

Professional Development Day Reflection

Date of Experience: Fall 2013 Semester

Description of Experience:

During my student teaching experience at Audubon Elementary I had the opportunity to participate in Professional Development Days. The “PD” days took place on a Friday, where the students got the day off. All teachers were required to attend the day long development. In the morning we met as a school and discussed through power points and handouts provided by the principal and vice principal ways in which we could improve our school. A great deal of our focus was put on standardized testing and what we were doing in our class to accommodate students who were at the lower end of our testing scale. We then broke into our grade level teams and collaborated. We were able to see what other teachers were doing in their classrooms regarding grammar, writing, math, science and social studies curriculum. Even though I am only teaching Language Arts currently, it was great to see what other teachers are using in their classes and how I can possibly translate that to my classroom. Collaboration is highly effective if done correctly and we were able to plan our units and discuss as a team changes that needed to be made in our discipline system.

Wisconsin Teacher Standard Alignment:

This artifact aligns with Standard 6: Teachers communicate well. *The teacher uses effective verbal and nonverbal communication techniques as well as instructional media and technology to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.*

This experience aligns beautifully with Standard 6 because using Professional Development Days to create coherence within your school is a strong communication tactic for a school to use. During my student teaching at Audubon Elementary, Professional Development Days were required and for good reason; communication among staff members.

In the morning, the head of our special education department had created a visual walk through that showed the different ways each grade level and subject was being inclusive in their classroom. Audubon prides itself in being able to provide an inclusive classroom environment. Through displays I was able to see the different ways each teacher used inclusion: journals, hands on projects, daily starters, and different styles of assessments. I was able to ask each teacher how it worked in their classroom and think about how or if I could incorporate it into mine.

For further support in communicative technologies, our principal gave a power point and handouts to discuss NWEA testing scores and how we can best improve upon them within our entire school and test preparation techniques. He emphasized focusing on our students who are on the border of meeting; what can be done to bump their scores slightly higher. This was

beneficial for communication because we were able to discuss as an entire school the testing prep and process. We were able to see where our school fell compared to other schools in our district's scores. We were able to ask questions and give suggestions to our fellow peers.

At the end of the day we were able to meet with our grade level teams and discuss Unit plans, discipline procedure and what could be done to improve it. Through the discussion of Unit Plans I was able to collaborate with the Social Studies teacher to implement a Unit for next semester focusing on the holocaust. The text I use will correlate with his discussions in class. This collaboration and discussion is helpful not only to me as a teacher but for the students. They are able to have a structured focus for the Unit. They are able to see where Reading and Writing correlate with Social Studies.

In my future teaching job, I hope to have a school and staff that work as closely as the ones at Audubon Elementary. Being able to communicate with your team is crucial to providing the best possible education for your students. When everyone is on the same page with discipline, rules, curriculum and guidelines, there is less room for problems to occur. Constant communication is a key to the success of any relationship.

This artifact further aligns with:

Standard 7- Teachers are able to plan different kinds of lessons.

Standard 10- Teachers are connected with other teachers and the community.

UW-Platteville School of Education Knowledge, Skill, Disposition Statement Alignment:

This experience aligns with KSD4.e *Grows and Develops Professionally*. The candidate is aware of opportunities for professional development to improve content knowledge and pedagogical skill and can take an active role in assisting other educators.

Through having Professional Development days, this alignment is accurately addressed by using the professionals within my school to share, question and present ideas that would better help our students and our school, succeed. Through visual aids, multimedia presentations, handouts, examples of student work and discussion we as educators were able to take an active role in assisting our peers and students. Through collaboration and the sharing of ideas we were able to expand our curriculums to better address the common core standards and be more comprehensive and structured in our daily lessons.

Secondary Alignment:SD4.d. *Contributes to the School and District*. The candidate is able to assume a leadership role among colleagues and is supportive and cooperative with peers and volunteers, and serves as a participant and leader in school events and school and district projects.

Personal Reflection:

What I learned about teaching/learning from this experience

During this experience I learned the importance of communication in the workplace. Having a teaching staff and administrators that talk to one another on a regular basis are able to better see where improvements need to be made within the school. Often times small problems go unaddressed until “big” moments such as report card pick up. By this time, the small problem has become bigger and everyone is on a different page. Through constant communication we as teachers are better able to individually address the needs of our students. For example, a student who struggles to complete assignments on time in my class may be excelling in another class. It would be to my benefit and that student’s benefit to find out what helps them excel in another class. Perhaps simply changing something as minimal as letting them type assignments; as opposed to writing them by hand could be the difference in their work ethic in my classroom. Being able to bounce ideas off of my colleagues is another huge positive to communicating. Through PD days at Audubon, I was able to see so many great ideas that other teachers in my school were using such as interactive grammar journals. Why reinvent the wheel, right? I was not only able to get great ideas through communication with the other teachers, but I was also able to collaborate and get resources so that I could use those tools in my future classroom.

What I learned about myself as a prospective educator from this experience

I learned that as a future teacher I need to utilize the other professionals in my school. It is so easy to become secluded with your own workload that you forget about the resources around you that can help to lighten the load. Building relationships with the teachers within my school and on the team is crucial to not only our success as a school but to the students’ success. They can tell when teachers have a positive bond and communicate well. I learned that as a prospective educator I will make a great effort to develop strong verbal relationships with the people in my school. When everyone is playing for the same team and knows what is going on, it is much easier to win.