

Field Experience Reflection
By: Jessica Grandlinard

Introduction to Early Childhood Education

Professor Eastman

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My field experience was at KinderHaus Daycare Center in my hometown of Berne, Indiana. Though this is considered a daycare and not a preschool, KinderHaus follows a curriculum that helps children develop skills that are necessary to be successful in the future. During my time at KinderHaus, I learned more about young children and the teaching profession. This experience opened my eyes to the reality of teaching, and got me even more excited about entering the field of education.

The very first part of my field experience was interviewing Bethany Balsiger, a teacher in the four and five year old room at KinderHaus. During this interview, Bethany explained the basics of teaching at the early childhood level and how she got into the teaching career. We connected very well because we both have a passion for teaching and a family that supports our decision to go into the field of education. Through my experience as both a student and observer, passion plays a very important role in effective teaching. Bethany also shared with me that teaching is not always easy, and the children will not always be willing to listen to you, but in the end, seeing their “light bulb” come on is worth every minute. As a future teacher, I hope to bring the passion I have for teaching into the classroom, and strive to do my best, even though some days may be difficult. Another professional goal I have is to act as a facilitator and guide children in their learning so they will be able to turn on their “light bulbs”.

I also learned more about assessment tools during my field experience. Performing assessments are a necessary part of teaching, and can help us learn how the child is progressing and if our teaching methods are effective. Since KinderHaus is a daycare, they do not do as much assessing of the child as a preschool, but will record progress and inform parents of anything unusual. Teachers at KinderHaus use observations as their primary assessment tool. The teachers at KinderHaus also set up a conference once or twice a year with parents to discuss

Comment [MC1]: Change to which

progress that is being made and what can be done to help the child. For my lesson, I used an oral assessment. Before this experience, I thought of assessment in very broad terms, including mainly portfolios, checklists, and rubrics. During this experience, I learned that a variety of assessment tools should be used in order to effectively assess a child's progress. My eyes have been opened to the endless possible ways to assess a child. In the future, I plan to use a variety of assessment tools in my classroom, including all of the ones that were mentioned. I think using multiple assessment tools shows competency as a teacher, and adds variety in the classroom.

Comment [MC2]: And creates a balance evaluation of the child's progress

During the lesson I observed during my field experience, I gained some useful information about methods that do not work very well and methods that children respond to positively. While observing this lesson, I found that children respond to interactive materials and learn best when they are actively engaged in what is taking place. When the students were not actively engaged, they began to stop paying attention and focus on something else that grabbed their attention. After observing this lesson, I feel like I am capable of creating fun, interactive lessons for children. However, I still worry about how effective my teaching will be, and fear that my students will not grasp the concepts I will be teaching them. I plan to incorporate interactive lessons that promote learning and creativity in my classroom.

My teaching manipulative was a friendship tree that I made out of construction paper. At the beginning of the lesson, I started talking to the children about friends and their ideas on what qualities good friends have. I then read them a story by Fred Rogers that discussed the qualities of a good friend. After the story, I then asked each child to tell me one characteristic of a good friend, and wrote their response on an index card, which I taped to the tree. Overall, the children enjoyed listening to the story and helping me tape their responses to the tree, and grasped the concept I was teaching. However, there were some periods during the lesson when

the children began to become restless. I need to learn how to better control the classroom environment so the children will be able to focus on the lessons. In the future, I plan on creating a controlled classroom environment with lessons that are informational, fun, and engaging for the students. My ultimate goal is to see every student do their best, and fun, interactive lessons in a controlled environment can help me achieve this goal.

My favorite part of the field experience was observing two children. It was rewarding to work individually with these two children. I also learned a great deal about young children in the process. I am able to connect to a child on a deeper level when I work with them individually, and with this experience, I connected with both of the children, which helped me with my observations. The most difficult part of observing these children were getting them to concentrate on what I wanted them to do. From working with these two children, I have concluded that children of this age are in the preoperational stage of cognitive development. I also concluded that their motor skills were very similar, and could do pretty much the same things, with differing success. I noticed the most difference in their social-emotional and cognitive skills. The two children I observed enjoyed playing with different things, and interacted differently with their peers (one was a leader, another was a follower). KinderHaus and all of the other early childhood programs I have visited support the diversity of each child, and provide children with a variety of different activities to explore, ranging from bicycles to pretend play. In my future classroom, I plan on having many activities for children to explore and develop. I would also like to have the opportunity to work individually or in small groups as much as possible, because it seemed to be effective in the classrooms I observed that were using this method.

Comment [MC3]: True

Comment [MC4]: Observant

The last component of the field experience was classroom environment. After being in several different classrooms, I have learned that a good classroom setup is essential for student success. If the classroom is not set up for learning and the teaching philosophy of the teacher, learning will become very difficult. When I become a teacher, I am afraid that I will not have the materials that I need to make a successful learning environment. At KinderHaus, everything was against walls to provide maximum floor space, which promotes movement. My ideal classroom would consist of plenty of space for student to move around and discover, as well as area for quiet reading and small group work. In the future, I plan on creating a classroom that is child-centered and promotes active learning to the best of my ability.

I really enjoyed this field experience, and gained a lot of useful information about teaching, children, and classroom environments. This field experience has also made me more experienced and knowledgeable about my future profession. Because of this opportunity, I have become more observant and knowledgeable about young children, and what it takes to help them learn. Not only has this experience helped me grow as an educator, I have grown as a person, and have become more passionate about teaching.

not utilize professional vocabulary when describing the early education programs observed.	Uses professional vocabulary, but lacks in detail or does not provide concrete examples when comparing programs observed.	Effectively describes the classroom environment and student-teacher interactions observed and experienced.
adequately in his or her abilities, struggles/limitations, experiences as a teacher in programs observed.	Reflects on his or her abilities, struggles/limitations, experiences, but does not apply that information to the programs observed.	Reflects on his or her own abilities, struggles/limitations, and experiences as a learner/teacher by including concrete examples from programs observed.
utilize the information provided from the experience to professional development goals.	Uses information provided from the experience, but does not connect that information to individual goals.	Effectively uses the information from the experience and the evaluation setting to new professional development goals.
ent errors detract from meaning; Weak sentence structure	Sentences convey meaning; Inconsistent errors that detract from meaning+4	Well-organized sentence structure; Minimal errors do not interfere with meaning
		Points Earned <u>28</u>/30