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Field Experience at Northfield Junior/Senior High School

This fall semester, my field placement was at Northfield Junior/Senior High School. My field experience teacher was Mrs. Erin Sapusek. During the time I was there, I worked with her regular 10th grade English class and her Honors 10th grade English class. I had many responsibilities during this experience. I helped her grade papers and helped any students with questions they had. I would also help Mrs. Sapusek teach different things. For example, when her students were reading *Othello*, I contributed to the discussions. I had a very positive field experience, and loved helping the students.

During this period, I had a lot of time to discover my strengths and weaknesses as a teacher. One of my strengths was helping students with English related questions, such as defining a word or a grammatical question. When the students were working on something, I would walk around the room and help them with anything they needed. I thoroughly enjoyed working with the students and tried to interact with them as much as possible. Another strength I discovered was classroom management. Mrs. Sapusek's regular English class was a tough one. They were very noisy and did not like to pay attention. If I was trying to tell them something and they were not listening, I quickly got their attention by either asking them to settle down or to stop talking completely. I feel like I handled situations like these very appropriately. Mrs. Sapusek told me many times that I would get my "teacher face" on, or my very stern face that

meant I was not happy with their behavior. I also had a lot of time to discover my weaknesses. One prominent weakness was pace and time management. When I taught my lesson plan, it was shorter than the time period allotted. I tried to grasp their attention by telling them some interesting facts, but it was hard to keep their focus. I need to work on the pace and time of my lesson plans. I will try to work on this before my student teaching by practicing my lesson plans to see how long they will run. I will try and remember to pace myself and leave enough time for discussions and asking questions. I will have backup materials ready, such as interesting facts about the author we are learning about, if the students take shorter than expected and need more to do.

In Mrs. Sapusek's regular English class, there was one student who had a very unique learning disability. This student felt that everything needed to be perfect and look a certain way, such as his handwriting. He would spend a lot of time making sure that his handwriting looked the exact way he thought it should look. His strengths were that he was very organized and thought a lot about his answers before he wrote them down. A few weaknesses were that he took an extremely long time to do anything and became frustrated very easily because he would fall behind with the class or get confused about what he was supposed to do. If I had this student in my class, I would try to accommodate for his learning disability in many ways. First, before every class period, I would tell him the step by step plan of the day so he was prepared and would not get confused. If he was still confused and did not understand, I would write the schedule down for him. That way, when he got done with each step he could cross it off and focus on the next step. If we were working on something in class, I would give him plenty of time to accomplish it, making sure he completed the activity. If we were working on group projects, I would assign jobs for each member of the group, making sure that his job was not the

writing part. His job could be something that has to do with reading or looking up answers. That way he would not get frustrated or overwhelmed. If the class was working on a lot of writing skills, such as a short story or essay, I would make sure to try and get a computer lab so he could work on a computer. These are the different techniques I would use to try to accommodate for this particular student.

My lesson plan for this field experience was on allegorical stories. The night before I taught the lesson, the students read the short story *The Masque of the Red Death*, by Edgar Allen Poe. My lesson was about how this story was an allegorical story. I started the lesson by discussing a little background information about the story, such as setting and historical context. I then asked the students if they could briefly summarize what happened in the story. After that, I explained to the class that this was a literal reading of the text, which means what is actually written, or the plot. I explained that today we are going to look at this text's allegorical meaning. I explained what allegory meant, and asked them if they could think of any examples of other allegorical stories. I then put them in groups and passed out an allegory chart, which had four symbols from the story. I assigned each group one symbol and asked them to find the allegorical meaning of that symbol. After they had enough time to complete the activity, I asked each group to present their information. I then asked the students to write down on the backs of their papers what they thought the moral was in the story. For this lesson plan, I did a lot of planning. I had to pick the short story they were going to read and read it myself. I then looked for different activities they could do with this story. I finally chose the allegory chart, and filled it out myself so I could help them with this activity. If I could do this again, I would have more symbols for the class to find. The regular English class was fairly large, so the groups were rather big. I would pick more symbols for them to find and explain. The most challenging part of the lesson

plan was time management. The first class I taught my lesson plan in did not take as long to finish the activity. I had to improvise by giving them more symbols and by telling them interesting facts about the author, Edgar Allen Poe. The second class took a much longer time to finish the activity, so time management was not an issue. This experience taught me many things about teaching. I learned that one must always have a backup plan. I also learned that one must be ready to handle anything. During my lesson plan, two students started goofing off in the middle of the activity. I had to tell them numerous times to be quiet and do their work before they listened to me. Overall, this field experience was very enjoyable and I learned a lot about my teaching style.