Field Experience Reflection Paper

My field experience was with the program Headstart at Laketon Intermediate School. I had the opportunity to work with preschoolers for a few hours once a week. I did not know what to expect with this program or how to handle younger children, but I was surprised how easy it was to work with them. Before this experience I planned to work with first graders, but I was shocked when I realized how fun it was to work with a younger age group.

The teachers that I worked with, Mrs. Bowers and Mrs. Pince had a different approach to teaching than I was used to seeing. They often yelled at the children when they were getting in trouble. The first time I heard them yell I was shocked because I did not think that children really responded well to yelling. The children must have been used to their yelling because most of the time they stopped what they were doing to listen. I do not believe that yelling at a child constantly is a good way to teach them the proper actions they must take because when you lecture a child, they will not listen. They would listen, however, if you talked to them in a normal voice that may sound stern but still talking to them on their level. I understand the reason why the teachers spoke to them in this way because they wanted to make sure they were listening and to stress the point that they should be listening to instructions. I just do not think that it is a good idea to always speak to them in that way.

Through the Headstart program the teachers had to stress the health issues in the classroom. They would always have a healthy lunch or snack when I first walked in the
classroom. They rarely had desserts or candy in the room, but they did have them when it was St. Patrick’s Day and Easter. I also thought it was interesting that a few times a week they have the children brush their teeth. They each have their own toothbrushes where the teacher will have them each come up and brush their teeth while other students are playing or working on other things. I think it is good to have teachers stress the issue of brushing their teeth because some parents do not. Although it is an activity that probably should be more so for the parents, the teachers helping them learn to brush more is still stressing the importance. Because the children do it a few times during the week, they are not only learning how to keep up with their dental hygiene, but also learning how to keep themselves healthy by themselves. There are other ways that a teacher can teach hygiene in the classroom and I want to do this for my students because an education does not always have to be just academic. It can include activities that they will use later in life or in their daily actions.

I was pleased that the children had a lot of play time when I observed. They had time to play by themselves inside and outside. I think it is important that they have both types of play in their daily activities because it can open them to the various activities that each environment gives them. Every child that I saw play enjoyed playing inside and outside because both let them be creative and have fun. They were still learning because the types of activities inside that were offered required them to use their motor skills, whether physical or mental. Any type of creative play is education. They can learn to be independent or to play with others. Both of these aspects are essential to a child’s education, especially at a young age. If a teacher stresses playing well with others, then they will most likely not have an issue with it when they are older.
In my classroom whether it is with preschoolers or first graders, I want to make sure that the children have time to play inside and outside. Children cannot stay inside all day or work for long periods of time without having some sort of a break. Teachers cannot do this either so it will be beneficial for both to take a break from structured work. I love the fact that when children play, they are allowed to be themselves and not worry about schoolwork. They are just allowed to be free and can come up with the most creative things to do when they do not have someone telling them what to do. Although I want structure in my classroom, I want the children to feel free to participate and be themselves. If they are not themselves, then they cannot fully grow and develop.

Preschoolers are different than first graders or kindergartners. They not only are not developed all the way but require constant attention and care. The children are always curious about what they should be doing and how something works. I love how their curiosity will enhance their development because they have the constant need to ask questions. I have worked with younger children before but I did not expect to enjoy it so much. The only problem I have with the younger age group is the amount of work and patience that needs to be put in with them. I do not think that I would want to start out teaching a young age, but I may change my mind later in my career after I have taught a few years and know how to handle students in a classroom. Their constant energy and need to learn kept me excited every day. On days when I was tired when I went to observe, I came out with more energy than I came in with because they filled me with such hype and excitement.

Being able to observe the preschoolers at the Headstart program opened my mind to a different type of teaching that I might want to consider when I start looking for a job.
I was not prepared to thoroughly enjoy working with a young age group as much as I did. They needed so much attention that I could not always give but I did my best to help them in any way that I could. It encouraged me whenever a child wanted me to read to them because it meant that they had a thirst for learning. When I am a teacher, I want to keep the thirst for knowledge going and make it grow. Younger children are the basis for our future and teachers must let them grow so they can develop to their full potential.