
WORK BASED LEARNING JOURNAL

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Abstract

My name is Grace Mozingo. I am a senior at South Pointe High School. In third grade, I decided I wanted to be a teacher. I tried to take the teacher cadet class offered at South Pointe, but it would not fit into my schedule. I was given the opportunity to complete an internship. I completed my internship with Mrs. Sanders, who teaches seventh grade math at Saluda Trail.

Job description: While I was interning at Saluda Trail, I performed numerous activities. Some of my responsibilities while interning included:

- Grading papers
- Helping students one-on-one
- Walking around to check students' work
- Making copies
- Organizing papers

This journal includes multiple entries that explain what I have learned through this internship.

Importance of Teachers

Mucella Ulug, Melis Seray Ozden, and Ahu Eryilmaz conducted a study to test the effects of teachers' attitudes on students' personality and performance. This study is relevant to this internship because it discusses how a teacher should carry herself to ensure the best results from her students. This is the analysis of the results of this study¹:

2. Analysis and findings

The participants' expressions were subjected to meta analysis. The findings and results of the research are presented in tables and graphics in order to provide visual ease.

Participants generally describe teachers' positive attitude as compassionate, understanding, helpful, seeing the student as an individual, being friendly and interested, communicating, being genuine and tolerant, supporting, motivating and encouraging participation in social events. Teachers' negative attitude is listed as discrediting, vengeful, too disciplined, uninterested, favoritism, being angry, not caring, being intolerant, not understanding and being inconsistent.

When considering the effect of the teacher's positive attitude on performance of the student, positive attitude by the teacher can improve student success as can be seen in the graphic below (Fig. 1). According to responses from participants, 91.2% believed a positive attitude increased performance, 0.9% believed it lowered success while 7.9% felt it had no effect on performance.

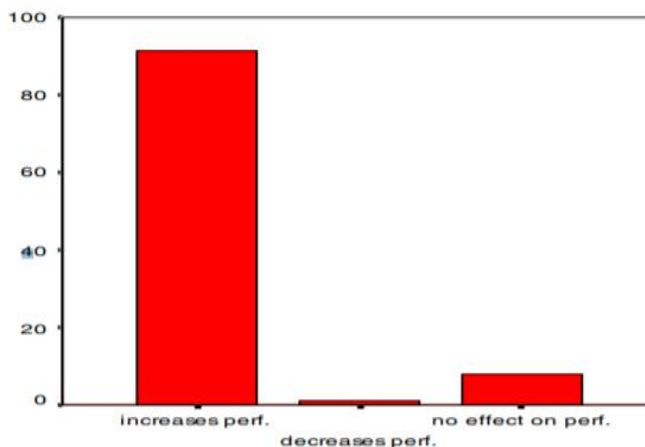


Figure 1. The effects of teachers' positive attitude on students' performance

When considering the effect of the teacher's positive attitude on the student's personality development, we can see that a positive attitude has a positive effect on the personality development of the student as is clearly seen in the graphic below (Fig. 2). According to answers received from participants, 88.3% believed a positive attitude had positive effect on personality development, 11.5% felt it had no effect at all and 0.3% stated that it had a negative effect on personality development.

¹ Ulug, Mucella, et al. "The Effects of Teachers' Attitudes on Students' Personality and Performance." *The Effects of Teachers' Attitudes on Students' Personality and Performance*, pp. 1–5., file:///C:/Users/012845205/Desktop/1-s2.0-S1877042811019690-main.pdf.

Journal Entry #1 – Changing Up Class and Students Receiving Help

I know from personal experience that classes that are always the same can become extremely boring. After this internship, I know that the same class routine can be boring for the teacher as well as the student. To combat boredom, Mrs. Sanders is very good about changing up class. As I was observing her class, she did multiple different activities.

- 1) When she does have to do a lecture style of teaching, she amazingly engages her student. The other day, she was teaching about ratios, specifically, unit rates. She sat down at a desk with her students and she got them to think about the real world. She asked, what real world uses are there for unit rates? The students engaged with this question, and it made the lecture much more enjoyable.
- 2) Mrs. Sanders has allowed different engaging activities. In the inequalities and equations unit, she had her advance class work on a cell phone activity. The activity had several different cell phone plans. The students had to come up with an equation for each plan and answer several questions regarding what plan was best for different situations.
- 3) Another activity is the way she designs reviews for assessments. The students can work at their own pace, by doing the activities given to them in canvas.
- 4) Sometimes, it is a simple printed out worksheet the students work on during the class period.

