

Reflective Journals

Presented to

Dr. Smith

In Partial Fulfillments of
The Requirements
For

ECED 4403/4433

By:
Tremaine Leslie

December 2, 2009

Week one

Monday 08-24-09

I had an awesome first day of school. I have really been blessed with a wonderful co-operating teacher, which is a key ingredient to a successful student-teaching experience. The school is very small and the teachers have a very close bond with each other. I am really loving my first day and is eager to see what's next as the experience unfolds.

Tuesday 08-25-09

My second day was pretty good too. I spent the better part of my day making copies and doing different kinds of errands for my co-operating teacher. This was absolutely not a problem at all, as I hate sitting and just looking with nothing to do. T assisted with different activities in the classroom, as I walked around and acquainted myself with the students. I think I actually like 4th grade more than I thought I would. I really wanted a placement in the lower grades, but God knew I needed to get out of my comfort zone and experience something new.

Thursday 08-27-09

This is almost the end of week one! Seems the days just flew by so fast. Well, my co-operating teacher who is the math/science teacher for the 4th grade has worked out a plan with me today where she suggested that we could split the subject areas with her covering math while I cover science. That is absolutely not a problem, because whatever I need to do to make the experience work that is exactly what I will do. I asked for an opportunity to teach math later on, and that we agreed on. She also asked if I would like to start teaching in the second week, and that I

consented to. What's the worst that could happen? If I make a mistake, it is definitely an opportunity to learn. Got to go get ready for my science lessons next week!

Week Two

Tuesday 09-01-09

Today I taught my first lesson. It opened the science unit on *Safety*. I was not at all nervous as I was well prepared. But I was a little apprehensive considering that I was being evaluated. Well, I got a totally awesome review from my cooperating teacher, who especially complimented my classroom management strategies. I was really relieved. My confidence level was also boosted because I know I now have a personal standard to keep measuring up to.

Wednesday 09-01-09

I spent the better part of my today gathering apparatus for and making general preparations for my second lesson. I also spent some time monitoring and checking for understanding while my cooperating teacher taught a math concept.

Thursday 09-03-09

Today's lesson was a continuation of the topic *Safety*. I do try my utmost best to make the science lessons as practical and hands-on as possible. The students so far love it and even the most unmotivated student actively participates. This is very rewarding for me and it makes me dig deeper every time to come up with more practical and fun ways to teach science.

Week Three

Tuesday 09-08-09

There are three fourth grades that rotate through the different classes' everyday. The first group I had for science somehow was not very receptive today. I could almost feel the lesson bouncing back on me. Before the second group came however, I quickly had to regroup and re-evaluate my method of delivery. The lesson was much better with the subsequent groups and so I did not close my day out with a feeling of defeat. Lesson learned: Teachers have to be able to think on their feet! The feedback from my teacher has been successively positive.

Wednesday 09-09-09

Today was another productive planning day. I cannot mention enough how supportive my teacher has been. I seek her input about ideas that I have for lessons, and implement her suggestions as best as possible. We make a great math/science team and she is really excited about my progress and the students' knowledge growth in science.

Thursday 09-10-09

We had a 'ball' in science today. The students were all pumped and ready to learn. Before I even got in the building in the morning, there were students trying to find out, "what are we doing today?" students at the beginning of the first week who said science was boring, are now so motivated and ready to explore. I am glad that I am able to in some small way to keep their investigative and inquisitive mind active and open to the wonders of science.

Week Four

Monday 09-14-09

I helped out with small groups in math today. The students have been working on double digit multiplication, and it has posed a challenge for a few. They however process information better in their small groups. So while the cooperating teacher worked with one group, I worked with another and the people who had full comprehension worked on independent extension activities. This arrangement worked beautifully.

Tuesday 09-15-09

My supervisor stopped by today, but not for a formal observation. She was just making routine checks to see if all was going well. I must use this medium to mention that she is an awesome supervisor who has the best interest of the student teachers at heart. She is not intimidating but very respectful and understanding. She calls every week to check on the progress of the previous week, and extend best wishes for the upcoming week. That I think is a great trait in a supervisor. Today's lesson went well, and as usual the students loved every minute of their experience.

Thursday 09-17-09

Today was review day for our first Curriculum Based Assessment (CBA). We revised the concepts taught from the first week in creative ways that would increase the students' chances of remembering the concepts. In addition, most if not all the concepts taught had some hands-on component and that also aided memory. As the saying goes "...if I do I remember."

Week Five

Tuesday 09-22-09

Today we covered the concept of measuring mass. The students as usual were excited just to be able to handle all the appropriate apparatus, and not just learn the concepts in abstract form. I always reinforce to the students that they are actually scientists, so they need to use their investigative skills, use correct tools and also wear appropriate safety garments/equipments.

Wednesday 09-23-09

Today was dedicated to planning and co-teaching with my cooperating teacher. I am getting a great deal of math strategies as I spend more time working with math small groups. The little mnemonic type strategies are so useful, and they work really well for the students.

Thursday 09-24-09

Today was another recap day for the CBA test. It was another creative recap where we played games, did a question and answer session, had the students think-pair-share; just so they can reacquaint themselves with familiar concepts. We also closed out the unit with some activities on density and buoyancy.

Week Six

Tuesday 09-29-09

The earlier part of today's class period was used to give the students a chance to review their CBA test. The three class sections on average did a great job, but there are a few areas of weaknesses to be addressed. We revised some of the incorrectly answered questions, and figured out why alternate answers were chosen. My cooperating teacher did my first formal evaluation today and I was also visited by my cooperating teacher. I got positive evaluations from them both. God is good all the time!

