My first placement is in a Resource Room for grades K-5 and my second placement is in a fourth grade classroom. In working with the different grades and in different settings, I observed and participated in a lot of different types of instruction. While the two experiences had some similarities, they were very different from each other.

I spent a total of four days in my first student teaching placement. I was fortunate to have a cooperating teacher who wanted to get me involved and working with the students right away. Throughout the four days I was given the chance to work one on one or in small groups with students of different grades. My first day I observed a guided reading group and then on the second and third day I was able to instruct the group. On the second day I instructed the group and helped them work on a worksheet about proper nouns, suffixes, and syllables. Then on the third day we read a chapter together and I asked them some questions after each page. We went around the group and each student read a page aloud and then we would discuss it. After reading and discussing the chapter, the group worked on a worksheet that covered pronouns, picking out words with suffixes in a picture, and finding quotations on a page. There were different times when I sat with some students and had them read aloud to me. After every couple of pages I would ask them questions about what they read to check for comprehension and to get them thinking about what they were reading. I also spent a lot of time working with a second grade girl on reading and writing numbers one through twenty. For the first three days, I had the student read the same three books, work on a counting worksheet, and write the
numbers one through twenty. When the student came to a word she did not know she would either stop or say a word that made no sense. I told the student to sound the word out and she did. While sounding the word out she used phonics and made every sound for the word and most times she was able to figure it out. There were times she needed to me to guide her to figuring out the correct sounds. At times it was really frustrating because she struggles so much and is easily distracted but I stayed positive. On the third day I could tell a big improvement in her reading and writing the numbers. I was so proud of her and it was a great feeling. Each day was about the same as far as the students I worked with and the different activities I did with them. I also worked with a Kindergartener on the letters of the alphabet. There were times when he worked with a puzzle of the letters, spelled out his name, and colored pictures of words that started with a particular letter. I also worked with three students from my second student teaching placement. During the time working with them I helped them with writing about a famous Hoosier, accelerated math, read the questions to a history test aloud for them, played math games, and helped with spelling words. There were two students I worked with on spelling. The two were the second grade girl I talked about and a fourth grade girl who is labeled mild but is very low academically. While working with two students on their spelling words, they wrote the words multiple times on a dry erase board and also used magnetic letters. Most of the students I worked with needed help in either reading and/or math. The reading assessment I used and observed was asking questions for comprehension. The student would read a page or two and then I asked questions. It was an informal assessment.
My second student teaching placement experience was quite different from my first. I spent a total of six full days in my placement and during this time I observed many things, was given the chance to instruct, and also worked with students individually or in small groups. The teacher starts the day with having a morning task for the students to work on. Each morning the task focused on a different topic. Some of the topics were writing a story in their writer’s notebook, a worksheet on synonyms vs. antonyms, fables, and making a list of adjectives about a character. Afterward is Reader’s Workshop. Each day I was there I observed something different during this time. The first thing the teacher does in workshop way. During this time the students each have slip of paper with different words on it and they read the words to the teacher and if they get them all correct they are given the next sheet or they are told to practice the other one some more. This is one way the teacher assesses the students’ reading. While this is going on the students are either working on their morning task or reading silently. The teacher always starts reading with workshop way and then she has a different activity after it is done. Some of the different activities I observed during Reader’s Workshop are talking about the types of fiction, conferences, students giving book talks, teacher reads aloud and have class discussions or activities about the story, and activities for starting a focus unit. There were also times when I worked one on one with a student out in the hall. I worked with a student on reading and writing site words and I also worked with my reader case study student during this time. I liked the different activities the teacher did with the students. She never did the same thing and they were all effective.

Throughout the day the teacher had an assortment of activities for literacy instruction. She always has community circle time after specials and during this time she
uses the task and agenda board to instruct and review different language topics and also some math topics. One time she had the students do an activity where they had to match two words with their contraction. This really got the students involved, working together, and had them moving around a lot. They have writer’s workshop where the students have various writing activities. Some activities I observed were the students writing anything they wanted in their notebooks, writing a letter, and they worked on different writing assignments such as their specialty folders. While I did not observe writing’s workshop each time, the teacher had the students involved in various writing activities throughout the day. She also had them involved with different reading activities.

There are many things I really like that my cooperating teacher does. One thing I really like is how she uses buddies or has the students share ideas or things they have done with another student. I think this is a great way to give students a chance to talk and also gets them involved and interested in what they are learning and doing. Another thing I like is how she uses different books to teach students about various topics. Some topics she taught about by reading aloud books are about Hershey Milton and chocolate, evens and odds, and how books have different meanings. I also liked her idea of having the students give a book talk presentation.

Not only was I able to observe a lot of different activities, but also I was able to instruct. On one of the days I did an activity about proper and common nouns with the students. They had been working on the common and proper nouns so I found an activity to review with them. I had the students work in their table teams and each team had a piece of paper and a pencil to share. I first reviewed with them what common and proper nouns were. Then I gave them a common noun and they were given a certain amount of
time to write down as many proper nouns that go with the common noun. For example I would say state and they had to write down as many names of states as they could in about a minute. This activity went well and the students seemed to really enjoy it. My teacher also liked it and said she planned to keep it in her files of activities to do. On my last day there I was able to teach a writing lesson. My cooperating teacher gave me a book to pick a lesson from. I picked one on writing details about a character. I first talked to them about how good writers give lots of detail about a character so we can have a picture in our minds of what they look like and also have some idea of the kind of person or thing they are. Then I read a part from *Because of Winn Dixie* to give an example of a lot of detail about a character. Lastly, I had the students pick a character they have written about before or a new character and write down a list of details about the character. This lesson went fairly well. However, it could have been a much better lesson had I demonstrated what I wanted to the class and had them share their list with a buddy. Those were the two suggestions my cooperating teacher gave me and I agreed with them one hundred percent. After talking with her I thought of so many ways I could have made the lesson more effective.

I benefited a lot from both of my student teaching placement experiences. Each placement gave me different opportunities to learn and work with students. I was able to observe and even instruct many different literacy activities and lessons. For each day I was there, I got to observe and experience something new and different, which was great.