

Angelica McDonald

Final Reflection

Part I. Dispositions

It is astonishing how hastily my internship has passed. It seems as if I am just beginning graduate school with the feelings of anxiousness but also excitement about being a part of the program. Now reflecting back on my experience, I am amazed by how much I have grown not only in my craft as an educator but also as a professional and teacher for social justice. Words cannot express how thankful I am for both of cooperating teachers for allowing me to learn alongside them and their students.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, so much occurred that has shown me how to monitor and adjust as a teacher. Nevertheless, throughout my full-time student teaching, I was always punctual to my placement. I was never absent for student teaching except only to attend the NCTE conference which counted as an internship day. I have always dressed professionally during my placement and only wore jeans on Fridays when teachers are permitted to wear them.

When I was teaching in the classroom in person or virtually, I have always tried to exhibit ethical behavior by honoring FERPA confidentiality laws and keeping all of my interactions with students and parents professional. I did not interact with parents during my placement except for once to inform a parent about a small incident. I could have improved on my parent communication by taking more initiative to speak with them. My communication was professional which included positive feedback about the student, asking for the parent's assistance, and ending the call with how I was willing to continue to work with the parent to assist the student to have a successful year.

One of my favorite parts of teaching was greeting students at the door at the beginning of every class period. Seeing their faces brightened up my day and allowed me to recognize my students' moods before they entered the classroom. It would set a positive tone for the day and promote a sense of belonging when they enter the classroom. Throughout the class period, I would consistently assist students as they worked independently or in groups with their assignments. I was also able to conduct a few reading conferences with students during their independent reading which allowed me to learn more about my students interests and why they are intrigued by certain texts. The English department utilizes the workshop instructional model which allowed me to work alongside students who needed assistance and to monitor student behavior. The model allowed me to differentiate instruction, work in small groups or one-on-one and pushed students to become more engaged with the lessons. In transition to e-learning, I would provide written feedback on student work via Schoology. My CT and I also provided online office hours sessions to help students.

I tried to prepare lessons and materials at least two days ahead before every lesson to both my CT and supervisor. All of my lesson plans were submitted online and I provided a link to all of my lesson plans that both my CT and supervisor had constant access to. All the materials would be prepared either during planning or early in the morning before students arrived to the classroom.

As an educator, reflection is essential for growth. I am constantly reflecting after every lesson with my CT even if I am not being observed. At the end of the day, I write in a journal with my GLOWS and GROWS. A principal encouraged me that I should write down what I did very well in the classroom (GLOWS) and one growth that I would like to see (GROW). This

method of reflecting has increased my self-awareness and allowed me to learn from my mistakes and successes in the classroom. I have also learned so much from my CT throughout my placement. She encouraged me to practice my mini-lessons before teaching. I have followed that feedback and I have improved not only with the flow of my mini-lessons but also in my confidence as an educator.

I have displayed respect to all of my students not only through my interactions with them but also through the lessons presented. My CT and I conducted weekly classroom meetings with students to help them understand their identity and to appreciate the diversity of their student population. Also, the texts that we have provided in our lessons displays

My CT and I have regular communication through either text messages or email. I also attended faculty and department meetings to lesson plan lessons and to discuss classroom management issues. I have also attended various professional development meetings with other professionals to discuss classroom management, restorative justice, and reading strategies to engage students throughout the year. I could have improved in my resourcefulness as a student teacher by providing more resources or input in PLC meetings. However, I did incorporate ideas and resources for our weekly classroom meetings. I also readily worked with my CT to prepare materials for our units and lessons. In transition to e-learning, I helped my CT provide resources for our online unit and created instructional videos for our students.

Part II. SC Standards-4.0 – Professionalism

I have been prepared and participated in our PLC meetings in person, on the phone, or online when needed. During our transition into E-learning, I have provided resources to be used

for the argumentative unit although I have never been requested to bring in student work to meetings.

My CT is a part of a discipline intervention team meeting at the school and we have both tried to implement what we have learned regarding restorative justice into our classroom. I have also followed along with their book study *Better than Sticks & Carrots* to learn more about effective classroom management strategies and how to implement it into my own teaching pedagogy.

From this book study, my CT and I implemented weekly classroom meetings to address any issues within our classroom community with all of our English I classes. These were weekly gatherings to discuss important topics that will help build a classroom community and promote social emotional learning. We always begin our meetings with any celebrations that our students might have in their lives before reviewing over the expectations of our meetings. Next, we would proceed into our meeting with some activity or a short lesson about the topic we are discussing that day and end with a short debrief. Some of the lessons included respect, bias, discrimination, and the power of self-talk.

As an educator, I am constantly trying to develop my craft through my daily personal reflections and by obtaining observation notes from both my CT and supervisor. My CT provides me with goals for me to accomplish throughout the week as support. One of our goals was for me to be “clear and concise with instructions.” She encouraged me to practice giving instructions before teaching and to think how a student would perceive them. This input has helped me with giving instructions to students and it has also improved my classroom management. We have also set goals in being consistent with my classroom management. Because of her feedback I

have seen growth in my confidence and relationships with students. During my daily reflections in my journal, I also keep notes from my CT to help record my growth. I do not only record what I can improve on but I will also write down specific strategies that I will use to help me. I obtain these strategies either from my CT, supervisor, or other teachers that I have contacted.

For the entire semester, I have conducted a research project with three of my students in one of my classes. I used the student work data from this project over the course of five weeks and analyzed it to help guide my instructional decisions. This data has informed me about my students' strengths and weaknesses in their writing and reading throughout my student teaching. I also utilized various assessment tools such as exit slips, reading and writing conferences, and other types of formatives to help me assist students.

I have enjoyed being a part of my placement school community and participating in school activities and events. I had fun dressing up for spirit week or holidays by wearing the school colors, dressing up as a magician for Halloween, and wearing fall colors. I have participated in the school's volunteering to bring food for the Valentine's teacher potluck. I am glad that I also had the chance to attend a lacrosse game with my CT to watch a few of our students play.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, I still had a meaningful learning experience and accepted leadership responsibility in the classroom. The transition to e-learning has taught me that education is constantly changing and that as educators we have to become flexible.