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TEAC Assignment

 **Teaching and Learning Statement**

 My philosophy on teaching and learning has evolved during my time in the (WWTF) Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowship Program. Originally, I had not thought so much about teaching and learning so my 1st Teaching and Learning statement was what came to mind when I thought about teaching and learning and what it was about. I thought about how I learned best and how I had been taught and realized that I had basically been lectured to for the majority of my school career and only, more recently, in my graduate studies have I had more opportunities to come up with my own ideas and perceptions about things that I am learning. I feel that having an opportunity to take part in the learning process has been good for me. Recently, I have had opportunities to share what I have learned with my peers and have discussions around it. I have had to work with a team. I feel that having these experiences has made me more accountable for my learning, and also made me work a little harder to research answers to questions that I have had. This process has been a bit daunting at times because there was a bit of uncertainty, initially, and then over time I began to relax and at that point I was able to listen better and learn to become a true part of the discussion good. I have shared information with my peers by networking. This is the type of learning that I foresee for my students, networking and sharing information amongst themselves for a greater cause.

Although the behaviorist philosophy may work to some degree because students are promised a reward for learning and the repetition of information over time may help commit it to memory, I believe, that students would experience greater learning if they are allowed to figure some things out for themselves. This method seems to cement what was learned into the memory.

I believe that my teaching philosophy may differ slightly depending on the students involved. At this point in time it seems that I have more of a constructivists teaching philosophy. I say this because I prefer that my students be active learners engaged in the learning process instead of sitting passively while I deliver a lecture to them. I demonstrate this by allowing my students to have a voice. I expect their input in our daily lessons and ask for it regularly. My students assist in the classroom learning process. I have set certain expectations in the classroom and they know that when they come to math class we have a good time, but it is also time to work, learn and improve our skills. They read for me, write for me, answer questions that I pose and share their thinking and ideas with the class as we cover relevant material. I allow them an opportunity to be themselves, as long as they are not disrupting the class and I work to give all of my students the chance to participate in class activities. Certain things are not permitted in our classroom, by students, such as chewing gum and eating during instructional time or disrupting others from learning. These types of rules go across the board, for my students, if I say no to one, then I say no to all. I tell them that we are a family and that we are working together for a common goal nice. We discuss their future goals such as high school and college and put together a plan to get them where they need to be. I manage my class like I manage my own children by letting them know what the expectations are, and holding them accountable for meeting these expectations. My goal is to move them all to the next level and to help them succeed in school and in life.

Under this framework my students learn by doing. They have to take part in the class activities. I also ask that they take notes on what we cover in class daily. Whatever goes up on the board or on the document reader should also go on their paper. I suggest that my students take time to review their math notes on the days that they don’t see me. We have a block schedule so I see my 7th grade students only three days per week on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. I am available daily afterschool to assist students as needed with their math assignments very good.

I assess learning in a variety of different ways. Sometimes I use a Do Now to assess learning and sometimes I assess students individually by giving them a task to perform. Other times, I may assess by a quiz or by giving students a ticket out the door which may be one problem or a few problems or a question about the lesson that they must answer. I collect these from them before they leave me for the day. I also collect group activities and review homework to see how they are doing and I also collect and review their math binders and this counts as a test grade. What do you do with the information that you get from the assessments? In other words, in what ways does assessment inform practice? Each tab in their math binder should be clearly labeled. They should have items such as their Do Now activities, homework, vocabulary, and lecture notes under the correct tabs. Good. I hope you will continue to require binders once you begin teaching next year.

Some of the ways that I will be an effective urban educator that is reflective include the following;

I put a lot of thought into the lessons that I create to present to students so it takes me quite a while to plan my lessons but I like them to be very detailed so that I know from moment to moment what I will be doing and what students should be doing good; that type of detailed planning is very important. I often challenge my students to find their own answers by carefully guiding them through the lesson while making them think about why we are doing what we are doing. I tell them to ask questions about things that they don’t understand. Teaching in this manner will help to improve students’ critical thinking skills.

