

This clinical was a challenge for me. The classroom that I came into had a disengaged, negative atmosphere and I did not see eye to eye with my supervising teacher on several areas, largely management style and approaches to differentiation. I think that the ruralness of the school also had a negative impact on my experience.

My clinical experience was in a ninth grade required English class. This class incorporated both literature and grammar, and while I was in the classroom, the focus was on parts of speech and the novel *The Giver*, by Lois Lowry. I was confused by the novel selection, because *The Giver* is a seventh grade level book. Once we got into the novel, the selection made a lot more sense; several of the students barely understood or did not understand it at all. Also, the parts of speech should have been a review for these students, but in many cases it seemed as though the concepts were brand new. It was very evident with the parts of speech that the students were usually working in the lower order thinking skills. The students could recite the definition of a noun or adjective, but they struggled to apply the definition and identify the parts of speech in a given sentence. This was all very concerning to me, but critically important to see. Some students are extremely behind in that classroom and will be in my own classroom.

In teaching the parts of speech, I learned that explaining why something is important is just as important as explaining the important thing. The students did not care about the parts of speech, which (in my opinion) tied very closely to the fact that they did not understand the parts of speech. Even from my perspective as a future English teacher, the way that Ms. Douma was teaching the parts of speech made them seem pointless. She

never spoke to why this content was important or why students needed to be able to differentiate between an adjective and adverb. This instruction lacked the context which would have made it meaningful.

In leading discussions about *The Giver*, I learned that not all students are able to make connections in literature on their own. This was surprising to me, largely because it was a below level book. I also realized that the supplementary activities meant to aid comprehension were in the end, distracting from the book. Students would spend more time filling out the Hyperdoc and looking up vocabulary definitions than they would reading, which is the opposite of the goal of a literature focus unit. I also learned that the students that you may want to work with the least are the ones who want or need to work with you the most. Because I was fresh to the classroom and unfamiliar with the “problem students,” I did not mind working with any of the students. Ms. Douma, on the other hand, had two students who she had, in a sense, written off because of perceived laziness. She would work with them individually, but largely she was frustrated. I worked with these two students in a small group and what we were able to accomplish was amazing. The students wanted to learn, but they often felt shut down and responded accordingly. These students in particular, needed a champion. This reminded me that time and attention can be a teacher’s most valuable instructional tools.

I also saw once again that planning is essential to effective teaching. This did not seem to be my supervising teacher’s strength. One morning, I walked in and asked Ms. Douma what we would be working on and her response was “I was hoping you’d tell me.” She was not joking. During the few hours that I spent in this classroom, I saw so much time

wasted. It would be the first two to five minutes of class and unplanned transitions. It made the instruction feel unintentional and the students would respond sluggishly. Towards the end of the clinical, I started writing the day's agenda on the board. I think this helped me as a teacher and the students to know where we were going. The transitions seemed a bit more efficient and I felt better about my communication with the students.

I learned a good deal about what I do not want in my future classroom. My supervising teacher and I had differing approaches to management, differentiation, and the role of the teacher. Ms. Douma spent a lot of class time at her desk, which is something that I never want to do. She did not have a positive relationship with her students and her instruction struggled for it. It reiterated the idea that relationships are the key to successful classroom management. Above all, I learned that my educational approach and philosophy may differ greatly from other teachers and that that is okay, as long as I keep working to utilize best practices and research and am willing to participate in conversations about methods of teaching with an open mind.

During this clinical, I taught alone four of the days. But starting on the second day of the clinical I was in front of the class. Ms. Douma and I team taught the vast majority of the days. Generally speaking she focused on teaching the grammar elements and I would go over homework with the students and lead the literature discussions. I was also able to work individually and in small groups with several of the students.

