

Morgan Schwarz

Dr. Polly Browne

EDUC 320

23 November 2015

Clinical Experience Journal: November 2nd-November 20th

### **Week 1**

**November 2nd:** I awoke with nerves as I read Polly's email giving the class encouragement and positivity. As I arrived, I parked in the parking lot, walked in the preschool doors (which I knew as soon as I walked in that this wasn't the main entrance. Whoops!). However, as I walked in, I knew from the room numbers that I was close to Mrs. Wolf's room. Before long, I found the room tucked back in a small hallway alongside of a preschool classroom. I was curious as to why this was. As I entered the classroom, Mrs. Wolf was not in her classroom. I questioned if I was in the right place and where she was. As I set my things down on the table, I decided I should check into the office and see what they would like us to do on a daily basis as far as checking in. I wasn't sure where I was going and it was so early in the morning that not many people were around. However, it didn't take long to find another staff member and ask where the office was. I finally found the office and asked the secretary if signing in was necessary, and she responded by saying, "No. As long as you have a name badge/identification visible, you are good to go!" Fine by me. Off I went back to the classroom where I met Mrs. Wolf, who was now back in the classroom. She gave me a brief overview of the classroom, curriculum, the student breakdown, as well as minor details such as Casual Fridays. As the students arrived, many students wondered who I was. The "loud" and "bluntly speaking" students asked me directly who I was and what I was doing there. In other terms, what was I doing invading their territory and stomping grounds? As we began, I got familiar with the morning routine. The morning schedule is as follows.

#### **Morning Schedule:**

**7:30**—Teacher's Arrive (With coffee, of course!)

**7:50-8:00**—Bell rings, enter classroom, attendance "activity" on Smart-board, announcements

**8:00-8:05**—Morning meeting, Pledge of Allegiance, and sharing time

**8:05-9:25**—Wolf's Reading Class (Read aloud, mini-lesson, small group "centers", wrap-up)

**9:25-9:35**—Classroom rotation and snack break

**9:35-10:55**—Skinner’s Reading Class (Read aloud, mini-lesson, small group “centers”, wrap-up)

**11:00**—Departure (Depending on what needs to be done or discussed as the students are at recess)

The students sat on the floor in a group for morning meeting and the read aloud. The read aloud book they are reading is Maniac Magee. They were then instructed to return back to their desks in which they would begin the mini-lesson. Each day, the students read the objectives for the week chorally. They are displayed on the Smart-board. The mini-lesson for today was finding the main idea of a text. Following the mini-lesson, the students know the routine of splitting into the groups based on their test scores. The groups are divided into a low group, an average group, and an advanced group. One station was the small reading group focusing on the main idea and sequencing. Each group reads a different book based on the level in which their group is at. For example, the low group will read an easier text, while the average group reads a more complicated text, and the advanced group reads a text that is above their grade reading level. The second station was spelling at the back table. This, today, was a packet to begin in which they are working on suffixes. The final station is a silent reading station in which the students are given the opportunity to read in the reading center which has beanbags, comfortable chairs, etc. The students did a wonderful job following directions. Super excited to go back tomorrow and continue learning and getting to know the students!

**November 3rd:** I couldn't have asked for a better birthday morning! The students remembered from yesterday that it was, indeed, my birthday today. With that, they demanded that they sing to me during morning meeting! I thought it was pretty kind of them to do that with only knowing me one day prior to today. The day went as a normal routine, however. At this point, I barely knew anyone’s names but am determined to learn them all by the end of the week. Mrs. Wolf taught the mini-lesson of the main idea and sequencing. I assisted with the small groups and stationed myself at the spelling station as well as working my way around the classroom, as needed. The final portion of the class period was a writing activity since it is Election Day. The

students were to persuade the reader as to why or why not their parents/guardians should vote “yes” or “no” to the school’s referendum. This was their exit ticket.

**November 4th:** Today was especially a long day. I felt as time was dragging unlike no other. As Mrs. Wolf taught the mini-lesson for both class periods, I assisted with spelling. I found it difficult to keep the students focused today, however. At this point, I ensured that the students were aware that if they were not paying attention, they would be instructed to return to their desks to complete their work. Many students were late to recess due to not finishing their work during the allotted time. The writing portion of the period involved the school’s referendum as they wrote on yesterday. As the referendum passed, the students were instructed to persuade the reader as to what all needs to be changed/remodeled within the school. This kept them updated with the school’s information and expanded their thinking to outside the box.

