

Practicum Day One Journal

Overall, I thought today went extremely well for the first day of practicum. It was interesting thinking about the differences between my first day of block one in comparison to today in block one. I felt a lot more confident and purposeful in my actions- I wasn't afraid to stand for myself if students were misbehaving, and I felt very comfortable talking to the staff surrounding Centennial Elementary School.

The highlight of my day was getting to witness a student teacher conference at the end of the school day. It was really neat getting to see my cooperating teacher speak to the student and her parent about the progression of reading and math MAP tests, and see how the student's face lit up when my cooperating teacher showed pride in the student's progression. It was a little reminder that although the days of teaching may be quite long at times, it is all worth it in the long run.

Today I taught my reading lesson as well as my math lesson. I really enjoyed creating the lesson plan for reading as I thought it would be relatable to the students. My opener involved the students talking to one another about their weekend, and then some students shared what their partner said- this was to spark up the lesson on summarization. I thought it would have gone better, however I think that the passages that I chose for group work for difficult for the students to endure. I think this mainly has to do with the fact that I'm still getting to know what the students are capable and incapable of doing. It was just a healthy reminder that you always have to be thinking about the highest and lowest learner in the classroom.

The lesson plan that I had been the most nervous about was my math lesson plan, and it ended up going the best today. The students in the classroom stayed interested enough through the whole lesson, which ended up being about 50 minutes. They were well behaved and on task. I think it is nice that with math, there is always an obligated amount of interaction, and this makes it a little easier. After completing the lesson, I spoke with my cooperating teacher and he thought that the lesson went very well. It is always nice getting words for improvement, and he suggested that I always commend and reward students for their work- it shows them that what they are doing has meaning and purpose. This was a great reminder for not just math lessons, but all lessons that I will teach.

Overall, the day went very well, and I am nervous to teach science on Wednesday, but am also looking forward to the challenge.

Reflection Two – Practicum Week One-

The style of classroom management that my cooperating uses is a non-tolerant kind, which is exactly what this particular class as well as most fourth graders need. For example, if students are speaking out of turn or not listening to directions in a prompt manner, Mr. Larson will tell the students, in a voice they know means that they should not be participating in the behavior, to stop inappropriate behavior immediately. To refute, before any of this classroom management good begin, Mr. Larson said he to build a good relationship and rapport with the students so that there was a lot of trust and a level of respect. I think if students hadn't done this, they would have felt like Mr. Larson or whoever

enters the classroom to teach would just be there to discipline. Although it is significant to set the stage right away, it is also equally important to build a relationship with students beforehand.

The techniques that Mr. Larson uses are simple, but extremely effective. One of which is using a firm voice and making direct eye contact with the student that is misbehaving. This really gets the students attention and helps them know that the teacher is also respecting them by giving them direct eye contact. Another technique that Mr. Larson uses is the silent stare. Silence helps the students know that Mr. Larson is waiting and is also directing the issue on a specific student or behavior of that student.

My favorite reinforcement classroom management technique that Mr. Larson is encouraging good behavior when he sees it. If a student is sitting nicely at his or her desk, Mr. Larson will say "Thank you, name" - this gets other students in the classroom thinking about their own behavior and helps to make changes to behavior that is unfit.

I think of the techniques mentioned, I will take with me the silence technique, as I have used this before this practicum block as well as during it and know that students react well to it. I also think that silence is extremely powerful and can say a lot about how someone is feeling. Another technique that I will take with me is the positive reinforcement of good behavior. I think students are so influence by their peers, and by honoring and awarding students that are acting and behaving respectfully.

Overall, I have really enjoyed seeing Mr. Larson in action in regard to his classroom management techniques, as I know it has helped me become more confident in projecting that management in my own teaching.

Practicum Journal Day Three

My favorite artifact that I've collected so far is the math weekly worksheet each student receives on Mondays. This sheet has a variety of math problems that range in difficulty. Students are expected to have this sheet done and handed in each Friday. One of the main topics that the math weekly covers this week is on fractions. I really like how some of the problems are worded, as it really makes the students think about what they're doing.

One of the aspects that I love the most about this artifact is that it is an activity the students can work on when they are finished with an activity or are working faster than students- it definitely keeps them from boredom and keeps them on task and not distracting those around them.

Another aspect that I like about the math weeklys is that they have pictures, which for some of the story problems is extremely helpful.

I will use this in my classroom as a weekly regime as well. I like that it is consistent and something the students can count on an easily pull out and work on. I will go over it on Fridays and go over the problems to check student's understanding and work.

Overall, I think that the math weekly worksheet is my favorite artifact thus far. I think it helps students review prior knowledge as well as expand that prior knowledge to something on a larger scale.

Practicum Journal Day Four

One thing that I have been grateful for in this past year is having clarity on which career path I want to take. For the longest time, because I am a double major, I was under the impression that I would either be a school counselor. This really changed my mindset and questioned my ideas on teaching. I knew and know that I have a brain that sometimes gets unorganized or too creative in thought, and I thought that because of this, I would never be a good teacher. However, I always noticed in my psychology classes that I was always leading discussion, trying to organize thoughts and main ideas, and thinking about how I would apply the information I was applying to the classroom, rather than in psychology as a future counselor.

Nothing, and I mean nothing (besides adorable babies) excites me more than creating and writing a new lesson plan, and figuring out ways to improve it after teaching it. Constantly, I am applying things that I am doing or using and trying to implement them into a lesson plan.

Though the teaching days can be extremely long and exhausting, there is no place I would rather be Monday through Friday than teaching in the classroom. I know that this is what God has called me to do, and although it will be challenging more than a few times, I am very willing and excited to bring on the challenges and joy of the teaching world.

Journal Five Reflection

I had my PLC on Thursday, and it really opened my eyes up to how hard teachers work to keep kids on track. Some of the PLC was unproductive, as it always is difficult to get a meeting started and dig right into things. However, Centennial has a meeting leader, who really helped in guiding the discussion of the meeting.

The meeting was primarily the teacher's middle of the year check up on student's reading and math scores. Each grade has a 3-D display poster of students that are at risk, could be at risk, and on track. It was interesting to see how my teacher's class and cohort got split up compared to Mrs. Dietrich and Mrs. Churchill's class. Mr. Larson had a very strange placement year, as he has about 85% of his learners on task. The other fourth grade teachers as well as Mr. Larson were very frustrated on how the students were placed from third to fourth grade, as Mr. Larson should have a more mixed learning class.

I can understand why it is important to have a mixed classroom- it gives each student a different role or task in the class. For the lower learners, it would be their goal to try and improve to keep up with the rest of the class. For the middle learners, it would be their goal to try to be up to the point of the top learners of the class. Lastly, for the upper learners, their goal would be able to know information well enough to lead other students that may be struggling, as well as try to challenge themselves to learn more.

At the end of the meeting, teachers went over their curriculum plans for the next two months and tried to figure out which units they needed to complete before math and reading testing. The determination in trying to figure out dates and deadlines for units was really amazing to see.

One thing that stuck out was the teacher's frustration with some of the students- of course it is much easier to make light of these situations, but I just found it amusing that teachers need to vent out just as much as anyone.

I really enjoyed this PLC meeting, and look forward to going to PLC meetings in the future.