

September 9, 2009

### Start of School Experience

During my start of school experience, I participated in multiple activities that got the classroom and students' ready for a new year. Between handing out lockers, opening locks, and going through school and classroom procedures, I tried acquainting myself with the students that would soon become my students. With trying to squeeze in rules and procedures into a thirty minute gym class, it left hardly anytime for activities. The challenge with being a physical educator during the first week of school is that most of your time is contained with locker assignments and rules, and then that particular class may not return until the following week. This makes it hard to have an introductory activity, for the teacher, let alone the student teacher.

For an introductory activity, I collaborated with my cooperating teacher. With a limited time frame and nine, thirty minute classes, I participated in an activity my cooperating teacher had designed. This being that a few of the classes had never had my cooperating teacher as their physical educator. The activity was used in all kindergarten to fifth grade classes, after the rules and procedures were taken care of. It engaged the students to listen to their classmates and learn about each other because some were unfamiliar with their peers and the teachers.

The structure of the activity was simple. The students sat in a cluster, the same as they were in for the administration of rules and procedures. They were to introduce themselves and explain one exciting thing they did during the summer. This immediately got students listening and thinking because every child loves to tell a story, especially about summer. Each child patiently waited their turn to share their adventures with their peers. The activity had to be short due to lack of time and the students' having to return back to their original classroom.

Throughout the collaboration on this activity, I think my cooperating teacher structured the activity this way because students want to relate something to what we as educators have done. The summer is a time where many educators and students participate in similar activities, such as, swimming, camping, boating, or playing a sport. This creates a connection between the student and teacher. Wong states that an effective teacher, "listens, listens, listens" and that "the

three most important words for a teacher are listen, listen, listen (Wong and Wong 26). This intro activity clearly mandates the teacher to listen to their students and what they have to say. The activity also created an inviting atmosphere for the students. It really showed the teachers interest in the students life. “One inviting act can make a positive difference even if everything else is disinviting” (Wong and Wong 62). I think learning comes easier when a child is placed in an inviting and comforting environment. This activity proved to be inviting of students to share their stories and feel appreciated. Another Wong explanation to why the activity may have been structured this way is that an effective teacher plans a classroom welcome for the first day (Wong and Wong 50). The transition from summer and school can be overwhelming with little ones wanting to share their whole summer festivities. An activity like this gives the students an opportunity to learn about each other, and share with the class something fun, that may have been shared at an inappropriate time if the activity hadn’t taken place. Throughout, *The First Days of School*, a lot of resourceful information was given and will be used throughout my teaching. Many more factors can apply to this activity, and will apply to future activities that I use in my classroom.

The activity was successful in acquainting the students with each other and the teachers. It gave everyone an insight on what the person is interested in and who they are. I really enjoyed how most of the students thought my last name was so funny. It was particularly enjoyable at the end of the day, during bus duty when all the students seemed to remember my name and loved screaming it down the hall way. If I were to do this as my own activity, I would have had everyone sitting in a circle so that all the students could see each other. There were a few times students would get side tracked and not pay attention or a student did not speak loud enough for all to hear. Putting them into a circle would have created a better hearing environment and been better classroom management, than sitting in a cluster. The students all seemed to enjoy the activity and loved it when it was their turn to share. I feel as if I could have just introduced my name, and they would have been happy with that because “Miss Purdy” is a cool name apparently. I hope with my fun enthusiastic summer stories I shared captured the hearts and attention of my students.

Wong, H.K, & Wong, R.T. (2005). *The first days of school*. Mountain View: Harry K. Wong Publications, Inc.