

Part One Theme: The Learner and Learning - Candidates demonstrate the ability to thoughtfully describe, critically analyze, and insightfully reflect upon their readiness (to use an understanding of learning theory, learner development, and learner differences) for the design of effective learning experiences in a variety of settings with diverse learners.

Standard 3: Learning Environments – The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self motivation.

Performance Criteria 3.2: Candidates design learning environments that support collaborative learning marked by positive social interaction.

Describe

The theme of Learner and Learning is Part I of our portfolio for licensure for education in the state of Vermont. In order to prove that I am able to demonstrate the three standards included in Part I of the portfolio, including learner development, learning differences, and learning environments, I have provided examples of my learning so far which exemplify how I have completed each standard in Part I of the Learner and Learning. Below I demonstrate how I have completed standard 3, Learning Environments, using Performance Criteria 3.2 through a mini back to back lesson performance in my curriculum and literacy courses. Being able to demonstrate Performance Criteria 3.2 is extremely important because it shows how I am able to design an effective learning experience for students that is positive and encouraging.

Performance Criteria 3.2 allows me to demonstrate how I can design lessons that promote collaborative learning with social interaction and engagement among classmates.. This is a very important aspect of a healthy classroom environment and by making sure I am exemplifying this in my own classroom, through my lesson plans and teaching strategies, ensures that students are having a positive interaction with their classmates and myself as their teacher.

Analyze

I was able to demonstrate Performance Criteria 3.2 through my [mini back-to-back lessons](#). The first section of my mini lessons is based on citing and analyzing sources about John F Kennedy's assassination. At the beginning of this lesson, students are introduced to the upcoming assignment and are instructed to move into their groups, which they have been working with throughout their [unit](#) on John F Kennedy. In their groups, they are tasked with looking over the sources they found from the previous class to make sure they are credible and then are tasked with citing the sources using Chicago Style citations. As students are working in their groups, I made sure to make myself available to questions and guidance. When students completed the task, they were advised to meet with me so I could make sure they completed their citations correctly. I was able to design a learning environment that was not only collaborative between students, but also with myself. By making myself available to all students directly and indirectly, I was also able to have a positive classroom environment through our interactions.

One aspect of this mini lesson in particular that I noticed was that students were actively engaged throughout the entire lesson, with their partners and with me as their teacher. If students are not engaged, the lesson can be forgotten and not effective towards students learning. According to Katrina Schwartz (2016) there are eight different qualities that indicate if students are engaged or not in a lesson, including making sure the expectations are clear through explicit instructions, making sure there was a clear social interaction between each student and teacher during work time and during conference time, and allowing for student choice by giving students an option as to which source they wanted to complete for the lesson. I made sure to include these three aspects into my lesson in order for students to be as engaged as possible. I was also able to notice that students were engaged based on the work that was produced at the end of and through the assessment results. Tomlinson and McTighe (2006) describe the principles of effective assessments and how we can use these tools to ensure we are giving assessments and assignments which are most effective towards students' learning. They state, "All types of learning, whether on the practice field or in the classroom, require feedback. Ironically, the high-quality feedback systems necessary to enhance learning are limited in our schools, as least in academic classrooms" (Tomlinson and McTighe, 2006, p.77). By allowing my students to know that I was going to give them feedback, which would help them fix or continue on with their work, I believe I was able to create an environment where students wanted to do well. Students knew they had support and wanted to prove their abilities through their work.

In order to show how I was able to engage students, I have attached evidence I received after teaching my lesson, which shows that I was able to create an engaging environment and was clear throughout the students' work. I have also attached the images of me teaching my students and their quizzes, which was the second half of my mini lessons. Their quizzes show how they were able to effectively learn what was taught in this first half of the mini lessons.

After completing my mini lesson and reflecting on Performance Criteria 3.2, literature, and my salient evidence, I believe I was able to achieve what the Performance Criteria asked me to complete as an educator who is studying for their licensure in Vermont. I demonstrated my learning with my back-to-back mini lesson. Based on the evidence presented and the references to literature that I have studied, I was able to show how I promoted a learning environment that supported collaborative learning marked by positive social interaction.

My most successful achievement with this Performance Criteria was the piece linked directly to the collaborative learning aspect. By having my students do their work in groups, they were not only collaborating with each other, but were also collaborating with me in order to make sure their work was completed on time and done correctly. When I look at the results from the quizzes from the second half of the mini lesson, which were used to assess their learning from the first mini lesson, they proved to me that the content taught in the first mini lesson was valuable and understood.

Although I feel like I was able to complete the Performance Criteria efficiently, I still know that I can work on improving my classroom in various different ways in order to better suit the PC and my students. One area where I feel I might be able to improve on for the next time is making sure the environment was positive for everyone. At the end of the lesson, I made sure to ask everyone if they felt they were engaged and were able to get a good understanding of what was going on, but I can do more to make sure everyone feels comfortable expressing their feelings about the class. In order to do this, I am going to be adding an exit slip to the end of the

lesson with questions regarding the learning environment and how engaged they thought they were throughout the lesson.

