

This was a challenging experience, and I learned a lot through these last eight weeks. The biggest challenge was shifting from the High School environment and schedule into an Elementary School setting. I remember struggling in the first couple of weeks and questioning if I really had what it takes to be a teacher. I know in my heart this is what I want to do with my life and career, but I am not sure that elementary school teaching is what I am meant to do. After the last eight weeks, I think I have grown and could teach elementary school students well enough, but not as well as I want to. I want to be an outstanding teacher, who is passionate about my work with the students and content.

During this experience, I did have successful experiences. The first and foremost was getting students to interact together when reflecting on their projects. This allowed students to not only give each other feedback, but very constructive feedback that the students seem to receive extremely well. I think this was successful for students largely due to being in small groups or pairs, which allowed them to critique each other without the added stress of being critiqued in front of the entire class. Another success towards the end of my elementary school student teaching was the development of relationships with the students. In the last couple of weeks, I was able to learn more student names and open up more with students. I don't feel I developed as strong of relationships with the elementary students as I did with high school students. However, this was quite difficult while teaching 25 classes a week with 600 students, each only having 50 minutes of art in a week.

If I were to do this section of my student teaching again, there are several things I would do differently. I would find a way to start teaching my unit much earlier, but this also means making sure I have a first observation or meeting time set up early with my CSU supervisor and cooperating teacher, so we all are on the same page and limit feelings of uncertainty. I also would find a way to get seating charts or a roster with photos and names printed to help in referring to students' names. I would also not have any observations in the last week of student teaching, nor continue teaching in the last week. Teaching in the last week stretches my abilities to far to keep up with portfolio, job

interviews, and providing the best education experience to all my students. This is something that can't be sacrificed, but I am human and have truly learned the limits of my multitasking capabilities when it comes to working in the classroom. I must be fully present with the students and the last week of student teaching has not allowed me to do so.

After this experience, I am determined to strive to be the best teacher/mentor I can be and continue my journey of growth in this career. I want my students to respect me as the teacher, but also to see me as a mentor they can talk to and approach if something is up. The most important part of my job as a teacher is to care about my students and build those awesome relationships with them. Past that I want to continue to have passion for what I teach and the students I am teaching. I can't wait to see where this career takes me.