While these activities are occurring, Mrs. Sanders makes herself available to her students. One class period, students were working on a scavenger hunt around the room, and Mrs. Sanders and I walked around the room and answered questions. Also, if the class is self-paced for the day, students are allowed to come up to Mrs. Sanders as needed and she will provide help. She makes it a priority to make sure all students are receiving the help they need.

From this internship, I learned several different ways to run a classroom. I also learned how important it is for students to get the help they need. The help can be in the form of a small group or individual, but regardless teachers need to provide needed help.



ASSISTING STUDENTS IN
COMPLETING A FRACTION
SCAVENGER HUNT

Journal Entry #2 – Knowing if a Student Should be Moved Up

In 6th grade, my teachers, guidance counselor, and parents decided to move me up from advanced classes to double advanced classes; instead of taking 7th grade math, I took pre-algebra as a 6th grader. This decision to pull me up has had a positive impact on me to this day. Since I was able to take Geometry in 8th grade, I had Pre-Calculus on my schedule for 10th grade. Therefore, I can take IB Math and AP Calculus in my senior year. Because I was pulled up in middle school, I was set me on a path of success for high school.

Due to my personal experience, it is important to me that a student is in a class that is most challenging to them. While I was interning, Mrs. Sanders taught me some key signs that suggest a student should be moved from regular classes to advanced classes. Some signs include:

- 1) The student is studious and willing to work hard in the class.
- 2) The student asks critical thinking questions that take the problem discussed to a different level.
- 3) The student can reason with numbers and does not always have to know the detailed process of how to do a math problem in order to get the correct answer.
- 4) The student excels on current examinations.
- 5) The student's test scores are high. (Teachers should not considered this factor first.)

It is important I learn these signs so I will be able to judge my future students and make sure they are benefitting from their education in as many ways as possible.

Journal Entry #3 – Flexible Grouping

One day I walked into the classroom at the time I usually arrive, but the kids in the class were not the kids I was used to seeing. It turns out that Mrs. Sanders and the other seventh grade teachers had designed something called “flexible grouping.” This system provides students with the help that they need to fully grasp the topic they are learning.

The teachers compiled an exit slip for the students to complete. Then based on the results of the exit slip, students were split into three groups: low, medium, and high. Then each of the three 7th grade teachers decided which group she was going to control. The day of the grouping the students went to the teacher they needed to go to. Mrs. Sanders had some of her kids, but the rest of her students were divided between the other two math teachers. In the “low” group, the students were able to receive intensive one-on-one tutoring and help specific to what they needed. In this group, the teacher retaught the material and was free to focus attention on the students needing extra help. The “medium” group received support in the area they needed, but the teacher did not have to be as hands on. Lastly, the “high” group applied its skills to instructional games or real life situations. Every student benefited by receiving extra help on his or her weak areas.

For a learning environment, flexible grouping is beneficial because it helps teachers establish good rapport with more students than just the ones she sees every day. The students then realize there are other people who want them to succeed.

The seventh grade math teachers had to work together in order for flexible grouping to become reality. Mrs. Sanders explained that collaboration with other teachers is extremely important. She meets with the other seventh grade math teachers weekly. They make sure they are on track with one another with the material they are teaching, they plan for the next weeks, and they discuss what is working and what is not. Flexible grouping grew out of these meetings.

I want to implement flexible grouping when I become an educator because I will be able to provide students with the help they need, and I will be able to get to know more students.

Exit Ticket: Solve the equations. Show your work.

1. $\frac{x-6}{3} = -12$

2. $\frac{2}{5}x - 9 = 3$

3. $4(x+8) - 2x = 22$

AN EXAMPLE OF AN EXIT TICKET STUDENTS HAD TO COMPLETE SO THEY COULD GET PLACED IN A GROUP

Journal Entry #4 – Purposeful Grouping

I did not comprehend how much behind the scenes work a teacher does until I had the privilege of completing this internship. Over my school career, I have worked in many groups; sometimes I was able to pick my groups and other times the teacher already picked the group for me. I did not think anything of teachers picking groups, until I interned under Mrs. Sanders. She taught me what purposeful grouping is. Purposeful grouping is strategically placing students in a partnership or group based on certain factors. Students could be placed together in a group based on their level of grasping; same level students could be matched up, but sometimes a higher-level student is strategically placed with a lower-level student. Other times the factor is merely who the students work with best. However the groups are designed can aid in instruction.

