LMS Reflection

LM5210

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Reflection Part 1:

As I start this practicum, I am confident in my abilities and look forward to the opportunity to show other professionals what I can do while being blessed with having those professionals provide feedback and discussion to help me create a stronger foundation for my future.

After 18 hours, I am still confident I will succeed, but know that I need to know more about the book selection (and reading level) available for recommendation to students. I am having a little trouble with knowing which books to recommend for which students because I don’t really know the students well enough. I watch as my mentor pushes students to read books at their level rather than way above or way below even though that is what they may be choosing. The comfort level the students have with their LMS is very apparent as they put back books when she questions their choices. When I get my position, I will need to get to know the books teachers are offering in their reading groups so I can have a ready list of books at equivalent reading levels when students come in to find a book.

With week two completed, I’ve encountered a situation that may come up in my own library some day in the form of a foster grandparent that doesn’t really like kids and has a very proprietary stance on her position as a helper to the LMS. She is very set in her ways and doesn’t appreciate changes or improvements. While I would like to see Kindergarteners able to choose from 36+ books each week, our foster grandmother feels that 28 is the most books that should be available. I’ve watched as my mentor sneaks in more books to give the kids a wider selection. In my own library, I like the idea of having 40 books per Kindergarten classroom being checked out to the kindergarten cart and placed on a rolling wagon that goes to the classroom for students to choose that one book that stays in the classroom. Students could come to library-time bringing one of the books from the library cart from the prior week to return. That setup would allow us to have a printout of all books on the library cart and in the Kindergarten classrooms and the cart books could be borrowed by students from other grades when not being used for Kindergarten book choice time.

Week 3 began with my taking over the Kindergarten Library/Lab time based on an agreed upon topic of study. I identified 3 books out of those suggested by my mentor to use as read-alouds and created a vocabulary list to help students understand the text through pre-teaching of new words. I created a “bugs” spotlight center with related nonfiction and fiction texts that will draw students of all ages to the topic and provide handy finding guides for similar materials through accessing the call numbers of the displayed texts. I began in the lab with a Word document on the large screen which I filled with the students’ answers to “What do you know about butterflies and caterpillars?” This is my pre-assessment which shows that these kids (at least in this class) know a lot about the topic. To keep the process moving along, I indicated that if we went through this quickly that I had a short Youtube video to show. The students were respectful, waiting with hands raised for their turn to speak, and watching as I typed their answers into the document displayed on the big screen. I think that watching words “appear” on a screen is a bit more mesmerizing than watching the teacher write the answers on the white board or easel paper. It also means that I never had my back to my students and because I can touch type I was available to interact throughout the process. After the video, we moved to the story area where I did have to speak to some students about sitting back too far but my mentor has those same discussions when she teaches too. We reviewed the vocabulary and I started reading. By about two-thirds of the way through the book the first student noticed the repeating nature of the story and then shortly after more students noticed. I will add to the KWL (Know portion only) after the second book is read next week or the following week before reading the third book.

Day 2 of the butterfly lesson found me teaching the same lesson as yesterday to a different class with my mentor sitting with the kids. The kids know lots about butterflies and after finding ways to identify who I’m calling on were very willing to share even if it duplicated what was said earlier. We watched the video about the life cycle and went to the story area. After previewing the vocabulary, I read the story but this class didn’t get the repeating nature of the story. Once done they returned to the lab for keyboarding lessons. Just moments before dismissal, students were dismissed from computers to pick books that get piled and brought to the classroom by me after school and line up for dismissal. It was a bit hectic for my mentor as she has bus duty with these kids and needs to have everyone zipped and buttoned and ready to go because she needs to leave the room and they all need to come with her.

Same lesson, day 3. Today’s class was very clingy when my mentor sat with them during the KWL portion and then again when we moved to the story area. This class also did not pick up on the repeating nature of the book but were very interested in the pictures and details of the book. Overall the students know lots about butterflies and caterpillars and did share that they were learning about the topic in the classroom. I think the tie in between last week’s book about the importance of protecting wolves (The Wolves Are Back by Jean Craighead George) and the need to protect butterflies with this week’s book is a valuable experience even if some of the information is already know.

Reflection Part 2:

After some hiccups in my program, it has been decided that I will take an incomplete for my practicum after finishing my required hours and all the assignments except the Reflection. The reflection is to be completed after I finish the courses that should have been taken before the practicum was started. Leave it to me to do things differently. Part 1 of my reflection was written during the first 3 weeks of my practicum and are valuable to include but with the change in the requirements for when the reflection is due and what needs to be included or referenced, I put the reflection to bed until now (December 2014) and this is where I stand as I complete my reflection:

* I have taken
  + LM5010 – Learning Research Centers and Services
  + LM5030 – Reference and Research
  + LM5300 – Advanced Children’s and Young Adult Literature
  + CE5160 – Teaching and Learning in a Networked Classroom
* I am employed at Pittsfield Elementary School
  + As the Library Coordinator, I am responsible for managing a school library collection with an average age of 1994
  + I am scheduled to teach 19 classes from pre-K through 6th grade
  + I am part of a PLC with a Student Learning Objective to accomplish
  + I have a Smartboard available with about 8 desktops in a remote section of the library

How have my courses helped in my practicum and, more importantly, in my work?

During the LM5010 course, I investigated my upcoming job assignment by performing a SWOT analysis and creating a 3-yr action plan for where I think the program should go. It was a valuable exercise that I need to revisit since having the opportunity to learn more about the town, district, school, and program. We also had collaborative discussion about setting policy for the program.

LM5030 gave me an opportunity to understand which direction I need to take my library in. I was able to analyze where it was on the spectrum of functionality and currency while exploring electronic databases that might be useful in the future. In my reflection for LM5030, I mentioned the importance of the LMS to be able to see the connections available for texts and curriculum. I’ve always found myself looking at fictional texts for elementary readers and thinking of which subjects they would be able to supplement. For example, Riordan’s series about Greek mythology would help bring Ancient Greece to life for older students while Magic Tree House and Magic School Bus can bring facts about events and things to my students in a child-friendly story format.

A booktalk, author research paper, book recommendation list, and annotated picture book were products of assignments from LM5300. This course gave me great insight into how to justify book purchases and provided a format I can use to have some of my classes perform author studies for Newbery Award winners.

While I am looking at content and standards for curriculum-planning, CE5160 gave me opportunities and resources to incorporate technology into my lessons. Some of the resources will be very helpful when I try to revamp my lessons to incorporate the philosophical framework of Universal Design for Learning that is being addressed by this term’s course, SE5581 – Technology for Diverse Learners.

In conclusion, while I work to provide an enriching learning experience to my 19 classes of students, I frequently find myself looking back at resources and products used/created during my courses and practicum to help inform and grow my teaching practice. Even though I didn’t follow the prescribed course timeline, I have completed the requirements to receive my certification as a Library Media Specialist and look forward to continued employment in the field with additional opportunities to become a leader and share information to help others advance in their learning as well.