WEEK ONE	
10 - 31	<p>Wrap up “And Then There Were None”-Talking through final projects</p> <p>Parts of Speech</p> <p>http://www.english-grammar-revolution.com/parts-of-speech.html https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/730/01/ Video: Mervin Terban’s Guide to Grammar: Parts of Speech Introduction Pretest on the parts of speech--(Walked through one) Corrected in class (40 points, 20 sentences--about 20 minutes)</p>
11 - 1	<p>Identifying Nouns</p> <p>http://www.english-grammar-revolution.com/parts-of-speech.html Douma walked through the website and went over the different types of nouns WS-identifying common and proper nouns in a short story. Students were given time to complete this. Then I went through the answers with the class. I asked students to say their names before giving an answer, so that I would get more familiar with them.</p>
11 - 2	<p>Nouns and Pronouns</p> <p>Class did not start until 10:08, Content did not start until 10:10 Douma went over a few brief announcements. I went through what was left of the noun WS and remembered everyone’s name, save one. Douma walked through same website- section on pronouns Students were given class time to get started on a pronoun WS.</p>
11 - 3	<p>Pronoun WS and Elements of a Utopia</p> <p>Class did not start until 10:08 Continued work on pronoun WS (Students working individually, Douma and I wandered and helped struggling students) Douma went through answers to pronoun WS I introduced Utopian Literature--The Giver by Lois Lowry, based off of a handout.</p>
11 - 4	<p>Dystopian Movie Trailers and Elements of a Utopia</p> <p>Douma wanted to give the students a break because it was Friday, so we watched Utopian and Dystopian movie trailers.</p>

	Douma lead a relatively unsuccessful discussion about elements that students would imagine in a Utopia. Students were either not understanding the concept or really bored.
WEEK TWO	
11 - 7	Curriculum Day for Teachers, Students did not have school
11 - 8	Verbs and Critical Response Questions Douma taught verbs by walking through the same website. We discussed four statements (hyperdoc) Students responded to the critical thinking statements in Padlet which was a tool that I really liked. It's essentially a virtual bulletin board that anyone can add to.
11 - 9	Verb WS As a class, went through a verb WS and continued prereading work in the Hyperdoc
11 - 10	Prepositions Douma went over prepositions. We continued our discussion on perfection and utopian worlds.
11 - 11	Preposition WS and Name Cards Douma went over the preposition WS. I introduced the Name project. Each student was to find the meaning of their name and decorate an index card based on the meaning.
WEEK THREE	
11 - 14	Parts of Speech and Ch. 1 (ME ONLY) <i>Observation</i> Red Thread Proverb Kahoot Quiz on Parts of Speech Discuss <i>The Giver</i> Ch. 1 Summary, Title, Vocabulary
11 - 15	Quiz on Nouns, Verbs, Pronouns, and Prepositions (ME ONLY) Reading and Work Time <i>The Giver</i> Ch. 2-3 (Fill out Hyperdoc)
11	Ch. 2-3

- 16	Summary, Titles, and Vocab of <i>The Giver</i> Ch. 2-3 Student Assignment: Read <i>The Giver</i> Ch. 4
11 - 17	Shortened class periods. I was able to observe multiple classes. English 7: Watched <i>Stranger Things</i> --no academic value or relation to the class. English 9: Brief discussion of <i>The Giver</i> Ch. 4 and Reading time (Ch. 5) English 11: Looked at edits to the Declaration of Independence Oral Communication: Intonation and emphasis relating to meaning.
11 - 18	Adjectives and Ch. 5 Douma walked through the Grammar Revolution website on adjectives. I led the discussion on <i>The Giver</i> Ch. 5 Student Assignment: Read <i>The Giver</i> Ch. 6-8 for Monday and Adjective WS
WEEK FOUR	
11 - 21	Adverbs and Ch. 6-8 (ME ONLY) Go over answers to adjective WS Adverbs I lead discussion on <i>The Giver</i> Ch. 6-8
11 - 22	Adverbs and Ch. 6-8 (continued) (ME ONLY) Finish Discussion, Titles and Vocab for <i>The Giver</i> Ch. 6-8 Watch two videos on utopian and dystopian literature Review Adverbs Kahoot on differentiating between adverbs and adjectives.

General Observations:

- Daily Objectives not posted.
- Constant chatter from three students.
- Low expectations for student participation and engagement.
- Students do not have a positive opinion of their teacher.
- This grade has a notorious reputation in the school.
- One student with an IEP, another in the process of getting a 504.
- Time wasted at the beginning of every class.
- Fridays are treated as a waste.
- Some redundancy in instruction.