

Future Teachers Early Clinical Project Reflection Focus and Reflections

DAY 1: CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Today the focus is on the classroom environment (how the room is arranged).

- How are the students' desks or seats arranged?
- What kinds of work areas are present in the classroom?
- Where does the teacher keep his or her materials? (Is there a teacher desk? If so, where is it?)
- How has the teacher arranged book and supply shelves?
- What do you see on the walls and/or bulletin boards?
- What technology is available in the classroom?
- What kinds of materials are accessible to the students?
- How is diversity of society evident in the classroom environment? (For example, do you see bulletin boards, books, or other materials that include people of color, people with disabilities, or people of different cultural or economic backgrounds?)

Reflections

- What did you observe in this classroom that stood out to you? Why?
- Why do you think the classroom is arranged as it is?
- How does the classroom environment contribute to learning?

DAY 2: STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOM

Today the focus is on the students in the classroom.

- How many students are present? Are there any students absent?
- What is the male/female ratio?
- What similarities do you notice among the students?
- What differences do you notice among the students?
- What kinds of personalities or behaviors do you observe?
- How do the students interact with one another?
- What characteristics that support learning do you observe among the students?

Reflections

- Were there any interactions between students that surprised you?
- How did the differences among students enrich learning?
- Write about one student who stood out to you today and tell why.

DAY 3: ADULTS IN THE CLASSROOM

Today the focus is on the teacher and other adults in the classroom.

- Identify the adults in the classroom, describe what they are doing, and note how long they remain in the classroom.
- Observe how much time the teacher spends with the whole class, small groups, and individual students.
- What role do support staff personnel play in the classroom?
- What diversity do you observe among adults in the building?

Reflections

- What did you discover about the roles and responsibilities of adults in the classroom?
- What did you learn from the tasks you performed today?
- How do the adults in the classroom serve as role models for the students? (Consider gender, ethnicity, and other aspects of diversity.)

DAY 4: INTERACTIONS BETWEEN TEACHER AND STUDENTS

Today the focus is on interactions between the teacher and the students.

- What is the format for instruction: lecture, hands-on activities, read-aloud, discussion, students working at the board, centers, or other?
- How does the teacher engage students, especially those not actively involved in the lesson?
- What interactions between the teacher and students do you observe (verbal and non-verbal)?
- Does the teacher interact differently with different students? In what way? If you see differences, what might account for them?

Reflections

- Over the four sessions you've imagined, what have been the most effective classroom management practices you've observed?
- What is the impact of students having an opportunity to interact with an adult role model

DAY 5: STUDENT TO STUDENT INTERACTIONS

Today, the focus is on interactions between students.

- What kinds of peer interactions are taking place (verbal/non-verbal, off-task/on-task, etc.)?
- What different languages do students speak within the classroom? What differences do you notice in vocabulary used by students speaking English?
- How do the students speak to one another?
- What kinds of interactions do you observe within and between subgroups of the class (gender, ethnicity, social cliques, etc.)?

Reflections

- What surprised you about the student interactions today?
- What was the high-point/low-point of your clinical experience today?
- What portion of the student interactions seemed to be schoolwork-related?
- Why and how did some students dominate interactions?
- What evidence of respect for one another did you observe in student interactions?

DAY 6: STUDENTS AS INDIVIDUALS

Today the focus is on the individual and his/her interactions with others.

Choose one (or two) student(s) to observe.

- What interactions do you observe between the student and other people, including you?
- What did the student do during: whole class discussions, small group, independent work time, or other activities?
- Observe some of the following: physical distance between those communicating, eye contact, facial and body language, volume and tone of voice, inflection, number and kinds of questions asked, topics discussed.

Reflections

- What surprised you about your student's interactions today?
- What portion of the observed student's interactions seemed to be schoolwork-related?
- How would you describe the social skills of this student? (On what do you base this assessment?)
- What was the cultural background of the student? Of what you observed, what might be connected to his/her cultural background? Why?
- What conclusions might you draw about this student, based upon your observations of his/her physical distance, etc?

DAY 7: A DIFFERENT STUDENT

Today again the focus is on the individual student and his/her interactions with others.

Choose one (or two) different student(s) to observe.

- What interactions do you observe between the student and other people, including you?
- What did the student do during: whole class discussions, small group, independent work time, or other activities?
- Observe some of the following: physical distance between those communicating, eye contact, facial and body language, volume and tone of voice, inflection, number and kinds of questions asked, topics discussed.

Reflections

- What surprised you about your student's interactions today?
- What portion of the observed student's interactions seemed to be schoolwork-related?
- How would you describe the social skills of this student? (On what do you base this assessment?)
- What was the cultural background of the student? Of what you observed, what might be connected to his/her cultural background? Why?
- What conclusions might you draw about this student, based upon your observations of his/her physical distance, etc?
- How was today's student the same/different from the student you observed during the previous session?

DAY 8: CULMINATING REFLECTIONS

Today the focus is on pulling together all your experiences over the past weeks.

Before making your observations, review your field notes from the previous seven visitations, and highlight both the focus for each day and those observations you found most interesting.

- Up until today, you have been observing in a "high needs" (indicates diverse student population with high poverty rate) classroom for individual aspects of classroom life. Now, step back and take a look at the big picture. Consider how these previous, focused observations collectively inform your knowledge of teaching and learning.

Reflections

- Write about your thoughts and feelings during the past weeks. As you reflect, consider the entire imagined experience.
- What experiences matched your expectations?
- What changes have you observed over time in this classroom?
- What are your hopes or goals for one of the students with whom you worked?
- What would be a challenge/joy of being a teacher in this classroom?
- Can you see yourself as a teacher in an environment like the one you have imagined? Why or why not?
- Based on this imagined clinical experience, what issues have you identified that you want to learn more about in future classroom experiences?