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Educ 301: Corrective Reading  
Field Experience Reflection  
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I spent my first week of field experience in third grade at Metro North Elementary School. Prior to going to Metro I was really nervous about what I would experience. I was unsure about the open-concept classroom and pod setting. I was worried about taking initiative and working with teachers who may or may not want me there. I was hoping that I would find inspiration and encouragement. I was looking forward to testing myself. I was also looking forward to learning more about what I want to do in my classroom and what I do not want to do. This experience ended up being more influential than I ever expected it to be.

The week proved to be a chance for me to actually teach. It wasn't just grading, running copies, and running errands. I got to not only teach lessons my cooperating teacher had planned, but I also got to plan my own lessons. I got to use my creativity, my ideas, and put to use some of the things I have learned in my education courses and professional development experiences. I lead math board meetings all week, taught a couple of math lessons, and a language arts lesson.

I was given complete freedom on developing a Writer's Workshop lesson. I chose to focus our Writer's Workshop on the use of voice in writing. I went to a Barry Lane workshop that focused on voice, so I decided I would like to try to teach it. I wanted to pick an author that does a good job of using voice in their writing to read to the class. I chose Patricia Polacco, who writes beautifully about herself, her ancestors, and several other personal topics. I thought her writing would be a good example of voice.

Before reading a sample book I asked the students to think of authors or stories they liked to read. I asked them to think about why they liked them, what got their attention, and how they picked a book to read. Then, I read *My Rotten Redhead Older Brother*. After reading the book I asked the students what they noticed about the writing. I asked them if they felt like they got to know the writer better. We discussed what voice is and how it is used. Then, we brainstormed as a class some ways they could share who they are to their audience. I had them write a story, using voice, to describe a part of who they are. During their writing time I also wrote in my notebook. After writing time I had a few people read what they had written so far. I was impressed with how well they got the concept of voice. Their stories were very genuine and entertaining. I only wish I could have had time to work on publishing.

I also got the chance to work with Blake on planning an activity to do Friday afternoon with both third grade classes. We noticed that due to the distractions in the pods the students rarely had time to be active, creative, and have fun. Since the fourth grade had a field trip on Friday, we decided it was a wonderful opportunity to get the kids up and moving. Because the class had read about space and aliens, we decided we could have them work in groups to create a planet. They had to name their planet, create a flag for their planet, and discuss what they might find on their planet. After all this, we took them outside to specific sections of the playground and let them explore their new land. We asked them to pay attention to what they saw, felt, heard, and smelt on their new planet. After giving them some time to explore their new land we brought them back inside to write about what they found. We asked them to compare what they thought

they might find on their planet to what they actually found. We let a couple students read what they wrote. We found that they had wonderful imaginations if they were engaged.

This is where my more negative outtake comes in. Although I honestly liked my cooperating teachers, and I thought they were good teachers, I did find some things that I would like to be different in my own classroom. I want to always remember to engage my students. I want to have them up and learning, hands-on, through group work, through activities, not worksheets. I do feel that worksheets have their place, however, I think they can be overused, also, I feel like they are the easy way out. Worksheets are often not the best way to teach something. I understand the purpose of a daily routine, it is especially important for the struggling student, but, how do you establish a routine and keep things exciting? I think there are ways. You have to want your students to be excited about what they are learning, and there are ways to accomplish this. I've seen it, and now I've done it. Overall, I could not have asked for a better week. It solidified my choice to be a teacher. Regardless of the good, the bad, and all the hard work, I loved it.