STUDENT TEACHER MIDPOINT SELF-EVALUATION

Preamble
At the midpoint of the field experience, the Student Teacher, with guidance from the Mentor Teacher, is required to complete a formative Midpoint Self-Evaluation. The purpose of this document is to provide the Student Teacher with an opportunity to reflect on his/her growth as a teacher.

Instructions
The Midpoint Self Evaluation should:
- Be thoughtful and detailed
- Be a maximum of 3 typed pages (the boxes expand as you type)
- Be complete by
  - the Friday of Week 3 of the IPT
  - the Monday of Week 5 of the APT
- Be discussed with the Mentor Teacher and the University Facilitator
- Possibly include Mentor Teacher’s written comments

Questions to Guide Reflection
- The questions listed below are meant to act as a guide for writing this formative evaluation. The Student Teacher is not required to answer all of the questions.
- In each category, please cite specific examples that demonstrate growth as a teacher. Comments should reflect strengths and areas for growth.

Description of the School and the Context of Teaching
St. Elizabeth Seton is a PreK-5 Catholic School in Anders, an average socio-economic subdivision in south-east Red Deer. For my advanced professional term I have been placed in one of their grade 5 classes with Mr. Kevin Williamson. Currently I am teaching Science, Social Studies, Language Arts and Health.
St. Elizabeth Seton is located in a fairly affluent area, and it seems that basic needs concerns like proper clothing and food are limited to only a few students in the school. This particular class is primarily Caucasian, Canadian born students. We do however have two English Language Learners in the classroom, who have both immigrated to Canada from the Philippines. We also have two FNMI students. A student who joined us partway through the year has been recently placed in foster care. One of our students has high-functioning autism, and is on a modified program. There are a few students who have some learning difficulties and perform average or below average most of the time and require ongoing support to complete learning tasks. Another student struggles with anxiety and will sometimes leave the room to speak with our counselor. Although there are few students with special needs in this classroom, they need to be accounted and accommodated for during my student teaching experience.
Preparation, Planning and Organization
When planning my units and lessons, I always start with the POS, following the backwards design approach to planning. Moreover, I am conscious of the developmental needs of this age group and try to consider their interests. For example, when planning for classroom chemistry lesson, I started with the SLO 5.7.4 – “demonstrate a procedure for making crystal” and planned an appropriate and fun learning activity of making rock candy swizzle sticks. At the beginning of every lesson, I give students an overview of what we will be doing and often ask volunteers to read the “I can” statement for the lesson on the board aloud to the class. Although I am by no means an expert on the topics in the various subject areas we are exploring, I strive to be well informed and knowledgeable by researching and studying the topic ahead of time. For instance, I read about all the Explorers we were learning about so that I could be prepared to guide discussion and answer questions as they arose. For each of my lesson plans, I strive to have an anticipatory set, input, main learning activity and closure. If a lesson lasts longer than one class, I will often plan “mini-closures” to help sum up what was accomplished during that one block. For example, I will have students turn to someone in their pod (shoulder, face, diagonal) and do a think, pair, share activity. I try to accommodate for different levels of ability in the classroom by allowing opportunity for choice and extension. For instance, when completing synthesizing questions at the end of our novel, I allowed students to choose a minimum of two of five questions to complete and allowed more keen students to take on additional questions of their choice.

Teaching Skills and Strategies
When developing original lessons, I always complete a detailed lesson plan. In addition to including the main elements of Hunter’s lesson plan, my template includes things like outcomes, vocabulary, time, notes, references, materials, assessment and a professional reflection at the end. Once I’ve finished a lesson, I take a few minutes to reflect on the “good, bad and ugly” and think about “things to try”. I record it directly on the lesson plan so that I know what things I can do to improve the lesson next time. Each week I set a goal for myself to try and achieve by week’s end. The goals I have worked on so far include: understanding and establishing classroom routines, completing my Classroom Chemistry unit plan, using more praise, quality modeling and using proximity. To optimize class time, I try to ensure that I’ve given clear and complete instructions, provided necessary modeling, set out materials ahead of time and I try to stay on top of classroom management. I believe that I do a great job of being organized and prepared to teach. I almost always have all necessary materials ready to go ahead of time. I also try to bring energy and positivity to each class to demonstrate my passion for learning to my students. I try to integrate technology in my teaching and learning activities as often as I can. In my instruction so far I’ve incorporated things like videos, mosaic maker, interactive games, SMART Board activities, PowerPoint, Windows Movie Maker, and Microsoft Office Word. Recently students have had an opportunity to create something to promote safety in the community in a format of their choice including typing a letter, creating a poster, or a brochure.
Communication