**November 5th:** Every Thursday, the morning schedule for the first period is abnormal. At 8:40, the students have Technology. Today, the mini-lesson was rushed, the read aloud portion of the morning was skipped, and only one station was completed before we were interrupted. With this happening, the students are not focused. Before Technology, their minds are on the clock. After Technology their minds are not in “reading mode.” Rather, they are in “computer and device mode.” It also doesn't help that the Technology teacher gave them candy today and told the students they could eat it just before they left. So, the students came back to the classroom eating their suckers and candy they were given. As they returned, we finished the stations and returned to their desks to write a persuasive letter as to why they should be given one thousand dollars. If you haven't noticed yet, our main writing emphasis this unit is persuading. They were also introduced to the Turkey in Disguise writing assignment that they will begin and will be due next Friday (a week from tomorrow).

**November 6th:** Happy Friday! By today, I have finally become familiar with the routine and feel comfortable doing things on my own. In the beginning, I was unsure of how Mrs. Wolf handles discipline and whatnot. I now am comfortable with discipling students and how to handle

misbehaving and off-task students. Friday's tend to be a fun day as Mrs. Wolf told me yesterday that Friday's are casual. She ensured that I not dress "dressy" but just remain casual. As the students enter the classroom in the morning, there is fun music playing on Pandora instead of the calming/relaxing music that they are used to. This can be engaging for the students as well as a distraction for some, as well. The normal routine continued throughout the day. However, Mrs. Wolf asked if I felt comfortable observing the first period mini-lesson and then teaching the mini-lesson to the second period. As this was a shock to me, I was excited. The mini-lesson was continuing sequencing a story in their Close Reading Book. The students were instructed to work with their elbow partners to sequence the story in their books. The students then were called upon to come to the Smart-board to highlight the sequencing. The moment within the classroom engaged the students. The small groups were normal. However, as I led the reading groups, I observed that the middle group was reading a text that was over their heads. The high group was also reading a text that was above and beyond their proximal development. The middle group's book was titled Life of a Star. Most of the information in this book was difficult for me to comprehend and read. How was I supposed to teach this? The high group was reading Chemistry in the Kitchen. This described the chemical changes in the kitchen and incorporated experiments into the text. I felt as if this text was more for advanced science students, not reading/literature students. However, all went well! Can't wait to get back into it next week!

## **Week 2**

### **November 9th: No School (Teacher Workday)**

**November 10th:** Mrs. Wolf emailed me last night informing me that she would not be in today due to not having daycare for her infant. As she didn't mind the cuddle time with her youngster, I could tell in her email that she was stressed with making the lesson plans for the substitute. I ensured her that I could take care of things and make sure the normal routine takes place. As the students arrived, there were countless questions about where Mrs. Wolf was. Instead of repeating myself, I told them that we would talk about that in the classroom as a class. They accepted that. This was a good learning experience for me. All of a sudden, I was "in charge." However, as we

began, the students were engaged and I was excited. We did announcements, morning meeting, and I began the lesson. The substitute asked if she could do the mini-lesson on realistic text features and without hesitation, I said, "Of course!" I wish I would have just done it myself, however, as the students had no idea what was going on as she was reading directly out of the teacher's book/basal reader. The day continued and all went well. However, I am glad that the students now respect me by now. If I wasn't there, I am unsure if the students would have acted the same way with the substitute.

**November 11th:** Today is Veteran's Day. This brought forth a different schedule but thank goodness that Mrs. Wolf was back! It blows my mind as to how anxious the students get when the schedule is slightly different. With the Veteran's Day program at 9:00, this interrupt our reading time again. Students simply are not focused as they are on a normal scheduled day. The Veteran's Day program was for all grades including PreK-12. As I believe that this is essential, the students need to be informed on what they will be discussing at the program. The students, including my fifth graders, were antsy and ready to leave almost immediately. I felt as if they were not educated on this material prior to the program or to today. Many students asked, "What is Veteran's Day?" I feel as if this is something that needs to be discussed, no matter what the grade level. As the program was over, two boys from our class took off without being instructed. Normal procedure is letting the people in front of you go until it is your turn. Needless to say, the two or three boys "got talked to" when everyone returned to the classroom. We then returned to our stations and continued the day normally. The class spelling bee will be held this afternoon.

**November 12th:** Finally a normal day this week! With no school Monday, Mrs. Wolf gone Tuesday, and Veteran's Day Wednesday, these students need a day to focus and catch up from the crazy week. Today I taught the mini-lesson on realistic text. What makes up realistic fiction? What parts of a story make it realistic fiction? We then split into groups and tried to finish the small group ability-leveled text as we are wrapping this up today and tomorrow to start Reader's Theatre next week!

