

APPENDIX G Adapted from Emily Whittaker's M401 Elementary OVERALL REFLECTION

The first paragraph briefly summarizes what the reader should have seen and read about in this portfolio. The following paragraph summarizes what this pre-service teacher sees as her strengths, how she knows they are her strengths, and how she will use them to help her improve during student teaching.

This portfolio is documentation of my ability to effectively meet the INTASC Principles and School of Education Themes of the IU East Education Department. Specifically, I have explained my educational beliefs, instructional experiences, professional growth, and commitment to volunteering in several communities. After reading this portfolio, the reader should have a sense of who I am as a future educator and citizen.

In preparing this portfolio, I have made mental notes of my areas of strength, and it is my intention to utilize these strengths during my student teaching experience. First, I provide instructional experiences that are suitable for all learners. I have shown several times in this portfolio how I have adapted my instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners. Second, I have demonstrated my knowledge of a variety of instructional strategies to facilitate student learning. It is my goal to continue to learn new strategies and to implement them into my instruction. Third, I have shown my ability to use and incorporate technology in the classroom. I am comfortable in using a variety of communication techniques in enriching the learning opportunities of students. During student teaching, I plan to capitalize on my ability to provide sound educational opportunities to all of my students.

The final paragraph outlines areas in which this student would like to focus during student teaching and why these have become her targeted areas. She gives hints as to how she plans to achieve these goals.

During student teaching, I need practice in using assessments to plan my instruction. In my field experiences, I have assessed the progress of my students, yet I have not used this information in planning succeeding lessons. In addition, I need to make a stronger connection with parents and to communicate with them more. I plan on achieving this through my writing of weekly newsletters, telephone conversations, and conferences. Finally, I need to develop my ability in managing the classroom environment. During my field experiences, I have managed the classroom for short durations of time; therefore, I am unaware of what it is like to manage a classroom for a whole day. Overall, I need to improve my ability to plan my instruction based upon assessment, foster relationships with parents, and manage the classroom effectively. I am looking forward to the opportunity to achieve these professional goals.

Amber's final reflection combines her original student teaching goals with her development as a teacher in terms of the School of Education themes.

Portfolio Conclusion

As I entered into my student teaching experience, I was very focused on expanding my instructional abilities. After observing my classroom for a week, I knew that there were at least three areas in which I wanted to concentrate. I wanted to work on developing my capability of assisting and monitoring students who disrupt the classroom, connecting cross-curricular content areas within the classroom, and improving my classroom management skills. Throughout the entire student teaching experience, I succeeded, failed, and sometimes, as Harry Wong says, just survived.

Throughout all of my struggles, advancements and letdowns, my ability as a reflective scholar was my biggest asset. Every individual experience, whether positive or negative, contained so many lessons to analyze and consider. Without the reflective skills that I gained in my methods classes, I would have lost out on many learning opportunities. Through the use of my journal and bi-weekly meetings with my cooperative teacher, I was able to gain a far greater level of educational comprehension in regards to my successes and failures. I was able to analyze the most finite detail of lessons, student and teacher interactions, classroom management techniques, and all other aspects of teaching. This was very apparent when I spent several meetings with my cooperative teacher, other seventh grade teachers, and outside resources considering the proper course of action with an extremely disruptive student. My reflective skills assisted me through this trying time and allowed me to consider all of my options as well as judge those that I had already tried. The strength of my reflective skills is what will guide me into becoming a more considerate and successful teacher.

As I progressed further into my student teaching, it became more apparent to me that my instructional leadership skills were strong but always in need of development. I have always believed that the pursuit of content knowledge had to be accompanied with a pursuit for better classroom management strategies as well. I experienced this need for more knowledge, when I enforced new classroom management strategies, from Harry Wong. I took his research and implemented it into my own classroom, which he encourages. It is this pursuit for knowledge that will lead me to becoming the head of my department, the liaison to my teachers' association, and to constantly test and use new classroom management techniques.

The final aspect of teaching I felt confident about, but I knew that I needed real teaching experience in order to prepare to implement my global citizen ideals. The global citizen part of teaching too often gets pushed to the side. It was important to me, as a teacher, to take the time to plan and implement educational opportunities that encouraged my students to consider their world from other perspectives. I achieved this when I performed the "brown eye, blue eye" experiment. The children were amazed at the reaction of the other students in the class and in their own as well. This effort to make students see outside of their comfort zone was much more difficult to achieve than I had originally thought. I realized that not only was it important to take the extra time to plan these very meaningful activities, but to include time to allow the students to put a voice to their thoughts through discussion and writing. Creating amazing global citizens should always be a part of the teaching process.

Her final paragraph leads the reader into Amber's Professional Growth Plan, which follows this conclusion and is the last artifact in her portfolio.

After completing my student teaching, I understand better the demands and tremendous benefits of being a reflective scholar, instructional leader, and global citizen. Each theme is unique and yet they all work together to construct a fantastic teacher. I want to be the teacher who continually maintains my current level of security with these three division themes while at the same time excelling beyond my own comfort. I want to continue my advancement in classroom management, through various resources and simple trials. I want to continue in my education to achieve a reading license, become a department head, and eventually a major voice in the politics of education. I am starting small with lofty goals, but I have the tools and experience to succeed.