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Reflection on Student Teaching Experience

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I decided in high school that I wanted to become a teacher. At first, I only wanted to become a teacher so that I could become a coach. However, after being up in front of a classroom I realized that I really enjoyed teaching and helping students learn. I also love the look on a student's face when the light bulb clicks. This realization has only been reaffirmed throughout my student teaching. One of the areas I have gotten to explore in student teaching that is hard to do in practicums is building student relationships. I believe that my students like me, but they also respect me. They understand that there is a time for jokes and a time for business. I can sit down and have an honest conversation with my students about their day. I can then instantly switch gears and cover the objectives without any arguments from them. My students trust me enough to let me get to know them. They tell me about their weekends, and if they have a problem within school they come and talk to me. Finally, my students also want to get to know me. They are always asking questions about where I'm from and what college is like. These questions make me feel like I have been welcomed into their school.

Three strengths that I believe I possess as a teacher are I develop my own in-class activities. I can facilitate a discussion with pre planned questions of varying thinking levels, which encourages students to analyze and synthesize information. Finally, I am also able to use proximity control in order to maintain a level of focus within the classroom.

One project that I developed on my own was a Nationalism activity. The activity used collaborative groups and encouraged students to use higher order thinking. Students were divided into groups and each group had a specific territory and ethnic group that they were assigned to. They then had to figure out how the territory would be divided up among the different ethnic groups. Some groups chose to team up with groups that had similar languages, religions, and ethnicities. Other groups that were different from everyone else argued that they should be their own independent country because they were so different from everyone else. This is exactly what I wanted to happen. The students were actively engaged in the lesson and very enthusiastic. Some students even went a step further and tried to gain allies throughout the class in order to gain more territory. One student even tried to take over all of Europe. Even though this was not the point of the assignment, students were learning about the intricacies of foreign diplomacy. This was an unintended learning outcome that happened because of student creativity.

After this activity, I facilitated a class discussion over what had happened in the activity. Many students were able to pick up on the idea that groups with the same characteristics teamed up and groups with different characteristics wanted independence. They used key vocabulary words, such as nationalism and revolutions, while answering questions. This discussion demonstrated the student's knowledge of the subject. This also served as a form of formative assessment. I was able to gauge whether any of the material we had just covered needed to be re-taught.

I also was able to maintain a level of control over the classroom, even though this was a relatively louder activity. I was able to do this through proximity control. I walked around the

room to make sure each group was on task. The students enjoyed the activity and were on task throughout the activity and discussion. I am not a very big yeller. Even though I have a loud voice, I do not think that yelling is the best way to get through to students. I like to use the strategy of proximity control. This strategy helps avoid conflict in the classroom, and is a very peaceful way to manage the classroom.

One area where I could look to grow as a teacher would be my summative assessment. I need to find a balance of higher order thinking questions and comprehension questions. My plan for improving this is to examine other teacher's summative assessments and get ideas from other professionals. I can also go to teacher workshops designed to focus on making better summative assessment. Finally, I can do my own research and look for new ways to assess students.