This way, students do not have to announce their feelings to the whole class, they can write them down and only I will be able to see their responses. At the moment, this seems like the best way to examine students' learning for this specific assignment, but I wonder what else I can do to make this a safe, positive learning environment where every student feels they can express their emotions freely. Should I make the exit slip anonymous? Should I make it electronic so I do not see their handwriting? These are some of the ideas I will question as I continue to learn how to be a successful educator. I hope that as I continue teaching my own lesson plans, I continue to see what I did well on and what I can still improve upon in order to improve my own teaching strategies and the environment of my own classroom.

Reflect

Overall, this specific experience helped me examine specific incidents and points of learning related to Part I of my portfolio, The Learner and Learning. While teaching my lesson, I noticed how much a classroom dynamic can change when students are working together in order to complete an assignment or project. They instantly felt more supported and were engaged in what they were doing. This struck me because I know that some students like working individually and some like working in groups, but for this particular lesson, students were helping each other figure out questions and were still doing individual work while in their groups.

Another thing I noticed was the classes panic when I announced there would be a quiz next class on what they learned in class today to solidify what they learned. Most students explained how they were extremely worried about how they would do on the quiz, even though they were doing amazing in class, especially after I gave them feedback on their group work. I learned about quiz anxiety and how this can seriously affect students' critical learning and mindsets for the rest of the class time.

I myself have test anxiety, but I have learned to accept it because many teachers did not know how to adjust for students with this problem. I immediately was taken aback by the response of the students and knew that even though my own teachers did not do anything about my test anxiety, I was going to do something for them. That night I sent out an email with a shortened study guide and also added a word bank to the bottom on the quiz. By doing this, many students confirmed that their anxiety was reduced because they felt more confident with their testing abilities after revisions were made.

This was especially important because it allowed a more positive environment for a diverse set of learners who were concerned about their quiz grades. Another section of the lesson which challenged my teaching strategies was time management. Although I made sure to get everything in that I wanted to teach, I found myself scrambling around to make sure I could include everything in one class time.

Before this lesson, I thought I had good time management skills, but after this lesson, I realized that anything can happen during a lesson, like tech issues, questions being asked, and the need for further explanation. I now make sure to add in extra time for instances which may be off track from my lesson plan. In order to design an effective learning experience in the classroom for all students, I make sure their questions are answered and that they understand exactly what is going on in class that day.

In the end, in order for me to be the best educator I can be, I need to continue to listen to my students. They are the ones receiving the lessons and are the ones who need to be doing the learning, therefore they are the ones who will tell you if they feel their time in the classroom has been valuable to them or not. In order to make sure I am promoting a classroom with student choice and voice, I will make sure to view how my classmates do this in their own lessons and also see how my own professors incorporate this in their courses. This will allow me to see what works and what does not work as I continue my education at Saint Michael's College.

ED 361 Analysis and Reflection

While teaching the two back to back mini lessons, I began to become extremely comfortable with speaking and teaching content in front of the small class I had. When I first started teaching lessons this semester for literacy, I was very nervous and stressed, knowing that I did not want to mess up because this was going to be my profession one day. As I kept making and giving lessons in our classes and in my school placement, I understood that mistakes will be made and your colleagues and friends will help you fix them along the way. Having this knowledge in the back of my mind made me more confident in my ability to not be nervous while presenting my lessons and has also helped me with public speaking in my other courses as well. For this, I am grateful because this was one of my biggest concerns about going into a classroom. Now, I am able to teach an entire classroom of sixth graders by myself, as the cooperating teacher watches.

My assessments from Day I and Day II demonstrate that students were able to learn the content and were confident in what they learned during the two class periods in relations to the standards/objectives that were put in place for both mini lessons. The standard I was looking to complete was, "Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources, the types of sources available, and the potential uses of the sources". At the end of Day I, students were required to cite one of their sources that they had found the previous class and also make sure that the source was credible. After students worked in groups to complete this process, they were required to conference with me to discuss their results. During our meeting, students explained why they thought the source was credible and how they were able to cite the source in Chicago Style. They also knew to cite these sources because they deemed that the source would be helpful towards their final performance assessment at the end of their unit. For Day II, students took a small quiz to reaffirm their knowledge on how to find a credible source. All students were able to get a 90% or higher on the quiz. This assessment allowed me to see that students were able to find and determine sources which are credible and resourceful for their future performance assessments.