After learning what purposeful grouping was, I had history class one day at South Pointe and my class had been placed into groups chosen by the teacher. I started to question him and I wanted to know why we were in the groups that we were. He admitted to me that he used purposeful grouping as well. As a student, I did not realize how much thought teachers put into their class, but now I understand that even groups have a purpose behind them.

Journal Entry #5 – Classroom Management and Meditation

From Mrs. Sanders I learned that efficient classroom management is important to success of the class as a whole. Mrs. Sanders carefully constructs her seating charts as one of the first steps of classroom management. There is a particular student who tends to start conflict with other students. As a result, Mrs. Sanders places the student around people the student will most likely behave near.

Even if a teacher constructs an amazing seating chart, conflict can still arise. One day, there was an incident in Mrs. Sanders' classroom, and she allowed me to witness how she handled it. Student A was standing in the entrance of the classroom, while Student B was attempting to push a desk in from the hallway. Student B's materials were on his or her desk. When Student B went to push the desk in the classroom, student A stopped the desk and lifted the desk, which knocked Student B's materials off his or her desk. These students had already not gotten along with each other, so this incident catalyzed an unnecessary reaction. Student A and B were yelling at each other in the middle of class. Mrs. Sanders sent one of the students in the hallway and kept the other in the classroom, so that the students were separated from each other. After, the students had calmed down enough to coexist in the classroom, both students joined in instruction.

After the class had ended, Mrs. Sanders decided to have a "Pow-Wow" with the two students. She pulled them into the classroom and stated her purpose for having them there. Basically, she said, "We need to take this time to figure out what is going on. This afternoon was not the first time I have seen you two have trouble with each other, so let's talk it out here." Then, Student A and Student B received an opportunity to share their side of the story entirely, while the other student listened. Mrs. Sanders mediated this affair. It is a situation she has to manage continuously, but because she took the time to mediate, the students do not have as much animosity towards each other.

For my future in education, I learned that conflict in the classroom cannot go unaddressed, but that it does have to be addressed in an appropriate manner. In this circumstance, it was conflict Mrs. Sanders could handle within her classroom. When I become a teacher, observing these events will help me because I will better know how to manage my classroom.

Journal Entry #6 – Communication with Parents

A teacher is not just confined to a classroom; there is so much more to being an educator. One factor I did not consider teachers having to handle is parents. For productive education, a mutual relationship between the parents of a student and the teacher is vital. Mrs. Sanders gave me several tips on how to establish a good rapport with parents.

- 1) I should try to make the first contact something positive about the student, which will show the parent that I care about the student.
- 2) If an incident occurs and I have to contact a parent about behavior, I should call the parent, at least for the first time.
- 3) If I contact a parent about something that needs improvement, I need to follow up with updates and provide positive feedback.

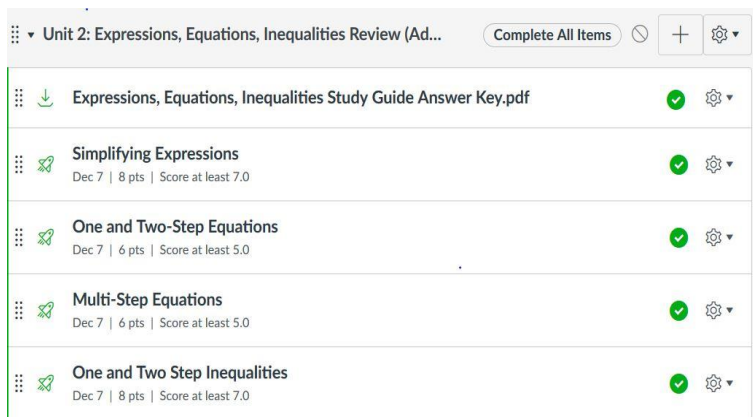
Mrs. Sanders also taught me the importance of documenting communication with parents. She recommended that I create a folder for parents, blind copy myself on all emails, and move the email into the parent folder. I should do this because if a situation arises in which a parent is not agreeing with what I said or words are twisted, I have the folder of emails for my protection. Communication with parents may seem small, but it can have a large impact on a student's education. Therefore, I am glad that Mrs. Sanders gave me some pointers to help navigate parent communication.

