Science: weaker intern

Exit Performance Description [redacted]
Major: Biology—Minor: English

Teaching Situation

During his internship year, [redacted] worked at [redacted] High School, an urban school in the [redacted] area. [redacted] High School houses approximately [redacted] students, with 76 percent African American students, 13 percent Caucasian students, nine percent Hispanic students, and two percent Asian students. Approximately 49 percent of [redacted] students qualify for the free and reduced lunch program.

[redacted] taught within several biology classes, including one honors period. From the beginning of the internship sequence, [redacted] taught one section of biology throughout the entire year. He also worked to observe and co-teach in his mentor's other biology classes. At two different times in his first semester, [redacted] also taught within one or two additional sections of biology. Then, from February to April, [redacted] worked within a ten-week lead-teaching situation, in which he taught four sections of biology. During his lead teaching, [redacted] was forced to suspend his teaching for about 10 days due to an illness; he then extended his lead teaching for several weeks to accommodate the disruption in his overall schedule. [redacted] worked within a block schedule, and learned to adapt lessons to both 55-minute blocks and 90-minute blocks.

The Four Program Standards

Michigan State University's Teacher Education program follows four major program standards for elementary and secondary teacher training. These standards are consistent with the objectives and standards for teaching excellence at both the state and national level. The following report is structured within the framework of these program standards: 1) Knowing subject matters and how to teach them; 2) Working with students; 3) Creating and managing a classroom learning community; 4) Working and learning in a school and profession.

Knowing Subject Matters and How to Teach Them

[redacted] exemplifies a good working knowledge of biological concepts. Throughout his internship experience [redacted] struggled with finding methods of presenting biology subject matter in an engaging curriculum of understanding, and toward the end of this year, he began to find some sources—including other teachers and Internet resources—to use in meeting these goals. Though [redacted] originally felt unsure when he could not answer a difficult student question, he recently implemented a process in which students could gain extra credit by researching the answers to such questions; he seems much more comfortable within these situations as he ends his year.

As [redacted] shouldered more responsibility as the lead teacher, he began writing his own tests and assessments. He is beginning to make connections between such assessments and the types of review sessions and materials that he plans. [redacted] should now begin to think about analyzing his

assessments, especially tests, to determine their effectiveness in telling him what students understand, along with how to change his teaching in the future.

Working with Students

As a first-time teacher with little experience with large urban classrooms, [redacted] initially struggled with initiating student relationships both within the classroom and within the overall school community. Because his honors section had a smaller number of students, positive relationships seemed to form more quickly in this classroom. As [redacted] ends his internship year, he shows improvement in getting to know his students, especially by overtly attempting to gain new knowledge about students each week. [redacted] taught in a tiered lecture hall with the seats bolted to the floor, which caused a major problem with moving throughout the classroom. Toward the end of his internship, [redacted] began moving throughout the room with more confidence in order to meet small group and individual student needs.

One of [redacted]'s major goals for this year was to apply active learning concepts within his classroom; he stated that his major reason for wanting to teach is to help people feel engaged in science. Though he often struggled to find such activities for his classroom, [redacted] ends the semester with several positive examples of this type of learning in his classes. For example, he found a genetics activity on the Internet; the activity involved a hands-on lesson about genetics and Punnett squares.

Creating and Managing a Classroom Learning Community

Due to the newness of his placement, [redacted] also had difficulty in working out classroom management issues. In his final observation, [redacted] showed improvement in his ability to scan the classroom and call on specific students in order to bring the group to attention. One of his best moves has been the addition of a daily opening activity in which he asks his students a question to help them settle into their work, as well as to help engage them in the biological subject of the day. In addition, in his second semester, [redacted] decided to implement a behavioral contract with his students, thus emphasizing classroom rules and norms. [redacted] now needs to focus on enforcing the consequences set within this contract.

Toward the end of his internship, [redacted] began to find that by knowing his students and their needs, he could create a more successful learning community within his classes. After his last observation, he mentioned that he was keeping specific students in mind when planning his units. For example, one of his honor students is very religious, so he prepared for his evolution unit with this information in mind.

Working and Learning in a School and Profession

This is an area where [redacted] has shown some growth this year. Though he did not initially take advantage of the multiple resources within his school community, he has ended his year with some observations with other teachers and some attention to professional development measures. After a period of adjustment, [redacted] began to attend meetings and in-services with his mentor, along with joining in on some extra-curricular events. When his schedule permitted, [redacted]

attended an after-school weight lifting club established by another science teacher. In addition, [redacted] has attended several rounds of parent-teacher conferences.

As he ends his internship year, [redacted] is beginning to take responsibility for his own learning and professional development. His most important discovery was the importance of actively observing other teachers in order to inform his practices. In addition, he has begun developing his journals and reflections in a productive and successful manner.

Conclusion

[redacted] has shown some definite growth, especially in his final internship months. He is working to develop relationships with all of his students, and he is searching for sources of engaging activities to help his students gain a better understanding of science. [redacted] is on a positive path toward becoming an effective science teacher.

Signature: [redacted] Field Instructor

Date: 5-7[redacted]