

Service Learning Experience Reflection

September 16, 2008 (Tuesday)

Today was my first day of the service learning experience. I am doing this experience with Mr. Goshert. He is the Manchester High School physical education teacher and he also coaches basketball. Since it was my first day and they were just lifting weights, I only observed. I am familiar with how things are done at the High School because I went to school there. It has been a long time since I've gone through a P.E. class and I have a different perspective on things now that I want to become a teacher. First off the class did a warm up. The girls did dots, while the boys did ladder drills. Then they alternated. To finish the warm up they ran around the gym twice. Then on to stretching. Then to the weight room. The class I observed was a freshman P.E. course so the students did not use free weights. There were not enough weight machines for everyone in the classroom so while one student did the machine, the other did step-ups (different formations every time). Then they would alternate. I noticed some students working hard and some who were not. I was surprised by the motivation levels among the individuals in the classroom. The period lasts seventy minutes. So the students have ten minutes to change and get ready, then they have fifteen minutes to clean up. So they are getting forty-five minutes of exercise, five days a week. And most of the students are also athletes. This is good for the students, but most schools do not have this long of periods. Overall, my first time went good. Next time I plan on getting more involved in the activities and associating with the students.

September 19, 2008 (Friday)

Today was a little different than normal days in a physical education class. The high school got an opportunity to have a climbing wall brought to the school for a day. The Army or National Guard (not sure which it was) takes a climbing wall around for physical education classes so the students have an opportunity to do something a little different, plus it is good advertising for them. I have never had experience rock climbing, so this was new for me. All the students really enjoyed it. I think that integrating things that students rarely get a chance to do or have never really experienced doing, keeps their focus and motivation to come to gym class. I know in high school when I had gym class (keep in mind, this was my favorite class), I kind of got bored with things because we had been doing the same things all throughout our education. So introducing new things is a good way to keep students alive and wanting to learn and participate. The class split up into two groups, one went outside to climb and the other stayed inside to play dodge ball. There was no supervision inside except for a student helper, who is also a high school student. I think the student's could have been doing something a little more productive inside than dodge ball. I had to leave a few minutes early to get back for class and as I was walking through the gym one of the girls asked me if Mr. Goshert was coming in. I responded and asked why. She had been sitting down the whole time and was going to get up and act like she was busy playing if the teacher walked in. I kind of got on the girl for slacking off because she knew she was doing the wrong thing. This is not good classroom management. He should have had to other group outside doing things while waiting their turn to climb. Today was a neat experience, and it taught me that you should never leave any grade of students unattended because they will either slack off or cause trouble. Classroom management is key!

September 24, 2008 (Wednesday)

Today was different than the normal days because I usually am involved with the afternoon classes, but today I went in the morning. I liked being able to interact with more students and with another class other than the fourth period class I usually do. It is neat how different classes are between the way they interact with each other and their motivation to work hard. Second period class today was very energetic and always moving around, while third period was very lazy for the most part. The students are doing a lacrosse unit right now. They went outside and played a game on the tennis courts (the general area). There was only one game going on, and a lot of the students were standing around just talking. This drove me nuts. There was enough students and enough room for there to be two games going on so no one was standing around. One of the teams was much more talented than the other, so the defense on the blue team were all grouped together talking and had no idea what was even going on in the game. After around twenty-five minutes of lacrosse the students went inside to play dodge ball. They did this until it was time to go in and shower. They play dodge ball a lot. When I went to high school there, dodge ball was all I ever remember playing. A lot of the students just stood there and let the ball hit them so they could get out. I've learned by teaching the students in PEP and observing/helping out in high school settings that younger kids are so much more willing to interact and get involved in the activities/games. High school students are there just because they have to be to graduate, elementary students are there because they have to be too but because they want to be! Getting older students to be involved is a bigger task than getting a younger student to interact.

September 30, 2008 (Tuesday)

