

Strengths:

One strength that I feel I have as a teacher is my confidence in the classroom. When I get up in front of a group of students, I feel completely at ease almost all of the time, and I rarely feel nervous. Of course, I get nervous at times right before I teach a big lesson, but as soon as I get into it, that feeling goes away. I feel like this feeling of confidence is evident to my students as well. I think they can tell that I feel comfortable, and in turn, they feel comfortable as well. Before I ever got into the classroom to teach lessons, I always worried and stressed about it so much. Ever since I taught my very first lesson, though, that has never again been an issue for me. I now get excited and look forward to teach every time I get the opportunity, and as soon as I get in front of a class, I feel at ease.

Another area that I feel is a strength for me is my patience with students. I have come across many students who struggle in school, and I have found that I have great patience for those students. This seems like an obvious trait a teacher should have, but I have actually observed some teachers who appear to get frustrated with students when they do not understand something. When I find myself working with a student who does not understand a concept right away, I do my best to find another way to explain it to them so that they can understand it. If that does not work, I try again. When I have seen teachers get frustrated with students, it makes me sad because the students are trying to learn; they just need to learn it a different way.

Challenges:

One challenge I have as a teacher is reading instruction. Reading is something I have very little experience teaching, so that may be why I feel it is a weaker area for me. To me, reading is probably one of the more complicated content areas to teach, and I think I am a little bit intimidated by it. There are just so many different strategies that can be used, and what works for

one student may not work at all for the next. Of course, this is true for all content areas, but for some reason reading just seems like a bigger challenge to me.

Another thing that I have found to be a challenge for me is closure in lessons. I can have a great lesson all planned out, teach it wonderfully, but then the closure is weak. This is something I tried to work on all throughout my practicum experience, and I think I may have been getting better at it toward the end, but I definitely still need more practice. I need to find better, more effective ways to wrap up lessons so that they do not just end so abruptly.

A third challenge that I have noticed is my pace. A few times during my practicum, I felt myself rushing through a lesson. I knew I was doing it, so I tried my best to slow it down when it happened. However, I think this is something I should work on to prevent it from happening at all in the future. I think my tendency to rush comes from trying to get in too much information in too little time.

Goals:

One goal I have for myself is to develop my one-on-one work with students in reading through reading conferences. I have learned a lot about differentiated reading instruction this semester, but I would like to still learn more to make myself feel more capable in that area. I think a big reason why I do not feel confident about it is simply because I do not have much experience in it. The two resources I want to consult are 1) A Teacher's Guide to Reading Conferences: The Classroom Essentials by Jennifer Serravallo and 2) Powerful Practices for Reading Improvement by Kathryn Glasswell, Wilhemina Mostert, Lindsey Judd, and Lesley Mayn.

A second goal I have for myself is to improve my lesson closures. I think closure is an important part of a lesson, because it brings everything together and wraps it up. In order to get better in this area, again, I think more practice will help me. Other than that, I would like to research and learn more about effective strategies for lesson closure. I may also be able to attend some kind of workshop on this topic if the opportunity arises. The two sources I want to consult are:

http://mcps.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_92164/File/General%201/Lesson%20Closure%20Activities.pdf and

<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/22-powerful-closure-activities-todd-finley>.

Finally, a third goal I have for myself is to slow down my pace. I did not always rush through every single lesson, but, like I said, I did notice it on more than one occasion. I always thought if I had more time, I would not have to rush. However, there is only so much time in a day. Because of that, I think I need to learn to prioritize what I am teaching. One strategy is that I will ask my cooperating teacher read my lesson plans with an eye for how long things might take. A second strategy is to have my cooperating teacher video my lesson and then I can review it.