Thursday 10-01-09

Students were off from school today as it was Parent/Teacher conference day. it was an interesting day for me, as I got to see first hand how the proceedings are handled from a teacher's perspective. It was a really productive and insightful day.

Friday 10-02-09

Today marks the end of another productive week. Lots of planning activities were done today.

Week Seven

Tuesday 10-06-09

Today, the lesson covered measuring temperature. My supervisor came to evaluate me and her presence was not intimidating at all. She was again impressed with the lesson and the classroom management skills that I displayed. My teacher also did my second evaluation today and this was also positive. My supervisor left me feeling even more confident and motivated. I am still loving the experience. I'M LOVING IT!

Wednesday 10-07-09

I had to make it to school extra early this morning for a math/science team meeting. I had a great rest of the day co-teaching and planning with my co-operating teacher.

Thursday 10-08-09

We did some extension activities on measuring temperature today. The students liked the idea of predicting the weather and then actually going outside to check the actual temperature. We also measured different temperatures at stations set up in the room, and we also got on the computers to check and compare temperatures in different locations around the world.

Week Eight

Tuesday 10-13-09

We worked on *States of Matter* today, which was very hands-on and fun. The students enjoyed the rotation stations immensely, and it was difficult to bring closure to the activities. My supervisor also visited and was very positive.

Thursday 10-15-09

We continued our work on *States of Matter* today. Students got in pairs and shared information that they remembered from the previous class about the topic. The pairs presented their information to the class after which they took their second CBA test.

Friday 10-16-09

We had small group activities where some students were able to receive reinforcement, based on their CBA results. The others had computer activities and games that served as enrichment.

Week Nine

This week was indicated on the schools calendar as TAKS related testing week. All the activities done in our classes over this week were geared towards TAKS preparation and developing and sharpening students' skills for taking the TAKS test. Different CBAs were done, and also drill and practice activities. After practice test days, we had our usual small group intervention to address missed concepts.

Week Ten

Tuesday 10-27-09

Today we started a unit on the *Solar system*. I opened the lesson with a KWL chart activity. The students were really excited to write down information they knew, and also to come up with questions they would like answered about the solar system. We did shared readings from the text book (Gateway Science), and completed journal entries. I then individually assessed their knowledge gain for the class period with a short paper and pencil test after which we completed the KWL chart.

Wednesday 10-28-09

Today my cooperating teacher and I co-taught small groups for math. We also did some planning for the upcoming weeks' lessons.

Thursday 10-29-09

Today's lesson started with a recap of the *Solar system* lessons. The students were able to work in small groups and make up mnemonics to aid their memory of the order the planets are in from

the sun. Each group presented to the class. They did an awesome job. There were several speakers who came to address Drug Awareness week, which cut into the class time.

Week Eleven

Tuesday 11-03-09

We continued our lesson on the *Solar system*. The students wrote letters to their friends telling them about their favorite planet. We had rotation stations in which students were able to create bar graphs on the computer of the distance of planets from the sun, they made posters of their favorite planet, and also created advertisements to sell their favorite planet. Another group was also able to take a mini timed quiz about the *solar system* on the mini- laptops. We had loads of fun. The culmination was a final assessment on the *solar system*. I also got my certification test results today. It is a great feeling to be totally certified before graduation. Thank you Lord!!

Thursday 11-05-09

Our new topic following the *solar system* was the *water cycle*. As usual it was loads of fun discovering and experimenting with creative ways to make the concept understood. There were experiments set up to facilitate visual learners and directions were in written and verbal form for reinforcement.

Week Twelve

Wednesday 11-11-09

I taught whole group math today. We looked at rounding with division. I didn't feel really great about it. The students got the concept-even those that usually struggle-but I just did not feel the air of confidence I needed to. I guess it was just one of those under the weather kinds of days.

Thursday 11-12-09

We had a good learning day today. Science was interesting as usual. We made a water cycle wheel, analyzed some data and then took a short assessment. Overall, a very productive day. my supervisor came by to check in.

Friday 11-13-09

End of a really busy week. I am so physically drained, as I have only been sleeping a few hours per night to stay current with student teaching, my Graduate classes and a family which includes very alert 8 year old.

Week Thirteen

Monday 11-16-09

Today was a really busy day. It involved preparation for the rest of the week's lessons and also an upcoming math CBA. We had the students in small groups where they got individualized attention with areas of weakness in long division problems.

Tuesday 11-17-09

I taught science all day today. We looked at the formation of wind and wind related activities. It was an awesome sharing period as I got to share my experiences with hurricanes, floods etc, being from the Tropics. Other students were able to talk about experiences with tsunamis and twisters. I really enjoyed today.

Wednesday 11-18-09

I taught math all day today. It really was rewarding to see the students grasp the concepts of long division. My cooperating teacher was out for the day, so I was accompanied by a substitute teacher. The assessment proved that the concept was grasped by more than 95% of the class. I worked one on one with the few students who had difficulties, while the rest of the class moved on to more challenging activities.

Week Fourteen

Monday 11-23-09-- Friday 11-27-09

We were off this week for thanksgiving break. I love the teaching experience, but I was also thankful for an opportunity to change pace for just a little.

Week Fifteen

The better part of this week is designated as shutdown Benchmark test days. This is a simulation of the actual TAKS test and students get an opportunity to test under the same conditions of the actual test. I have been assisting with hallway monitoring and proctoring.