Today was a little bit different than usual. I walked in and Mr. Goshert told me that I would be leading the class today and that I could do whatever I wanted for the warm up and then we would go lift weights. I was a little nervous considering I had less than five minutes to prepare. I ended up telling the students that they would just be running around the cones today, but the twist was that the harder they ran the less they ran and the slower they ran the more they'd run. I also told them if they didn't listen we could just run suicides (half kidding, of course). They all listened to me extremely well and worked very hard. Then we did dots and ladders. I noticed as I observed, that girls do ladders and can move their feet much more quickly than boys do. After the warm-up, the students lifted weights and did steps in between each station. Normally, they slack off when they are doing the steps and some do when they are lifting weights. I walked around today as the students worked out and most of them worked harder than they normally do. Usually the teacher is standing in the same spot the whole time, and not walking around making sure everyone is doing what they are suppose to. So by me walking around and encouraging some of the students, it made a bigger difference. I could tell that some of the students were getting tired because they were sweating a ton. Most of the time, when it is time to go and take showers the kids are not sweating. Today they were! I really enjoyed today and that I got to be more involved and have almost complete control over the students. Not only does it benefit me, but it allows me to interact with the students and get to know them so when I walk into to their class they don't stare at me like I'm a foreigner. I'm excited about next week because Ricky and I are going together and Mr. Goshert is giving us the warm-up to do by ourselves and an extra twenty minutes of an activity we want to do.

October 7, 2008 (Tuesday)

Since every Tuesday and Thursday are lifting days it isn't much different. Although, Mr. Goshert is allowing me to do more and more things with the class. It is almost like we are partner teaching. I've done the warm up the past two weeks. Today the students ran around the gym four times. I did not think it sounded very challenging but it proved itself to be. Then the students stretched. Then off to the weight room. I am starting to interact with the students more, and I really enjoy doing this. It not only gives me more experience, it allows me to make a connection with the students and correct and encourage their behavior. Today in the weight room, I managed a few stations where the students tend to use incorrect form. I had to correct a few techniques but overall the students lifted well. There were a few boys I was afraid were going to cause me some problems because I am a girl and not their actual teacher. But they quickly learned that I was there to help, and it was not some kind of joke. They actually ended up being very nice to me. I notice more and more though that high school students just do not care! It really bugs me. You have the students who always work hard, the athletes who do everything good but are not excelling because they do not want to get tired, and those who slack off. I know a lot of the students in there can be working a lot harder, but sometimes it is not enforced. I guess this type of attitude comes along with high school students, but I try my hardest to change that. I enjoyed watching Mr. Goshert today because he really got the students pumped up and was cheering them on while they lifted. He definitely was a big encourager today, and those he encouraged worked much harder while he encouraged them. Throughout this, I am not only teaching students' things but I am learning as well. That is what's so great about being in the classroom setting, it's a teaching/learning experience for everyone.

October 28, 2008 (Tuesday)

Well this was the first time we have been there in almost a month. So we had to kind of get back in the groove of things. The students are participating in a new unit. It is basketball (my favorite). Tomorrow they are having a three on three tournament so he gave them extra time to shoot around today. All of the students got basketballs and played knock out or just shot around. I was surprised that no one was standing around. There are always a few students in that class who try to slack off, but it seemed like they all enjoyed doing their own thing because everyone stayed very active. Then they stretched and did ladders and boxes. I always notice that the girls do these two things so much more proficiently and quicker than the guys. A lot of the girls in this class have matured quicker than the guys because a lot of the guys still seem to be in the goofy stage. Then they went to lift. Every Tuesday is this particular class's lifting day so not a lot changes unless Mr. Goshert gives us some free time to teach or do whatever we want. Today we did not get that free time because the students shot around/played knock out. But we did get to interact with them then and while they lifted. I always find it funny that when we walk around while the students lift, they tend not to goof off as much and stay focused on what they are doing. However, today I noticed a lot of students trying to lift too much weight. And because they had too much weight, they were not lifting with the proper technique. I tried helping some, and most of the girls put lighter weights. I had a harder time convincing the guys that they needed a little less weight. They got five minutes after lifting to do their own lifts, run on the treadmill, or do whatever they wished. Some of us had a pull up contest, and I lost! It is becoming more fun as the students begin to be more comfortable around us and we get to know one another.

November 4, 2008 (Tuesday)

Today was the fitness testing of the 800 meter run. I am not sure if this was the first time they ran it or the second time. However, we all thought that a girl would finish first. I thought this because all of the girls are more athletic in this class than the boys. I was wrong. A few guys won before the girls. He had the whole class run together at the same time. I thought it would have been better to split them up because certain girls just ran together. Because of this, it did not allow them to do the best they could. If they had been split up, their times may have been a little different. As the students finished they came to me with their times and I recorded them. Most of the times were between 2 minutes and 21 seconds thru almost 5 minutes. Mr. Goshert had the students racing against other gym classes to see how gets the best time overall. I think he did this to motivate the students to run a little harder. Although, I noticed today it is hard to get students motivated to run! Then the students went inside to lift weights. I did not do much today because I wasn't feeling well because I have been sick. So I just stood at one of the stations and made sure the students were using the correct technique. The students have improved on using the correct technique. But they have not really improved on working hard. I know I am going to find this everywhere I go but it drives me nuts when the students do not work hard. And it drives me nuts when they get away with it. I know they just ran the 800 meter run, but that is no excuse to not a least move. It is very frustrating to me and I hope someday when I have my own classroom I can find great ways to motivate my students and not let them be lazy as I have witnessed throughout my observations. Not just here but everywhere.

