies in representation of material that aid general learners as well.

In my observed lessons, I maintained a positive learning climate by showing awareness of student behavior (3.2). There is evidence for this in my Professional Growth Artifact that contains a video of me correctively addressing reluctance of two students who refused to participate in group work. In the video, I respectfully responded to the needs of students and got them back on task so that they acquired the content. My ability to teach students content relies heavily on my ability to use time effectively (4.3) and facilitate higher order thinking (4.5). There is evidence for

this in the detailed lesson outlines within my Lesson Plan 1, 2, and 3 artifacts. Specifically, in Lesson Plan 1, I even planned my lesson minute-by-minute to ensure that students receive an even balance of direct instruction through "I do/We do" tasks with an opportunity demonstrate their own knowledge in student-centered activities.

One way I appealed to student interests in my lessons was through technology. One lesson I planned (Less Plan 2 artifact) allowed students to use google classroom documents as a formative assessment for creating conclusion paragraphs. Another way I engaged students was by modeling the use of my own cell phone as a learning tool (6.1 and 6.2, Lesson plan 1 Artifact). Furthermore, I used formative assessments throughout the lessons to determine progress of individuals and identify differences in progress among student groups (5.2 and 5.4, Lesson Plan 1 Artifact). For example, in Lesson Plan 1, when students wrote on poster boards, I used their work to quickly formatively assessed their work to inform my facilitation of the end-of-class discussion.

While I do have content knowledge myself, it is imperative to connect that content to the life experiences of students. When planning lessons this semester, it was a goal of mine to keep content relevant to students. The way that I did this was by connecting to student schema to make content procedures relevant to the life experiences of students (1.2). There is evidence for this in the Lesson Plan 1 Artifact. In the student Springboard book, the formal writing example was an excerpt from a Thomas Jefferson letter. I did not want to teach formal writing using this excerpt because I knew students would not be interested. Instead, I used celebrity tweets and allowed students to make corrections to the tweets. Students were more involved than if I would have used irrelevant materials to teach the concept of formal writing.

I effectively connected to the life experiences of the students and demonstrated an instructional strategy that was appropriate for content and contributed to student learning (1.3). This is clear in my Lesson Plan 2 Artifact that deals with the topic of effective conclusions. To introduce the topic of conclusions for the learning objective "students will be able to write an effective conclusion," I told them a story to launch my lesson. I told the students that I woke up in the middle of the night the previous night to tapping and scratching sounds. I theatrically acted out how I creeped down the stairs to find a raccoon that had broken into my food. Once I got to the exciting part of my story, I immediately stopped and started giving students directions. They begged me to finish the story. I responded by asking them how they think it feels when their audience members read their paper and there is not an effective conclusion. My instructional strategy of using a story for a launch helped the students grasp the importance of writing an effective conclusion.

One of the most beneficial assignments I have had at Northern Kentucky University so far was my Professional Growth Presentation (evidence in Professional Growth artifact). In the growth assignment, I watched videos of myself teaching and analyzed priority areas of growth based on self-assesmment and student performance (9.2). Within this same presentation, I show video that demonstrates specific evidence of professional growth and my professional reflection on how I grew along with how my growth impacted student learning (9.4). In addition to creating my own plans for growth, I also discussed with my peers my strengths, weaknesses, and main areas in which I want to grow. For example, I identified that I want to create more student-centered activities, consistently use clear and measurable verbs in my objectives, and plan objectives/standards and assessment before creating classroom activities. I also talked about how over the course of the semester, I grew in my ability to adapt Springboard lessons, think-aloud,

model concepts, interact with students, and facilitate literate discussion. My peers pointed out instructional strategies I already do that are effective and gave me feedback on how to achieve my goals for the future.

