

Reflect—Review of my personal learning:

I am coming away from my experience in the Education Studies program at Middlebury College with a more profound understanding of the multitude of professional responsibilities inherent in teaching. These include the need to constantly re-evaluate my teaching process, the legal and ethical responsibilities of a teacher, the importance of student advocacy, and the importance of assuming leadership roles in the school community. Excellent teachers are constantly collaborating with each other and with community members, seeking out new teaching and learning strategies through online courses and seminars, and attempting to meet the needs of their students. It became clear throughout my professional teaching semester that huge amounts of planning, self-education, and leadership occur outside the district-required professional development days, highlighting the immense dedication that teachers put into their craft.

Reflect—Reassess:

While I wholeheartedly believed in the necessity of collaboration within the field of teaching prior to my professional teaching semester, my experience at Salisbury Community School reaffirmed the power of collaboration. The conversations I had with my cooperating teacher regarding teaching about systemic racism within the context of a rural, white, socio-economically diverse community pushed me to consider perspectives that I had not before. Together, we navigated the duty that we shared, as educators, to center anti-racism in our teaching while recognizing the tensions that arise in teaching specific values within communities that may not share those values. My experiences teaching about systemic racism reaffirmed my commitment, as an educator, to uplift non-dominant narratives and provide a critical lens towards

examining history and current events. The unwavering support that I received from my cooperating teacher throughout this process further affirmed that collaboration is truly at the heart of meaningful teaching and learning.

Through participating in an after-school initiative called Kids on the Run, a program geared towards strengthening kids' confidence, physical-fitness, and social and emotional well-being through running, I gained a deeper understanding of the impact that professional leadership can have on a school community. Led by fifth-and-sixth-grade teacher Bethany Morrissey, along with the help of many other Salisbury teacher volunteers, the majority of the third through sixth graders at the school participated in the bi-weekly practices from April through May, culminating in a 5-K race that every student completed. Involvement in this program was an incredible way to deepen connections with students outside of the classroom context. This is a testament to the power of stepping into leadership roles and taking on responsibilities outside of the classroom; programs like these contribute to the holistic well-being of a community.

Without an emotionally supportive network, teachers would struggle to bring their best selves to the classroom each day. Completing my student teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, which met teachers with additional challenges on top of the myriad of challenges that already exist within the teaching profession, allowed me to experience the powerful support network that existed within the Salisbury school community. It was inspiring to see the ways that teachers showed up for one another, and the constant support provided to those who needed it.

Reflect—Plan for ongoing learning:

An area of professional development that I will continue to learn about and gain experience in is classroom management. Moving forward with my professional teaching career, I am cognisant of the fact that I will need to develop skills and competencies in this area that I did not need to develop as a student teacher. Each class of learners is different, and each class will necessitate that I adapt my classroom management strategies, and learn new ones. I intend to read *Teaching to Strengths: Supporting Students Living with Trauma, Violence, and Chronic Stress* by Debbie Zacarian and Lourdes Alvarez-Ortiz in order to learn more about how students' experiences with trauma can inform their behavior in the classroom.

I am also committed to deepening my learning about how to engage students in critical conversations regarding injustices, specifically related to race and racism. I aim to continue to challenge the dominant ways of thinking and understanding that influence my own pedagogy, as well as build my content knowledge on the histories of communities of color by reading the book *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice* (2000) by Geneva Gay. I also plan to revisit curricular resources from the book *En Comunidad: Lessons for Centering the Voices and Experiences of Bilingual Latinex Students* by Carla Espana and Luz Yadira Herrera including poems, texts, films, and lesson plans that can contribute to a more multicultural, anti-racist classroom.