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EDU 221: Introduction To Education

Thursday: 4:20-7:00 p.m.

Spring 2010

Instructor: Professor Dick Percy

Service Learning Reflection 10 hours

Participation:

In the first ten hours of observation I have learned a lot. I was not very happy about being placed at my school after looking at their website. The thing that stuck out most to me was that hands on learning does not happen very often here, which to me was disappointing because that is how I learn best. Although I don't agree with a lot of the standards of this school I am still learning a lot. I am in a kindergarten and the kids sit in rows. This blows my mind because when I was in kindergarten I remember having tables, and not spending anytime at them. There is a lot of technology used in the classroom. The kids have their own computer which they use to test for AR books. Mrs. Holland has her own computer in the front of the room. Without this computer I think the classroom would be lost. This is where all of her power points and lessons come from. She also has one of the new projectors where she can put a piece of paper under it and draw or color on it and all the students can see it. I think this is a great tool, because not all the kids in the back could see if she was just doing an example just up front. It eliminates the children gathering around the table, and fighting over who can see and who cannot see. She has a smart board and uses it daily. I like the lessons that are taught with it because the presentations are normally colorful, and get the children engaged and involved. Mrs. Holland loves to have music playing for the kids. She has a lot of Dr. Jean CD's that she plays for the kids. Dr. Jean has a song for anything and everything. Mrs. Holland has little slide shows of the lyrics that she shows the kids when they are being introduced to a new song. This helps them learn the lyrics and then they are able to sing along when they are working.

Mrs. Holland loves baseball. Her classroom is run on a system related to baseball. Each kid is assigned a number at the beginning of the year. She has cards with baseballs in it, and if they are caught talking out of turn, running, or fidgeting with anything in their desk, they are asked to go change their card. The first time they change the card it is changed to strike one, then strike two, and strike three, lastly their out. At the end of each day, the kids who did not have to change their ball, get a home run ball which can later be traded in for a prize once enough of them have been earned. There is no real consequence for getting strikes except that they don't get the home run ball. When they are out, she makes a phone call home and the child may be sent to the office. I think this is a good system because it is fun, and she has a positive reinforcement and a consequence. Her whole classroom is set up with baseball related things. The calendar, the blinds, and the things on the wall that teach the children their colors and numbers. I think its neat that she keeps everything with the same theme through out the classroom. Her students sit in rows. She explained to me the first day that the children that need more help sit in the front of the room and the kids that are advanced sit in the back of the classroom. I think this has got to be the worst method out there. She told me it is so hard to help everyone. I think that If she were to place the kids randomly, or so that for each needy child there was one that could help them she would not spend all day running around answering simple questions. I feel like the kids are trained. She has so many little songs, and chants that they use to get everything in the classroom done. Although I know it is a good way to get the children's attention, I don't feel that the kids chanting back and sounding so depressed about it is good. It is almost as chanting back is their punishment. Everything here is done at the desk. There is no science center, or library. There is no block center, or art station. The children keep a box full of crayons and other things they need at their desk so there is no real reason to get out of their seat. While learning about the seasons and weather the kids do lots of coloring. The class makes a book a day so that at the end of the year the students can pick which one it is they want and take it home. There are limitations set on what they can color, the colors, and what they can use to color. At the end of each coloring assignment the children have to go to the front of

the classroom put whatever they drew under the overhead and explain to the class in complete sentences what it is that they drew. I think that it is great that the students are getting up and learning to talk in front of people but I see this hurts some of the kids. The kids who are not the worlds best cutters or colorers yet almost get made fun of in front of the whole class. The kids will call out "what is that!" or just simply laugh if it is not up to their standards. When walking in the hall the students are expected to walk in a complete straight line and not talk. They do this. They blow air in their mouth so that they are not tempted to talk. It is not just her class but it is the entire school. When passing the older kids in the hall they are not allowed to wave or talk or high five, even if they are just going to lunch or recess. I guess that is good because then they arnt loosing focus or anything but then again, why do they need to be focused to go to lunch? The children don't seem happy here, it seems like they have a lot of energy that is going to one day boil over and explode. There is just so many rules and they act like they are in the third grade not in kindergarten but I guess that is the goal of the school so they are doing a great job. They kids do not seem focused, on anything. When a movie about spring was put in only about 1/4th of them had their eyes on it, the rest of them were either watching me watch them or fidgeting with things around the room.