Cumulative Progress

In my KFETS time long, it is obvious that I worked with a diverse range of students. Students were diverse in various respects: SES (free and reduced lunch), exceptionalities (disabilities and giftedness), ELL, and racial/ethnic diversity. Specifically, I worked one-one-one in tutoring with a student who has autism. By working with him one-on-one, I could see his strengths to help him develop visual cues on his flashcards. Working with this student one-on-one allowed me reach him in ways that I never could have in a large group. I also worked with students who were gifted in both language arts. To help build on their skills, I gave them opportunities to be leaders and prompted them with high-order questioning throughout my lessons. For my students with specific learning disabilities and a student whose learning disability was paired with significant vision impairments, I provided many supports. Some supports were proactive through universal design for learning, but I also worked one-on-one with students scribing and making font bigger. In addition, for my students with racial and ethnic diversity, I worked with black or African American students, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, and students with two or more races. With these students, I allowed their cultural experiences to carry into the classroom. We talked about family structure and values. I also allowed students to share their own experiences through examples and discussion in class. Specifically, I connected with these students on the topic of literature. When picking out books in the library and/or during

the book fair, I helped students find books that reflect their reality because it is very important for students to see pieces of themselves in the content they are reading.

Many of my students (including 7 just in one class period) are English Language Learners. ___ has students from over 30 countries, which means that students speak various languages. Mostly, the students in my classroom spoke Spanish as a primary language. Although these students are now in their "monitoring" phase of learning English, they still needed supports speaking English. I mostly noticed their need for assistance in vocabulary acquisition and when they developed syntax in their writing pieces. To assist these students English Language Learners, I modeled dictionary and thesaurus skills, clarified my diction, engaged in think-alouds, gave strong visuals, and provided frame-sentences.

During my intensive weeks at ____, I had the opportunity to fully immerse myself into the school community as well as into the professional learning communities of the teachers. My classroom teacher involved me in her professional learning community with another 6th grade language arts teacher. In these meetings, I made suggestions for activities as they aligned to standards. I was included in conversation about assessment that influenced lesson plans, ties to objectives and learning goals, and the planning of materials and classroom resources. I also experienced grade level PLCs that allowed teachers to discuss common concerns, settle disagreements, and make plans to create an interdisciplinary unit.

Much to my surprise, I interacted with the family of a student when I was invited to attend a 504-plan meeting in which a student's grandmother attended. In the meeting, I greeted and introduced myself to the grandmother and she talked through concerns for her grandson. She confided in us about family struggles as well as her goals and suggested supports for her grandson. Between the family contribution, my classroom teacher's suggestions, and the Vice

Principal's implementation of supports, I experienced a true model of what it means to collaborate with families to do what is best for the child.

My experience at ___ was transformative, to say the least. I learned more about pedagogy that ever thought possible, met a variety of Kentucky Teacher Standards, worked with a diverse range of students, and moved forward on my cumulative progress by student tutoring, participating in a PLC, and interacting with families. I am excited to see what my next field experience will hold.

Kentucky Teacher Standards

1.2 Connects content to life experiences of students

1.3 Demonstrates instructional strategies that are appropriate for content and contribute to student learning

2.1 Develops significant objectives aligned with standards

2.2 Uses contextual data to design instruction relevant to students

2.4 Plans instructional strategies and activities that address learning objectives for all students

2.5 Plans instructional strategies and activities that facilitate multiple levels of learning

3.2 Establishes a positive learning environment

3.3 Values and supports student diversity and addresses individual needs

3.5 Provides a safe environment for learning

4.3 Uses time effectively

4.5 Implements and manages instruction in ways that facilitate higher order thinking

5.2 Uses formative assessments

5.4 Describes, analyzes, and evaluates student performance data

6.1 Uses available technology to design and plan instruction

6.2 Uses available technology to implement instruction that facilitates student learning

7.2 Uses data to reflect on and evaluate instructional practice

8.2 Designs a plan to enhance student learning that includes all parties in the collaborative

effort

8.3 Implements planned activities that enhance student learning and engage all parties

9.2 Identifies priorities for professional development based on data from self-assessment,

student performance, and feedback from colleagues

9.4 Shows evidence of professional growth and reflection on the identified priority areas and

impact on instructional effectiveness and student learning