Over the course of my practicum experience, including my extended practicum, I’ve tried to establish various means of communicating with students, both formally and informally. I will talk with students casually during non-instructional time both about academic and more personal topics. I will also try to communicate student progress formally and informally, in written comments or verbal communication. Moreover, when communicating content to students, I try to vary the way in which I am presenting material, whether it is written, visual, spoken or demonstrated kinesthetically. There are some students with which I seem to have similar communication styles, like those students who prefer visuals or are strong verbal communicators. However, I find that by using a variety of communication methods - visual, auditory or kinesthetic I am better able to reach the majority of students.

I have established and maintained communication with other Student Teachers in a variety of different ways. I frequently send text messages, emails or make coffee dates with fellow student teachers so that we can help support each other through our practicum, by doing things like sharing experiences or offering resources. Communication with my mentor teacher, university facilitator and other staff members is primarily face to face and fairly informal. I try to make a conscious effort to get to know other staff by visiting with them whenever possible and making time to eat in the staff room as often as I can.

The interactions that I have had with parents so far has been minimal, but positive. These exchanges were more personal than academic in nature.

I keep in touch with the coordinator of the Middle Years Program via email and our Blackboard discussion posting area as well as by attending all call backs.
Management and Classroom Climate

Upon introducing students to the classroom chemistry unit, we established a class list of lab safety rules together as a class. I make a strong effort to use low key responses like proximity, or verbal/visual cues before moving into more serious approaches. However, I believe that I am able to discern when more serious approaches are necessary. For instance, during one science lab, the class was particularly chatty and off task. After using listening cues, then verbally reminding students of the importance of good listening – particularly in science - I had to stop the lab part way through, collecting the materials and completing the lab as a whole class using direct instruction. The students had been told expectations ahead of time, given a warning with outlined consequences, an opportunity to correct behavior, and when that failed, I had to move to following through on the consequences I had outlined. I believe that the consequences were fair and reasonable. If the students cannot demonstrate that they are responsible enough to follow instructions in a lab situation, that they would lose that privilege.

Throughout this practicum experience I have tried to adopt the routines and expectations that are already in place. My mentor teacher’s organizational approaches are logical and seem to work well for the students. It seemed inappropriate to establish my own routine when the system in place seems to be working fine, especially when I am with the students for such a short period of time.

I find it an ongoing struggle to maintain the attention of this particular group. I constantly have to “get them back” on task. However, these students really seem to love being read to. They are fully engaged when I am reading their novel study book to them. They also seem to really enjoy discussion based activities, but need to work on knowing when to or not to call out.

On one occasion I had to remove a student from the classroom for being intentionally off-task. Once I had a moment and was collected enough to have a productive conversation, I met with this student and we talked about what choices they had made, the natural consequences of those choices, and what they can try in the future so that it doesn’t happen again. Another student has the tendency to challenge you when in front of their peers. In these situations I often move away from the group with that student and lower my voice so that they know that it is between them and me, not the whole class. This usually diffuses the situation.

I use various listening cues with this class like “Reaction, bubbles, bubbles, bubbles”, “Justin Beaver”, look and listen, using wait time as well as visual cues for when it is time to call out answers or call on for answers. I always strive to ensure that my interactions with students are such that they know that I value them as individuals. I am conscious of what both my verbal and non-verbal communication might be saying to them at all times, aiming to treat them in the way I would have liked to be treated as a young person.

In an effort to foster both academic and social development, I try to incorporate cooperative learning activities or group work as often as I can. Sometimes students will take discussions in a new direction by sharing a story or personal thoughts and I will often try to accommodate for that by connecting it back to learning somehow. We have had conversations as a class a couple of times about the atmosphere that we all help to create. This included things like showing mutual respect by listening attentively when others speak because that is what they do for us and we all have something valuable to contribute. Throughout my practicum I have been trying to focus on acknowledging and praising students for those moments where they contribute to a positive classroom environment, rather than just scolding them when they don’t.

I believe that the students feel safe and valued in my classroom. I will have students approach me when they have problems, or thank me for a great day. If students are stuck, they ask me questions. Similarly, students feel comfortable volunteering to read or answer questions, knowing that I’ll be there to encourage and help them.
### Understanding Students’ Needs

I try to find down time to visit with my students in order to build rapport. Sometimes I will stay in the classroom during lunch and chat with the kids while we eat. I try to ask them about things that interest them, like their basketball game, or the book they’re reading or their latest art project.