Mrs. Holland has a very good way of redirecting the children when this happens. Mrs. Holland also has a very nice way of asking things. The kids here wear uniforms, and although I didn't like that when I first came here I do not see it as so bad anymore. The kids are not distracted with what they are wearing, and it also illuminates them from arguing over who's clothes are better. The kids have free dress days, and on these days the kids go crazy. It almost feels like Halloween in here because they have to make up for all the other days of not getting to wear what it is they want. The Children have specials every day. This is the portion of the day where they go to the computer lab, P.E., or music and Mrs. Holland has time to do some planning or cleaning up. The kids need a lot of help in computers. Although part of the problem is that there is so many of them trying to get on the same program so it is slow, they also have trouble navigating through the programs. It is a lot of fun to watch the kids growing, and learning every day I wish that it was a little bit more fun for the.

Learning:

I'm learning a lot about how the classroom is run, and what the expectations of the kids are. Mrs. Holland has given me a lot of tips for being a teacher. I love learning about the kids, and their families. It is really interesting to learn about why these parents want their children to be ahead of other children. It seems like a lot of these people have a lot of money, and have no purpose for sending their kids there. But the ones who do have a reason seem to follow a trend they went to a really nice school and they want their kids to go to that college to so they are starting them off really in life. I have learned all my kids names, and almost everyone in the office. I am learning a lot about Mrs. Holland and her family. We have a lot of stuff in common and she is a great inspiration. I have learned a lot about safety hazards in the classrooms and other random things that she has told me that are things that I just never thought about.

Application:

I will use a system like Lonnie In my room with my kids because it is very simple to follow, and the kids are very motivated by it. I will use a lot of the CD's that she has suggested. The songs are so relatable to everything that is happening, like holidays and events. I will be very involved just like Lonnie. I don't think that I will do math like it is done at this school because they are very advanced and I don't think that students that young should be doing that kind of work. I will apply a lot of the math rules because they are so simple and I wish that I had known stuff like that because maybe I would have done better in math. In fact I use the math tips I learn here at work to give people the correct change.

Service Learning Reflection

20 hours

Participation:

During the next 20 hours I participated a lot. The majority of my hours come on Fridays because I don't have school and it is much easier to put in bulk hours on Fridays. Last Friday Mrs. Holland was gone and there was a sub so I figured this was going to be the perfect opportunity for me to be a big leader in the class room. The sub was a complete jerk, and did not know how to do anything, so it ended up being a lot more work than I was planning on. It started when I first got here, I had to go get the kids from music because she was simply old and did not want to make the walk. The kids were thrilled that I was there since I wasn't before they went to music. When they came back I helped them study for their spelling test, and gave instructions as of how the spelling test was going to go. I told them to put their "offices up" and we sang the name on your paper song together. The sub was very frustrated because the kids did not want to listen to her but she was being rude to them and like any kid, in any class, they would just talk louder and louder when she started being rude to them. I am in a kindergarten classroom and I feel how she was treating the kids was completely inappropriate and some of her smart comments that went right over their heads were very unnecessary. I also felt like as soon as I said I was going to go ahead and help and step up a lot she was more than willing to throw her hands up go sit down and not want to help at all. So after that I simply sat down, because she had to give the test. As soon as I sat down the kids yet again were very fidgety and talkative and she started throwing out her rude comments again, but I was not about to help quite them down again, if she would just speak to them with all would have been fine. Before she could even start the test it was time for lunch. I decided that I would much rather eat my lunch with the kids than with this lady, so I took this day to follow them to lunch and their recess. Kids are gross when they eat and that is what I learned at lunch. They use way to much ketchup and mustard on things and there is no way it can possibly be good but they shove it in their mouth and it gets all over their face and they don't even care! I helped with lots of opening kids packages of crackers or cookies and putting straws in their drinks. The kids were very appreciative of this so I didn't really mind helping.

After lunch we went out to play at recess. The kids all wanted me to follow them around. Each kid had something to show me, or tell me, or wanted me to play with them so I was running all over the place trying to be fair and get it all in. I watched all the girls play on the monkey bars and swinging bars, and they had me try and do it on my own. I failed at this because I lack balance and they all laughed and giggled but told me that it was okay, because the bars are not for everyone. Once it came time for the swings it was like they all forgot how to use them at all. Every kid needed help getting on or being pushed. So I helped with that for a while. Kids from other classes started coming up to me to tattle on another kid for hitting, or running their sand castle or pulling their hair, and all I could really say was that is not nice, and that is not how we play with our friends. I didn't really want to play with those kids because they weren't from my class, and I am not the play ground mediator. I got so hot and tired and realized that kindergartners really love their free time. Which is of no surprise to me because they don't get very much of it here.