I hold myself to the same standard and often think about why I do what I do. I perform a self evaluation and make necessary changes to my teaching methods. I think about what I do in the classroom and whether what I am doing seems to be working or not. I keep the good things that are working and change the things that don’t seem to be working to my advantage. good

Making constant adjustments to my daily routine is key, and is part of what makes me an effective educator. I think about what went well. If something I did or said, in my 1st hour class, seemed to help students better understand a concept that was presented then I feel that it would be worth repeating for my 2nd group of students. Also if there was something that was presented that student’s didn’t seem to get or had difficulty with in the 1st class then I revise it for the next group by coming up a different way to present it so that they might better understand it.

I am a good teacher overall. My strengths are that I am caring and have a good rapport with students. Some areas that I have identified for improvement are time management and keeping my student’s class work and information separate and organized. I want to work on getting all the way through my lesson in the allotted time and having time at the end for a brief recap before ending my class session. I have begun to use timers goo when applicable to assist with this process and I also try to look up at the clock every so often so that I can see what we can move through quickly and what we as a class need to spend more time on, during a class period. I plan to set up a paper collection system for my classroom using baskets or dividers to keep papers separate for students in different classes. I also ask my students to label everything that they turn in with their name the date, their grade and homeroom number. I have informed them that I am not responsible for unlabeled papers.

I have attended staff meetings at Spain K-8 to stay abreast of what is going on at the school. Sometimes dress code and student behavior are discussed, or new technologies are introduced. We had a guest speaker come in to talk to us about child abuse and how to be able to notice what the signs are. We had another guest speaker talk to us and the children about staying safe and out of the emergency room. She was a nurse and she gave us tips to ward off simple acts of violence. She urged students to do what they needed to do, within reason, to keep themselves safe. She said if someone is following you try to alert someone, go to a nearby house where you see people standing around and act like you know them and explain your situation or approach someone for help. If needed, act like you are crazy, talk to yourself, call on someone that is not there and run towards them, make strange body movements. Doing these things could exclude you from being a target. Do what you need to do to stay safe. This is great information for both children and adults.

I have attended parent teacher conferences and met with the parents of my students. I have gone to school performances and activities. I have participated in conferences related to education and have learned a great deal by attending the various workshops offered. Many of the workshops are technology based and some offer software or other fun educational options for the classroom that may help to keep students engaged. I have also attended the Woodrow Wilson Offsite Workshops which give a variety of tools to new and veteran teachers to add to their tool boxes that will help with interactions with students.

Some of the ways that I am an effective urban educator that is innovative include the following;

I have worked jointly with my co-teacher Sean Grant to create lessons plans using Google docs so that we could both view and make updates to the document at the same time. It was beneficial because each of us could see what the other person was adding in while they were typing it. This is innovative due to the use of technology and also due to our collaborative teaching methods that are used during the class period good.

I use strategies such as tracking where students watch me and their eyes follow me as I walk about the room. I have also used think, pair share, where two students work together and discuss their answer to a certain question from the book such as our Think and Discuss questions for a particular math section. I regularly use the pepper technique where I randomly call on students to answer questions about the lesson. Since the students are not sure who I will call on next they have to prepare to be called on. Some of these techniques are found in, “Teach Like a Champion,” by Doug Lemov and others we have used in our graduate classes at (WSU) Wayne State University.

I often model math work for students with manipulatives, or by color coding different parts of an equation good idea. I then allow the students an opportunity to use manipulatives for their own work, if it helps them to better understand. Often we use color coding, which sometimes helps them, to see more clearly how to group like terms when solving equations. The use of manipulatives can help them to better understand how to balance an equation when evaluating a math problem.

I allow my special needs students to sit closer to me and to the board so that I know that they can see and hear me. I also offer them more individualized attention when I can or send the resource teacher over to work with them. I notice that many of my special education students are really beginning to enjoy math and do well in it great, so I will continue to do what I am doing with them and assist them as needed. I allow them the opportunity to come see me for additional help as I do with all of my students. Sometimes I may modify the number of problems my special needs students have to do during class time. I may also write out homework problems for them as it may sometimes take them longer to write problems down from the book, if they do not have online access to it at home. I may also allow them the opportunity to complete a class activity at home and bring it back to me the next time I see them. Some of these small adjustments help these students to meet the requirements in math class. For my gifted students I offer extra credit and challenge problems to give them something more difficult to work on that will keep their interest good. For my struggling students I suggest that they come see me and I offer extra practice work for them so that they can increase their skill level in this area.