Journal Entry #7 – Canvas and Technology

Rock Hill Schools have started a modern learning initiative. As a result, technology is rampant in classrooms, and teachers have to adapt to that. I did not think technology had a very clear place in a math class, but, thankfully, Mrs. Sanders proved me wrong.

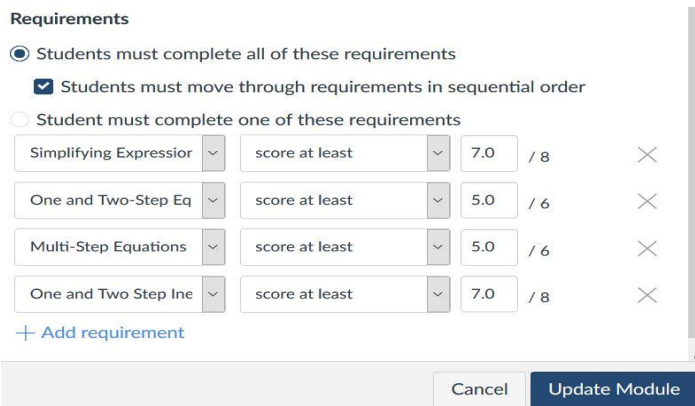
For example, she and the other 7th grade math teachers at Saluda Trail have implemented Canvas into the classroom wonderfully. One way Canvas has been used is to set up review modules before a unit test. Canvas has the option to set up prerequisites in the quiz mode. So, she will make several small quizzes and allow for each student to have two attempts on the material. If the student cannot get the required score, he or she has to walk over to Mrs. Sanders at the table and ask her for another attempt. She will look at their work and help them to understand what they are missing. The prerequisites technology helps to ensure that students do not fall through the cracks and are receiving the help every student deserves. Quizzes in canvas also allow for teacher moderation; Mrs. Sanders can track a student's progress and how much time he or she has spent on the assignment. Also in Canvas, Mrs. Sanders can upload pages for the students to work on and keep track of.

Canvas is a wonderful product and technology has so much potential, but I have learned that if I want technology to be helpful in my future classroom, then I have to implement it effectively, as Mrs. Sanders has.



A SCREENSHOT OF WHAT STUDENTS ARE GIVEN IN THEIR CANVAS, BUT IN STUDENT VIEW THE ONES THEY HAVE NOT UNLOCKED ARE GRAYED OUT

THESE ARE THE SETTINGS A TEACHER CAN SET UP IN CANVAS TO MAKE A REVIEW MODULE



Journal entry #8 – Reasoning with Numbers and Number Talks

In order to be successful, students have to be confident in what they are learning, especially in math. If a student is not comfortable with math and confident with numbers, then the subject will be a challenge for them. Teachers have realized this and developed a technique called “number talks.” Mrs. Sanders has used this technique multiple times.

A number talk is working out a math problem, but not the conventional way. A teacher puts a problem on the board. The problem can be counting shapes, multiplication, addition, subtraction, etc. The student cannot write anything down, including writing things in the air. Also, the student cannot physically count what is on the board. The idea is that the student will come up with a technique to answer the problem. After the student believes he has an answer, he is told to discreetly give a thumbs up. After all students have reached an answer, the teacher asks for answers. She then will write all answers on the board, and give different students an opportunity to explain how they obtained their answer. Eventually, she will tell the students the correct answer, but the most important outcome is the method, not the correct answer.

Because of number talks, students are able to become more confident with numbers and their number reasoning. When a student is taking a test and is not exactly sure how to do the problem, he can sit back, analyze the problem, and reason with the numbers. This technique helps lower-level students because it builds their confidence with the numbers and their number reasoning. However, it is beneficial to advance students as well. Most of the time, an advanced student will jump right into a problem, before considering what is in front of him. The number talks help ensure that the student will examine the problem and the numbers before jumping into the problem too quickly and getting it wrong.

I implemented this technique as a tutor. I was working with a 7th grade math student who was not very confident with his numbers. So, I had him talk the process out to me in order for him to look at the problem first. He explained what was present in the problem, and then how he would go about solving the problem. Number talks are beneficial with the technical procedure, but it also helps in one-on-one settings. When I become a math teacher, I will be sure to help my students get comfortable with the numbers and be intentional about building their confidence in their abilities.