In terms of standards, one thing that I did to modify my lesson for Day I and Day II was to revise my checklist that I gave at the end of day one to make it more accessible to those students who needed more assistance on the quiz. I wanted to make sure that all students were being assessed fairly and as I spoke about above, many students have quiz anxiety and were simply thrown off at the fact they would be quizzed on material they mastered the day before. The night of Day I I sent out an email with a modified checklist and added a work bank to the bottom of one portion of the quiz. Students were thankful that these accommodations were made because they not only benefited the students but also helped me see how they were completing

the standard efficiently, since the quiz anxiety was pushed to the side with these accommodations.

The lessons I will complete to create the 5 full lessons for the final unit project will be a combination of this mini lesson, my differentiation lesson, my vocabulary lesson, an intro lesson about the performance assessment, and an added research day/ project work day lesson. All five of these lessons will be spread out evenly throughout my unit, leaving the vocabulary lesson to be one of the first and the research lessons to be toward the end.

The instruction and teaching practice in both the literacy course and the curriculum course helped me transfer my learning into these mini-lessons because I was able to prepare a lesson which aligned well with my standards, performance assessment, and overall unit through peer feedback and feedback from both professors. Without the necessary feedback on my mini lessons, I would have made some major mistakes that needed to be fixed before presenting it to an actual classroom setting. After my lesson was reviewed, I was able to go back and fix those mistakes which otherwise might have been disastrous. My learning also assisted my progress of my mini lessons because I had the knowledge to create and prepare a lesson plan, prior to this bigger project. I knew what had to be put in each section of the lesson plan before starting my mini lessons so I was able to make my lesson efficiently and still get peer and professional feedback.

Overall, teaching these mini lessons was a chance for me to explore my own comfort zone. It was also a chance for me to practice my public speaking skills. I am now confident to speak and present in front of my peers knowing I know what I am talking about. I look forward to continue practicing our lessons in and outside of class in our school placements and also look forward to learning more about how I can best align my standards with my lesson plans to make them as efficient as possible for my students.

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Description	The description employs insufficient details of the context and/or demonstrates misinterpretation of the Theme.	The description demonstrates the candidate's ability to recall the context and discuss the Theme .	The description demonstrates the candidate's ability to depict the context in which the evidence was collected and to illuminate the Theme.
Comments: Sophie - You just need to clarify your writing and add a bit to make all of this clear. Score: _____			

Analysis of Performance Criterion 3.1: Candidates design learning environments that support individual learning marked by active engagement.	The analysis demonstrates misunderstanding of how to use individualized learning for diverse learners. The analysis reveals unexplored suppositions about the Performance Criterion, uses insubstantial or inappropriate literature, notes irrelevant evidence, and/or overstates or does not state the candidate's effectiveness, reiterating conventional notions.	The analysis demonstrates the candidate's ability to select and apply learning opportunities for individual learners. The analysis reiterates the Performance Criterion, references related literature, program mission or conceptual framework, identifies evidence, and remarks on the candidate's effectiveness, providing basic description and commentary.	The analysis demonstrates the candidate's ability to design learning environments that support individual learning marked by active engagement. The analysis explicitly interprets the Performance Criterion, is grounded in appropriate literature, program mission or conceptual framework, is enhanced by salient evidence, and critically evaluates the candidate's effectiveness, while generating ideas, questions, or proposals.
Comments: Score: _____			

Analysis of Performance Criterion 3.2: Candidates design learning environments that support collaborative learning marked by positive social interaction.	The analysis demonstrates misunderstanding of how to use collaborative learning for diverse learners. The analysis reveals unexplored suppositions about the Performance Criterion, uses insubstantial or inappropriate literature, notes irrelevant evidence, and/or overstates or does not state the candidate's effectiveness, reiterating conventional notions.	The analysis demonstrates the candidate's ability to select and apply collaborative-learning opportunities. The analysis reiterates the Performance Criterion, references related literature, program mission or conceptual framework, identifies evidence, and remarks on the candidate's effectiveness, providing basic description and commentary.	The analysis demonstrates the candidate's ability to design learning environments that support collaborative learning marked by positive social interaction. The analysis explicitly interprets the Performance Criterion, is grounded in appropriate literature, program mission or conceptual framework, is enhanced by salient evidence, and critically evaluates the candidate's effectiveness, while generating ideas, questions, or proposals.
Comments: Make sure to use your evidence to prove you met the PC. Quote what ss said or their work. This demonstrates you attained the standard! Score: _____			
Self-Reflection	In relation to the Theme, the reflection demonstrates insufficient discussion of learning drawn from specific incidents and/or ideas for ongoing development.	In relation to the Theme, the reflection demonstrates the candidate's ability to recount incidents, recognize personal beliefs, and identify actions for additional learning.	In relation to the Theme, the reflection demonstrates the candidate's ability to consider specific incidents, rethink long-standing personal perceptions, and conceptualize a vision for ongoing growth in this area.

Comments:

Score: _____