Reflection Paper

Over the past two weeks I have observed the middle school band room. During this time, many thoughts and ideas for becoming a better teacher have crossed my mind. The teacher I observed gave me some good ideas on what to do and also what to avoid.

One thing that I observed while watching this teacher is that her classes were not very structured. I hope that my classes will be both productive and fun. This is especially important for the smaller classes. I noticed that during the eighth grade orchestra, very little was ever accomplished. It seemed that the music she chose for them was not conducive to group play. Also, during one of the enrichment classes, she does not really do anything with them. If I had a class like that, I would take the time to help further their playing or give them new ideas for advancement.

She told us that she spent most of her time doing paperwork not lesson plans. I think that even in middle school it is important to balance both of these things. While it may not be vital that every activity is planned out for the day, I think that it is still important that there is a basic outline of the class time prepared before hand. It helps keep the teacher and the students on track more and helps to get more accomplished.

During the sixth grade orchestra, I really learned some good ideas for teaching. One thing is to go at each exercise one step at a time. This way the kids are learning it thoroughly and they do not become frustrated by playing the same thing over and over again. Also, using a baton to imitate the bowing for strings seems to be a very good idea
and very resourceful. Showing the kids by example helps them to understand the concepts quicker.

When I was helping out with sectionals, I found many weaknesses and strengths in my own style of instruction. First, I found that I needed to learn more about the instruments before I try to teach them. Just knowing how to play them is not enough, especially in brass. One of my goals before I start teaching is to get techniques for all the instruments and know them backwards and forwards. This will help when the students question the use of the instrument.

Another thing I must work on is to not ramble. There are times when several different things come into my mind and I find it necessary to release them. However, it is not so good when this information is lost to the students because it is not important to them and I would seem incompetent.

However, I found one of my strengths in working with the alto saxophones. I think that it may just be because I have had more experience with woodwind instruments than with brass, but I found it easier to work with the saxophones. I really like the idea of just using a scale to work on tonguing exercises and will probably implement this idea into my teaching style when I become a teacher.

During the past two weeks I have found many new ideas to ponder on and work out through the next few years. I am just excited that I had this opportunity to help me experience the field of teaching in a music classroom setting. This experience has taught me to learn by both example and my own leadership. In the future, I hope to gain more experience in the classroom so that I may become a better and more efficient teacher.