

The Reflective Journal: Week 9

This past week was my first week teaching everything, including the first five days of my unit. I have learned that teachers do make millions of decisions in one day and that it is exhausting, but it is worth every minute of it. This week, I had a student write me an apology letter, another student told me thank you for giving them fun math review worksheets, and one student even hugged me and I never thought he would.

My goals for this week was to give clear directions, repeat the directions more than once, and ask questions to make sure the students understand. Overall, I believe that I have made progress with each of these goals, but I still need to consciously work on them. For example, I think that I am giving clear directions and when I ask if the class understands, they say yes. However, once they get started, they are confused. To help this, I need to ask one student to repeat the directions for the class. Also, I have repeated the directions more than once and a couple of times this week, I wrote them on the board. Additionally, I need to ask more questions throughout the lesson instead of just observing the students.

My most proud moment this week was my first lesson in my unit. I explained to the students how I have planned a unit for two weeks and most of the activities are fun and are usually things they do not do. I told them that if they cannot handle the activity, that they will be spent into the hallway and doing worksheets. I asked if they understood and they all said, "Yes ma'am." The first lesson was a four corners activity to introduce the five civic duties. I explained the rules and modeled a practice round. After I stated the statement about the civic the students had to choose if they strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement. Then, I asked one person from each group to explain why they choose their corner. After the activity was over, I had each student state how he or she felt and had him or her explain why on a worksheet. While listening to and reading the students' explanations, I was truly surprised with how all of the students took the activity seriously and how intelligent their explanations were even if I did not agree with them. The students truly surprised me.

On the other hand, one of my failures this week was on Friday when Mr. York was at a funeral. The morning was going well and the students were analyzing their surveys to find out what we will be doing at Motivate Our Minds, but it took longer than I expected. Then, they took their spelling test and after their test, I handed out a worksheet on symbols of America. They moaned and complained. I gave them time to read it over and work on the questions before we went over it. However, the counselor came in for her lesson and the students stated, "You saved us!" After the counselor's lesson, it was time for recess and we stayed in the classroom, which the students were not happy about. After recess, I told the students that the symbols of America worksheet was homework because we lost too much time today. They started talking all at once and saying that it was not fair. I was a little upset in the morning because of some comments by the students, but at that point I was angry. I try not to show my frustration and anger, but they definitely saw it. I know that this is something that I definitely need to work on and figure out how not to show my feelings.

Throughout this week, Mr. York and I talked about how certain lessons went well and how I could have done other lessons differently. He also made me realize that some of the lessons that did not go how I have planned are because I have been trying out new activities that the students are not used to. Mr. York also provided advice on how to make my future lessons better, such as providing the students with a reference sheet in math. Additionally, we also talked about how the short videos from YouTube have been getting the students motivated and engaged

before each lesson. Overall, the week went well. I learned a lot about how to adapt my teaching style to the students' needs, how to make decisions quickly, and truly learned the life of a teacher.