

Abby Wegner
Dr. Pfeifer
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Reflection of Cleveland Public School Clinical

I was definitely skeptical going into this clinical because it is drastically different from where I want to teach. Urban settings have always been more appealing to me and so being in an exceedingly rural setting concerned me. Also fifth and sixth grade is a grade that I had never thought about teaching because I enjoy the early childhood level. Ultimately enjoyed this clinical and the students in it. I taught about things that challenged me and worked with an age level I was uncomfortable with. Because this clinical went well, I have realized that I have to open to more opportunities. I learned that I work well with an older age group and that I can tolerate a rural setting. However, I still believe that I would prefer an urban setting.

Mr. Skinner and his fifth grade students were very welcoming and accepting of me in their classroom. Immediately upon my arrival, students greeted me and were asking all sorts of questions. As soon as they found out I was in college they asked me about my college plans and proceeded to tell me about their own detailed college plans. However, one thing that I did not enjoy was that there was a lot of lectured class periods my first week there. This made it difficult to communicate with students because I couldn't disrupt their class. In passing times students always came back and talked with me.

I found that one reason why I enjoyed teaching this age is that they are able to do a variety of tasks using group and independent work. Many of my lessons were group work structured and all of the students worked quite well together. My favorite lesson was comprised of group and independent work. First the students played a game in which they acted out the

terms weather, erosion, and deposition using legos. Then because we had extra time, I told the students to now write an application of these terms. This could be done through a story, simply writing the definitions, or some other creative work. The students wanted to present their works and the lesson turned into a kind of poetry slam. Students were exceedingly creative and applied the terms successfully to their writing. At the end of each students presentation the class either snapped or clapped for them.

Even though the students worked well together, I found that this age group is exceptionally critical of one another. They will never hesitate to point out something wrong they see another student is doing and make fun of them in the process. This was an issue I hadn't had to deal with much in the past. Younger grades do not tend to have such a critical eye and have more or practical realistic eye. I was then allowed to practice some classroom management. I was able to teach students that just because a student was doing something different from them, it wasn't necessarily bad. After this comment, most of the making fun was done with. I think that students did not realize that there are multiple ways to accomplish something.

From this clinical I learned that variety in teaching is essential in order to have a class full of successful students instead of individual students. All the students were able to connect to at least one lesson because it involved a new form of learning. I also learned that creating an atmosphere in which students are not putting each other down but rather building each other up. Just one mean comment can affect a student's attitude for the rest of the lesson. Lastly, I learned that in order to gain the respect of the students, one must always be willing to talk to them. When students see that teachers care about them and what they have to say, they are much more willing to listen to what the teacher has to say.