Once we came back into the classroom the kids did what they normally would have done if Mrs. Holland would have been here but they got yelled at because they had a spelling test to take. They walked to their seats all sad, because she had snapped at them for following their daily routine. Once the test was over and finished with the students went to the rug and I read the chapter book to them. After that we sang the days of the weeks, months of the years, and the seasons. They kids listened very well to me, but once that was over she wanted control of the classroom back, and I gave it back and it all got lost again.

In general every day I get to grade papers, and put stickers on the ones with 100 percents. Every week I am in charge of one of the centers normally the one that is related to English, and I work with the children on that. I lead the lines to computers or to P.E and the kids follow behind me very quietly. I walk around during math and help, and especially try and help one little boy who is struggling with it. The kids love me the more involved I get, and I fall more in love with them the more time I spend with them as well.

Learning:

I have learned so much from being in this classroom. I came in with a very negative attitude towards the school but I do not hate it just as much as I thought. I am learning a lot from Mrs. Holland, about positive reinforcement. She never yells at the kids and they kids respect her so much, there is never any arguing or any confrontation. I love that she has the patience and can explain to my why she let a certain situation fly, and not

another one, it shows that it is not that she is favoring students but that she is thinking about what she is doing, and putting her heart into it. I am learning a lot of resources from her as to where to get tools of information, songs, and activities from for when I become a teacher. She has a lot of great ideas, and does not just break down when things are not perfect and I hope if I learn and keep one piece of information from this experience that this is it.

The kids also teach me every single day. I have learned that I have to stay firm with morals, that just because I am not an official teacher I cannot just let them get away with things or else they just try and keep getting away with things over and over. I am learning that they do not look up to people who think they are better or who are bossy but to when I am kind, and sweet, and funny with them. They respect me a lot, and I show them that same respect back. I have learned a lot about what motivates them. Candy is a big one, they will do pretty much whatever I say as long as candy is involved. I love learning about my kids. I know what works with each kid, and a little bit about them. Why certain ones break down and cry during certain situations, and why others just go off in the corner. I think this is great because it is helping me connect with them much better, and is probably why I have such a good relationship with them.

I learn something new every day even if all I am doing is stapling papers or making a sample project. I have figured out the easiest way to staple a packet, and the easiest way to grade papers. When I started it took me forever to get through one assignment but now I can do it very quickly. I'm learning a lot about Mrs. Holland as a person, and why she is passionate about teaching. I learn a lot about the school system. How the parents pick up and drop off their kids, and about field trips and fundraisers. This school has a lot to offer I just don't agree with the curriculum.

Application:

I am going to use so much of what I have learned here. With the sub being such a jerk I realized that the kids love the environment that Mrs. Holland creates for them. I want that same vibe in my classroom. Where there is never any yelling or putting down but lots of building up, and encouraging the children. I hope that I can teach my kids in such a positive manner because I often get frustrated and break down but she has taught me how to be better about that. I will apply all this to my teaching that when there is a sub, I should not expect there to be a lot done because they probably won't be.

I want my kids to be loving to everyone who comes inside the door just like her kids were to me. I want them to accept everyone and want to help each other and I will show this by being willing to treat all my students the same and not leaving any children behind. I will never make a child feel that they are less smart than any other student. I have realized I want the quiet learning environment where all my kids are free to learn and focus on their work, I will do this by playing music softly like she does, and with such a great reward system like she has. I'm glad Mrs. Holland is willing to share her ideas with me, and is helping me become the best teacher I can be.

Service Learning Reflection

30 hours

Participation:

I love my kindergartners. I love their hugs. And I love playing on the playground with them. They will probably never let me forget that I played on the playground with them even once. I can only go to recess with them on Fridays but I go every single day, and every single day they are like, "Ms. Amber, you missed recess", and go off shaking their fingers at me. I love pushing them on the swings, it gets me a good little arm workout. I eat lunch with them on Fridays. I still think it is super gross how they eat, but they love that I sit there, and they love that I am watching them eat.

I read them the story on the rug every day. They love it because I get so into it, and probably because I am just as shocked as they are because this is my first time reading these books too. I love how the kids react and they

laugh at some of the strangest parts. After that we do the calendar together. I pretty much just say... we are going to do the calendar and the kids just do their thing and start singing the months of the year and the days of the month. They have got it down to a T by this time in the year.