As I am seeing more of students’ work, I am gaining more insight into who they are as learners. Moreover, I am observing how they are responding to various types of activities that I use in instruction. For example, I know which students love drama and moving while others prefer quiet seat work.

I have a couple of students who can have mood fluctuations and have trouble censoring what they say. I have learned to talk with these students in a more private setting so that they are not encouraged by an audience. Another student struggles with anxiety. When working with this particular student, it is in a very logical, black and white way, so they know what to expect from me, and what I expect from them.

The majority of the class seems to love discussion, group work and being active. In order to accommodate these tendencies, I’ve attempted to incorporate a lot of small or whole group discussion, cooperative learning activities and kinesthetic tasks. They thoroughly enjoy these activities, however, I am still discerning whether or not the engagement benefit from these approaches outweighs the potential behavior issues that arise. These type of activities can sometimes serve to “rev” the students up, creating an environment that isn’t all that conducive to learning even though students are engaged.

I’ve tried to structure the classroom so that it is conducive to cooperative learning and direct instruction while taking into account diverse student personalities and learning needs. For instance, once student with visual needs is front and center, while a student who is chatty is paired with diligent students who would help them to stay on task.

Although I haven’t planned specifically for multiple intelligences, I do try to consciously incorporate the three learning modalities, visual, kinetic and auditory. My hope is that that way I will still be reaching many of the MIs like visual spatial, verbal linguistic, logical sequential, kinesthetic, music etc.

### Professional Qualities and Attributes?

I believe that I consistently act in a way that upholds the dignity of the teaching profession. I recognize that I am a teacher 24/7 and I act in a way that reflects that. Moreover, I believe that when in a conflict situation, I handle it in a positive way by dealing directly with the individual involved, promptly and with a solution oriented mentality.

I feel that my planbook is especially well organized. I have a section for each subject with a place for recording progress, lesson plans, handouts, keys and reflections. At the front of my planbook is my daily calendar complete with classes and school events.

Currently I have not missed any days or shown up late for my practicum. Often I am at the school before many of the other teachers.

I believe that serious consideration of feedback is crucial for growth. I try to be open minded and reflect on the criticisms that I get from my mentor teacher and university facilitator and come up with a plan on how to implement their suggestions.

During my extended practicum I attended the rehearsals and performance of the school’s Christmas concert to show the students my support and wish them a Merry Christmas. Currently I am preparing my second session of my whole school project, a Lenten journey program called Rising from Ashes. So far the response has been overwhelmingly positive and I am eager to see how the rest of it goes.

At the beginning of every week I set a new goal to work on and reflect on my progress throughout the week. I reflect regularly, both after lessons and on the week as a whole. For each I think about the “good, bad, ugly” and “things to try” as well as things like “observations” or “questions” so that I can try to learn from the people around me. The format that I use for reflections is very straightforward and practical. They are really easy to look back on later for specific information because it is dated, categorized and/or specific to a particular lesson.

### Reflection and Self-Evaluation

My reflections have helped me to pinpoint those things that I need to work on or keep doing to help me become the teacher that I want to be. For example, I want to be a positive teacher who has a warm and inviting classroom and in order to achieve that I need to try harder to invite opportunities to use praise.

Reflecting helps me to better identify who I am both as a teacher and as an individual. For instance, I see more clearly how I handle conflict situations, unforeseen circumstances and pressure. I can congratulate myself on those things that I am proud of – like conflict resolution, and I can more accurately identify those things I want to work on –like being more flexible.

When considering self-monitoring, I often find myself thinking back to my own education experience and to those teachers who made me feel good and those who didn’t. I always strive to make my students feel like how those special teachers made me feel. I might ask myself, “how would you have liked to be spoken to/treated?” This seems to be a very effective approach and I have yet to act or react in a way that I regret.
Faculty of Education
University of Alberta

Student Teacher
Midpoint Self-Evaluation

Student Teacher:

Subject(s) and/or
Grade level(s) taught:

Course:
(Check one)
[ ] EDFX 325 – Elementary IPT
[ ] EDFX 350 – Secondary IPT
[ ] EDFX 425/426 – Elementary APT
[ ] EDFX 450 – Secondary APT

School Name:

University
Facilitator:

Mentor
Teacher(s):

Date
Signature of Student Teacher

Description of the School and the Context of Teaching:

Preparation, Planning and Organization

Teaching Skills and Strategies

Communication

Management and Classroom Climate

Understanding Students’ Needs

Professional Qualities and Attributes

Reflection and Self-Evaluation

Mentor Teacher Comments