

Pre-Clinical Reflection – Ticket to Student Teaching

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Location St. Paul's Lutheran Grade School, Concordia, MO

Subjects Taught Language/Grammar

Brief Summary

Present a holistic summary description of your Pre-Clinical teaching experience. Include a profile of your students so that the university supervisor has a better understanding of the context.

For my Pre-Clinical teaching experience, I taught a 6th grade Language class for 2 days. I was intending on teaching a lesson all three days, but there was a miscommunication in the schedule for Wednesday, April 4, so I did not teach a lesson that day and ended up teaching my Day 2 lesson on the third day. There were 18 kids in the class, but one student went to the resource room for Language, so I only taught 17 students. I did not know much about these students before doing my Pre-Clinical except for the fact that this class had been tagged “problematic” by many past teachers. I was told by my mentor teacher that most of the students didn’t do their homework and didn’t feel the need to. She also mentioned that the class mostly acts at a 5th grade level, and more specifically, writes mostly in sentence fragments because they don’t understand the difference between that and complete sentences. Based off of this information, I decided to do my two lessons on parts of speech and clauses, respectively. For my parts of speech lesson, I wanted to review all 8 parts together, so we did that as a class before breaking up into groups for an activity/competition. For the second lesson, I broke down the different aspects of independent and dependent clauses, pointing out how they are similar and different before doing a review Jeopardy game as a class.

Analytical Reflection

Please reflect on the components listed below for each day of your Pre-Clinical Teaching Experience. Note strengths as well as modifications for the future.

1. *Hook* – For day 1, I failed to incorporate one main, overarching hook. All I did was ask the students to name the 8 parts of speech from memory. This seems like a simple task, and while it was, it also got the students to start thinking at the beginning of class as they pulled from their deep memory the different parts they had learned earlier in

the year. For the second day, my hook was the video *Subjects and Predicates* by Schoolhouse Rock. I liked using the video to introduce the students to the day's topic because it was different from what they're used to, and Schoolhouse Rock is catchy. If I use these lessons again, I would show the *Subjects and Predicates* video as the hook for day 1 before reviewing the parts of speech, and I would show *Conjunction Junction* for the second day.

2. *Tapping into prior knowledge* – On day 1, I tapped into prior knowledge by asking the students to identify the 8 parts of speech from memory. They had to pull from their deep memory to do this, but I then led from a basic recall of the terms to a deeper understanding what each part is and how it functions. For day 2, I again tapped into prior knowledge through the hook. The students were able to take what they knew about subjects and verbs and make an easier transition into independent and dependent clauses. If done again, I would use *Conjunction Junction* to tap into students' prior knowledge of the most common conjunctions and then lead into subordinate conjunctions.

3. *Setting a purpose* – On day 1, I stated the purpose immediately after the hook to let the students know why it is important to be able to identify the different parts of speech. For day 2, I also stated the purpose immediately after the hook to give students a brief preview of the upcoming lesson. I didn't include a bigger-picture connection for the second day, so I would add that in if I taught the lesson again.

4. *Vocabulary strategy* – My vocabulary strategy for day 1 was repetition. For the activity, I wrote a sentence on the board and the students had to, in their group, classify each word as one of the parts of speech. We did this for close to 30 minutes, so the repetition was how I got students using the vocabulary. On the second day, I had the students fill out a graphic organizer identifying the similarities and differences between independent and dependent clauses. For the future, I would have something more concrete for day 1's vocabulary, possibly another graphic organizer, to help students remember and understand better.

5. *Comprehension strategy* – My comprehension strategy for the first day is the same as my vocabulary strategy. I informally assessed students as they worked in the activity to gauge how well they were comprehending the content. For day 2, I used a Jeopardy game about independent and dependent/subordinate clauses to informally assess how well the students were understanding the content. In the future, I would adapt the second activity to keep students engaged better throughout, and I would include something more concrete to go with both activities to better assess students of their comprehension. For the first activity, I would use shorter sentences so we could cover more examples because we only got through 5 sentences in 30 minutes.

6. *Methodology* – For both days, I chose to focus more on student engagement than on formal assessments because I knew that keeping students engaged would be better for their needs than homework. For the first day specifically, I made the activity a competition so the students would be better motivated to learn, even if it was because of an external reward. For the second day, I used a pre-made Jeopardy game I found online

(<https://jeopardylabs.com/play/independent-subordinate-clauses>). The game wasn't bad per se, but most of the questions asked the same thing, which was to simply identify if a clause was independent or subordinate. In the future, I will create my own review game with a wider variety of questions – questions that challenge the students at a higher level of thinking.