I try to use relatable material when planning lessons. I think about real world things that the students will understand. I relate integers to dollars, money debits and credits for adding and subtracting, or multiplying and dividing them. I relate graphing to something tangible such as the amount of hours per night that the average Michigan middle school student studies or the yearly amount of snowfall in Michigan given, month by month for a 12 month time period. I give them rules, tools, and processes to help them succeed at math. They are given integer rules for addition, multiplication, subtraction and division. They are taught the process for graphing x and y coordinates and for solving two variable equations. These tools help them to solve problems, evaluate expressions and give them strategies to help them better understand math and complex problems that they may encounter. I give them real world homework such as asking them to look at the water usage or electric usage at their homes for several months and to graph the monthly usage and think about why these bills may be higher during some months and lower during others nice idea. Activities such as these challenge students to think about some real life activities and make them put some extra time and effort into the work that they do for submission. My hope is that they have discussions with their classmates, teachers, or parents about these bills and the trends that they see. Having these types of discussions will help to enhance their learning yes.

Some of the innovative strategies I use include giving my students hands on experiences by allowing them the opportunity to use manipulatives, when applicable, for integers addition or multiplication or to model balancing equations, at their tables. I have showed them how to plot points on a coordinate plane curtain which should help them understand better how to plot points, when requested to, on the board or on paper. I plan to incorporate technology into our lessons, through the use of the document reader, online textbook, math related videos and PowerPoint presentations as well as an interactive website where students can access their grades and assignments as needed. Students with computers and internet access can view their textbooks online. They also have the option to email, text, or call me if they have questions or problems on math assignments very good.

I am committed to diversity in a number of ways the first of which is because I let my students know that it does not matter where they are from, or how they grew up, or even what their home life is like. When we are in the classroom learning and working together, we are a team. Our class is a family unit working together to learn math and reach the next level and nothing else matters during this time except the goal that we are trying to attain.

I tell my students that they are the future problem solvers of the world and that they must use their brain as tool. They are much smarter than they give themselves credit for and if they could only harness their brain power then they would be unstoppable. I encourage them to think of a goal that they wish to achieve and are willing to work hard for and once they decide that they can achieve it, then they need to begin the work to make this happen. A mind is a terrible thing to waste agree, and we will not waste time in our math classroom. I am aware that there are differences in my students but I respect these differences and treat them all equally. I appreciate the unique skills and talents that they each bring to the table.

I work very hard to make my students feel comfortable. If they don’t bring up their ethnic differences then I don’t because I see them as a unique part of our family. If these differences happen to be a concern for them, then we have some discussions around this and clear up any misconceptions. If a parent wants to impart knowledge on students and it doesn’t disrupt the learning process, then I welcome it. If a new student comes from another district, city or state then I welcome them and try to make them feel comfortable, within our classroom environment. If they want to share something about what they have learned or done or as a part of their culture or heritage or just in general then I welcome it. If they know a unique way to do something that they think is beneficial then I will let them explain it to me. If we agree that this is good information and they want to share this with the class then it will be allowed. Since Spain is a performing arts school there are many performances that go on throughout the school year. I may ask students to tell me about a recent performance or to produce a graph of the number of performances that they have been in or gone to since the beginning of school year.

In conclusion, I would like to say that I believe that teaching is an art and that you have to work at to perfect it. I believe in education and that all children are entitled to getting a good one yes; and the key point is “good one”. I believe that the children are our future and if we instill the right values in them that they can lead our nation. As educators we need to be mindful of who our students are and embrace their unique differences. We also need to understand that they have different learning styles and that we must learn to teach accordingly. Differentiated instruction is a method that can be used to help all students learn.

I believe that learning is a choice and that our students must have a desire to learn. I believe that learning is a never ending cycle and that you can never learn all there is to know. Knowledge can take us to new heights and it is our job as educators to provide the very best resources available for our students. I believe that all children have the ability to learn, they just need the rightavenue. If we nurture and guide our youth and never give up on them there is no limit to what they can achieve.We must remember to celebrate our student’s achievements and become that positive motivating force within their lives.

Very nice work Lori! Well-articulated theories and ideas and good examples to support them.