After that we work on journals as a class. Normally we have a story that we read as a class. Mrs. Holland will read the story and I will walk around and make sure the kids are all on task. The kids are normally really interested in the story because they know that they are going to get to draw a picture about it after words! The picture always relates to the story. If the story was about the weather, then the picture will say today the weather is (fill in the blank) and they do and draw a picture of it. I pick one kid each day to color the cover then one of Mrs. Hollands parents makes it into a book and at the end of the year the kids get to take them home. After that they write in their journals and I walk around and remind them that captain capital is watching them!

We spend a lot of time in groups. I try and go from group to group. This week I am helping with the story group because that group is the group that seems to get the most off topic. I sit there and ask them what they think is going to happen next, or what they liked best, and try and make them think about the book. Once it is over they have a sheet to fill out and I let them work on their own unless they get goofy. While they do that, I go help with the math group who has a picture of a clown holding balloons. In each Balloon there is math facts and they have to color them according to the facts so I just make sure they understand and again that they are not being to goofy.

I walk the kids to lunch, or PE, and computers. The kids listen to me, and respect me. Its really nice, because my 6th graders last year did not do that. I get to walk the kids to their parents, and even get to meet their siblings and their parents. Its been really nice and I am going to miss all of them. Even though I still don't like the school.

Learning:

I am learning so much still every single day. I am learning a lot about ways to teach math. I am not very good at math myself so when she says stuff, I am learning it for the first time and I am like...WOW! That is so easy why didn't anyone ever tell me that, and then I am able to go around and help the kids with it. I am learning a lot about how the kids learn. A lot of them like to copy, So I see that they are visual learners. I get another sheet of papers for my little copier and I will do a similar problem and tell them that their problem is done just like the one on my paper and we do them together, but we have to different answers because our numbers are different. I am learning a lot that you don't have to be perfect for them. I was trying to draw a playground and it wasn't working at all and they told me that I was a great drawer. They didn't even care that my little spring toy in the sand box looked like an alien that had a broken arm coming out of its mouth and pizza sticking out of its ears.

Iv learned what gets their attention and what does not. With them, it is all about songs and clapping and dance movements. They don't like when they are being lectured. They don't mind doing stuff as long as I am excited about it, as long as Mrs. Holland is excited about it, and as long as their classmates are excited about it. I love that the classroom has that kind of energy in it, where everyone is excited the majority of the time. And I am learning a lot about how to create that through the songs, and through questions, and stories.

I have learned a lot while I am doing busy work on the side because I see the kids try and get away with something, and she still catches them. And they don't even know they are being caught she just finds a way to get them back engaged in what is happening in the class, and they are focused again. I learn a lot from the kids. About how to be more free, to be louder, and to be myself rather than just be in my own little shell and let stuff slide because I am not Mrs. Holland.

Application:

I love these kids. They are seriously what gets me out of bed most days. My alarm goes off, and I'm like no I'm just going to sleep today, and then I remember them, and I'm out of bed in the next ten seconds. These kids bring a huge smile to my face from the second I walk in the room and they are all yelling "MS. AMBERS HERE!!!!!" to the second that I am shaking kids off my legs before I leave and they are yelling "BYE AMBER". I hated this school, and really did not want to come here when I started this class, but I love these kids. This whole

experience has taught me a lot. Even though I still don't believe that hands on learning should be minimal and that kids should be doing work that is years ahead of what they are actually doing I will be able to take a lot of what I have learned and apply it to my classroom someday.

I will be able to apply everything I have learned about discipline to my classroom in many ways. In my years of church camp counseling, I always thought that just raising your eye brows, and just simply yelling or commanding at a child what it is that they were doing wrong, and tell them what it is they should be doing. I will use a lot of what I learned about speaking a lot more kindly and redirecting positively. I will also work on not getting so frustrated so easily, and just knowing that kids will be kids and they are just exploring and having fun. I will use more positive reinforcement, and more compliments, than punishments. This will help a lot this summer with church camp.

I will be able to use a lot of the tools and resources she has given me. She has told me a lot of great stores to get great teaching tools at, a lot of great websites to find great lessons from, and a bunch of singers who sing great kid songs that all of her kids love, and have responded well too. These will all help me get my classroom started and form the environment of my classroom. She has also taught me a lot about working with all the other teacher at your grade level, about everyone having the same curriculum but then just each person picking one topic then copying the lesson for all of the kindergarten, or all of the 5th grade. This will help eliminate a lot of stress, and I hope I can find a school that would be willing to do this.