November 11, 2008 (Tuesday)

There wasn't anything unusual about today. It was just the typical day of warming up, stretching, and lifting weights. For warm-ups they did running, ladders, and dots. I still see the girls out performing the boys in these skills. They can move their feet a ton quicker it seems. Then the students stretched. I noticed more and more every week that a lot of the students do not take this very seriously. I think it needs to be stressed that stretching is very important, even though I hate to do it. I think it is essential part of being healthy. Then the students went to lift weights. When I first started to observe, the students would write down the weights they were lifting on a sheet of paper that recorded every week the weight they used. It is to see if there is any progression. But they are not using those sheets anymore. I'm curious as to why they are not doing this anymore, I plan to ask Mr. Goshert next time I go to observe. Today it seemed like a lot of the students were making excuses to why they could not participate, especially during warm-ups. It is funny how some of the students say they are hurt during warm-ups because they do not want to run and do all the cardiovascular exercises. But when it comes time to lift weights, they are perfectly fine. Some of the students have reasonable reasons to why they can not participate but some are just awful excuses. For example, a girl has not been practicing during basketball because she has mono. So, of course, she would not be able to participate. But there was a boy who said his calf hurt so he did not run. Then he went into the weight room and was doing all sorts of leg exercises. Ah, this frustrates me! Overall, today was just the typical warm-up, stretch, and lift weights day. Nothing really exciting occurred.

November 18, 2008 (Tuesday)

Today was a lot different, and I am glad because I was ready for something different than lifting weights. It was the beginning of a new trimester, and Mr. Goshert is teaching health this time. I was excited to observe his health class because I have not had much experience observing the health classroom, it has mainly been the physical education setting. Since Mr. Goshert does not know many of the kids because most are underclassmen, he did an introductory activity. One of the activities was twenty-five questions, and the students wrote down their answers on a paper. Some of the questions were, what is your favorite movie, what is your favorite sport, or what is something you are afraid of. Questions that help the teacher get to know some of the students a little better. This part was kind of boring. I thought there could have been a lot more students involvement. Then the students got a worksheet where they had to go around to room and find someone that could write their name next to something they did on the list. This had a lot more students involvement, and it got the students up and out of their seats interacting with one another. I participated in this activity. It was interesting to see what some of the students put their names next to. One thing I would have done differently today, if I was the teacher, would be to have more student involvement. During the twenty-five questions activity, I saw students working on homework from other classes. If the students had to be involved they would not have time to do other things. I would also be walking throughout the desks of the classroom and not just staying stationary at the front. I liked the change from the physical education setting to the health setting. I am excited to see what next time brings because they are beginning chapter one. I am curious to see what they will be learning about and the types of discussions that will be brought up.

November 25, 2008 (Tuesday)

Today was my last day for observing. It was the health class again, and it is definitely not as exciting as the physical education class. I think this because most of the class is just lecture and not much interaction and moving around. For most of the period, they went over a worksheet (it may have been homework, I'm not sure). The paper was a list of things you can do to improve your health or things that put your health at risk. There were specific categories for each. The students put an X next to the unhealthy ones and a O next to the healthy ones. Mr. Goshert just called on the students to answer the questions. It did not seem lively at all, and it was kind of just going through the motions. I felt like there could have been more to the lesson. It just seemed boring! I remember a teacher from high school who made everything so much fun. He could talk about grass and make it the coolest class ever. I have a problem comparing all my teachers to him because I really enjoyed his style of teaching. Mr. Goshert is a very good teacher, but not necessarily the style I would want to teach. The students then took notes from their readings for a little while. Then they had a quiz. One thing Mr. Goshert did that can benefit different learning styles was that he read the quiz out loud. I thought this was a smart idea because I know some students need to hear things to understand it (auditory learners), and some can read it easily and answer right away. However, I could see students who are good readers becoming annoyed with this method. After the quiz, class was done!

Well I am glad I got the opportunity to do this. Especially because I got in on a physical education and health class. Something that I do not normally get to do is be in a health class. I think it has benefitted me very much, and I'm very glad I did this not just for the experience but because it is one less final I have to worry about!!