**November 13th:** You never know what to expect on Friday the 13th. However, today went better than anticipated! There was no spelling test this week due to the class spelling bee which was held on Wednesday. The turkey in disguise writing assignment is due today. Throughout the week, Mrs. Wolf and I met with each student to be the editor of their persuasive story. They then colored a turkey as to whatever their turkey was in disguise. Today was the day to present their final stories to the class! This was important to not only “show off” their writing work but also practice their public speaking skills.

### Week 3

**November 16th:** One word to describe today: *awkward*. Today, Mrs. Wolf taught the lesson for the first class and I taught the lesson for the second class. The second class, Mr. Skinner’s class, is a bit more chatty which gives me a challenge, especially today. As I began the lesson on introducing symbols and punctuation/pausing. I incorporated numerous small lessons into it. As we had group discussions, I observed one of my students, who is usually actively engaged in discussion and activities, zoned off in right field. As I noticed this, I called on her randomly and asked her a question. As I asked her, she threw her hands up in the air, and firmly stated, “I don't know!” in a strong, bold voice. I did notice that her face was a bright red but I didn't think anything of it at the time and continued my lesson. As I was correcting the spelling tests at the end of the second period, Mrs. Wolf approached me with a smile and shock in her eyes. She said, “Morgan! Did you realize what Student M was doing when you called on her?” I replied, “No. What was she doing? I just realized she wasn't paying attention.” Mrs. Wolf then informed me and stated that, “Student M was giving herself an orgasm and pleasuring herself when you called on her. She was sweating and her face was bright red! What do we do?” I was shocked and couldn't help but chuckle. All I could say was, “Oh, happy Monday!” As we talked later on, Mrs. Wolf and I decided that she needed to inform her usual teacher, Mr. Skinner and inform the school counselor. Anyway, as we wrapped up the mini-lesson, we began small group centers. I introduced the Reader’s Theatre the groups were to begin called “Tornado!” The spelling words for this week were a bit difficult as no one passed their pre-test today. With that, the spelling station/packet work is a huge help and very important for the students to focus on! The final

station this week was silent reading in which the students were actively engaged in the new Diary of a Wimpy Kid book!

**November 17th:** Today is a new day. As I arrived, Mrs. Wolf couldn't wait to tell me what else happened after the episode from yesterday. Apparently, the counselor overheard one of Student M's peers talking about how they could see through Student M's white shirt and that she needed to wear a bra. This was the time for things to be discussed with the counselor. The counselor informed Mrs. Wolf that she would take care of things. I am sure glad I don't have her job! The normal day continued and all went well as I taught the second period again, as usual. The students seem to really enjoy this play! I also incorporated a Director into this play due to only five parts/characters in the skit. With this, I have the Director in charge of making decisions, rotating the groups on the Smart-board, collecting and handing out the scripts, and introducing the scene to the audience on Friday during the performance. The mini-lesson for today continued practicing pausing at certain punctuation marks. We made a stoplight with punctuation marks. For example, green was a comma, a semi-colon was yellow, and a period was red. We then played punctuation mark green light, red light!

**November 18th:** Today was my day that I got observed by Dr. Pfeifer. She was observing me from 7:50-9:30 as I had period one with Mrs. Wolf's class. As the morning started normally, we did announcements, morning meeting, warm-up activity (Boggle), Maniac Magee read aloud, and I began my mini-lesson on author's purpose. In the past, the students have discussed PIE (persuade, inform, entertain) in regard to this. Therefore, this is how I taught the lesson, as well. I had the students turn to the next clean page in their reading journal to cut out and glue in a flip-chart graphic organizer. We then discussed the three author's purposes as the students flipped open the chart and wrote the definition and examples of that type of text. After the mini-lesson, we split into centers and continued practicing spelling words, Reader's Theatre, and silent reading.

**November 19th:** Today was a complicated mini-lesson in which I had many questions on. With that, I asked Mrs. Wolf if she would teach the first period so I could get a feel of how she would teach the material of similes, metaphors, onomatopoeia, etc. (figurative language). As I felt the lesson didn't go as smoothly, I felt more comfortable doing it myself. The students were unsure of what to do and the differences between them. However, the normal routine followed the day.

**November 20th:** What a fun last day! Not only was it a two-hour late start, it was also the day to perform the skits that they have been working on all week! To wrap up the three weeks, I decided to bring in PIE for the students as a way to incorporate what we have been talking about. The students were then instructed to put P, I, or E on their pie with whipped cream with whatever type of text is their favorite. As this didn't work for all students, most of them participated. Both classes joined together and watched everyone perform. When everyone was done and the pie was gone, each student got to go around the room and tell me one thing that they enjoyed about me being there whether that was something I said, did, etc. So heartwarming to hear all of the good things and compliments! One student even requested that I leave my address so they can write letters to me and let me know when they will be at Bethany Lutheran College for a visit and field trip this upcoming spring.