7. *Organization of lesson plans* – In my lesson plans, I organized the procedure section with bullet points of everything I wanted to cover in the lesson. The first day, I didn't include many examples for each vocab word, if any, so I would organize my lesson plans better for next time and include specific examples in the procedure section so I don't waste time thinking of any. For the second day, I did a better job of including the examples as I organized my lesson. It wasn't as good as it could have been, so I would fix that for this lesson as well.

8. *Assessment* – For both days, the only assessments I had were informal assessments throughout the lessons. I paid attention to how quickly or slowly students were picking up on the content and adjusted the pace accordingly. I also had the two activities and informally assessed at the end of the lesson that the students had a solid understanding. When I taught the second lesson, I started by reviewing the vocabulary from the first lesson two days prior and I again informally assessed that students retained and understood the parts of speech. The students also filled out a graphic organizer for the second lesson, and while I didn't take a grade on this, I would in the future, to make sure students were able to connect the ideas. In the future, I will add an exit ticket, graphic organizer, or something else to the first lesson, something that's concrete and I can physically see that students understand.

9. *Class management* – Class management was something I hadn't thought much about beforehand because I was focusing on how I would keep students engaged. I assumed students knew the rules, which I know now I should never do. I didn't have a problem with this, but I should have clearly stated my expectations for their behavior during the activities so there would be less “damage control” during and more time doing the activity.

10. *Pacing* – For both days, I controlled my pacing by having a basic outline of my lesson plan in front of me. For the first lesson, I had it written on a half sheet of paper and my example sentences for the activity were written on the back. With the second lesson, I had my computer sitting on the podium up front with my lesson plan open. I didn't read straight from the lesson plan, but instead used it as a general guide so I didn't forget to cover any important ideas. Both methods were essentially the same thing, but I found that having my lesson plan up on my computer was more efficient because I didn't keep losing my spot, so I would change this for the first lesson. Overall, I adjusted the pacing based on the informal assessment I was getting from the students through discussion and questions.

11. *What did you use for the pre-assessment? Briefly summarize the data.
What did you use for post-assessment? Summarize the data.
Provide evidence that you were successful in increasing student understanding.*

As I've mentioned already, I didn't have a solid pre- and post-assessment. All I went off for a pre-assessment was the survey the students filled out beforehand. From this, I learned that only one-third of the class enjoyed their Language class. I had small, quick pre-assessments for the hook of each day when I asked questions to tap into students' prior knowledge and informally assess where they stood on information recall. I would definitely change this for next time and incorporate at least an entrance and/or exit ticket so I could have something concrete to analyze. As for evidence of increasing student understanding, this was lacking because the assessments were lacking. The only evidence I had was that the students were continually engaged in the lessons, genuinely wanting to keep going and that they only had a handful of wrong answers by the end of the lesson.

Holistic Reflection

What did you learn as a result of this experience? How has this experience impacted your perception of self as a teacher? (1 page)

My Pre-Clinical experience was the best experience I have had with practicum and field experience. I was actually able to create and teach a lesson for the first time, instead of writing a lesson plan that might never see a classroom or leading a review in a classroom with no prior planning. Overall, I learned from my mentor teacher, the students, and my mistakes.

From my mentor teacher, I learned to be flexible. There was a miscommunication in the class schedule between Mrs. Hinck and the art teacher, so I was unable to teach on the second day. Because of this, I ended up pushing my second lesson back a day and didn't teach a third lesson. I was a little bummed at first, but I knew the whole thing was out of my hands and all I could do was accept the situation. Mrs. Hinck also pointed out to me that I have a calming attitude as I was able to keep the kids from becoming too

crazy throughout the lesson. I had never noticed this feature of my teaching style, but in pointing this out to me, Mrs. Hinck taught me how to be a little more confident.

From the students, I learned that not every lesson needs to be extravagant. I was nervous to teach the first lesson because I thought it would be too simple for them, but as the students became more engaged in the lesson, I started to relax. I realized a simple activity of identifying words by their part of speech can be enjoyable if it's presented the right way. The students' willing attitudes and participation assured me that I didn't need to be so nervous about the lesson, and I learned that less can be more.

Lastly, I learned from my mistakes. I learned that things don't always go as planned, but that doesn't necessarily mean everything will crash and burn. I knew as I was teaching my lessons that some things were working and others weren't, but most importantly, my mistakes taught me that I always have room for improvement. I can always grow as a teacher and I can always grow my lessons.