

Self Evaluation

Veronica

Please evaluate yourself in the following areas. Add other categories as necessary to address your experience. This grade covers most of the month of April and focuses on the Sucia Outdoor School.

Please type & submit by email attachment and printed paper copy with peer comments.

Effort and Ability related to lesson planning and teaching: In terms of planning and executing my lesson I put a lot of my heart into the process. I attempted to create a lesson that challenged me as an educator and the Explorations Academy students. I put effort into thinking ahead and fine tuning my lesson before I taught it. When I taught my first lesson it did not go as well as I had planned and although I was upset I did my best to work through it and modify it as I taught it. Afterward I put more time in energy into reworking it in order to make it more successful and engaging for my students. After that modification I felt that the students were far more engaged and got more out of the lesson. I think there are still things I can do to improve my original lesson but that the effort I put into it in the first place allowed it to be more effective by the end of the week.

Personal and Professional Growth: One of my most influential learning experiences on Sucia was the less than desirable outcome of my first lesson. During that first lesson I felt that the students were not responsive to my discussion questions and I had trouble bringing their focus in. In designing my lesson I was so intent on making their experience challenging and scientific that I created a long list of discussion questions for multiple parts of the lesson and I think this took away from the students opportunity to be connected to the place which would have in turn probably elicited a better discussion on the questions of beach ethics I was proposing. This experience helped me to understand the importance of sequencing an activity in order to meet the desired objectives. In my second attempt at my lesson I gave the students more focused exploration time and condensed my discussion questions which had a better result. I think this lesson was also gave me a feel for the different styles of presenting lessons and how they work in different settings. I think once I opened up more in my second lesson and was able to share my own excitement about the intertidal zone actually in the intertidal zone rather than starting off with a discussion that could be done in class it got the students more engaged. Although I was initially rather upset about how my first lesson had gone I think it was valuable to me in helping me figure out how to sequence lessons and how to create an environment that gets students excited and engaged in their learning. As for personal growth, working with older students was a bit outside of my comfort zone and I was rather nervous about relating to the students and providing a quality experience for them. To work through this I challenged myself to start a conversation with a new student each day and toward the end I felt much more confidence in my abilities and much more comfortable in my own skin as an educator.

Completion and Quality of Assigned Work: I completed assigned work on time and when given a task for the group put effort into a quality product that I then consulted with a peer or instructor to ensure it met the groups' standards.

Responsibility to Self and Group: My responsibility to the group and myself was to be present, punctual, supportive and to keep a good attitude. I think it is also responsibility to myself to make sure I am taking care of myself and my personal needs are being met along with meeting the needs of others. In my responsibility to the group I was conscious of staying present and supportive of what the group needed. During group activities like cooking dinner I tried to make myself helpful. While my group members were teaching I tried to help them by being enthusiastic about their lessons and by helping when they needed assistance in leading group activities or smaller discussions. Overall I feel like I accomplished what the group needed from me, However on Wednesday, when observing Garry Oak data collection I was still feeling a bit deflated from my lesson on Tuesday and I think I could have made more of an effort to be present in the activities. In terms of responsibility to myself I think I showed improvement in making sure my personal needs were met (which is something I sometimes struggle with). Wednesday afternoon I took time to explore, rest and reflect which allowed me to stay present for the rest of the week. One thing I know I need to work on is not being so hard on myself when things start to go wrong which is what happened in my Tuesday lesson. Another aspect in group responsibility is leadership. I spent a lot of this week trying to figure out my role as a leader within our explorations team. From past experience I know that I am comfortable being a leader but I notice I have a tendency to step back when other stronger leaders are stepping up. I think in this group I could work on stepping up more often.

Organization, Class Management and Ability to Motivate Kids:

I felt relatively organized going into the week on Sucia and as the week went by I felt more confident in engaging and relating to the students as well as keeping them energized during transitions with games and songs. In the beginning of the week I was a little unsure how to approach classroom management including risk management and keeping students focused. During my First lesson I especially had trouble keeping students focused and I attempted to focus them by incorporating their distractions into what I was trying to get across in my lesson. For example, when a student was distracted by a copepod while I was talking about adaptations and zonation I tried to ask how the copepod was adapted to its environment. I think re-sequencing my lesson and finding a balance between discussion and exploration really helped with classroom management. I also made an effort to be consistent and fair with the ground rules we set earlier in the week. I think my enthusiasm for my subject and the whole Sucia experience helped keep students motivated. When students were low on energy and not interested in a game I encouraged them to at least try a round which proved pretty effective for this group as when they tried it they became excited and interested in it.

Punctuality and Attendance: During curriculum development I made it to all of the classes and way on time. During the week on Sucia I made the effort to be on time to all planned activities and if I were to be late (for example, when I was reworking my lesson and was late for campfire) I made sure to let my fellow spring blockers know ahead of time and made sure it was for a legitimate reason.

Suggested Topics:

1. How you are feeling and thinking about your teaching. How does the high school age level look to you now? What was hard or easy or fun or rewarding or enlightening about teaching on Sucia?

I am feeling more confident about my teaching abilities after Sucia. I feel as though I have learned a lot from this experience and I know if I can take a moment to step back from something when I am stressed about it (like my first lesson attempt) and allow myself to loosen up a bit I can be a very effective and accessible teacher. I think in the beginning of the week I was very nervous about teaching high school students but once I decided to let go of that things got a lot easier and better. I think there is still a lot for me to learn about working with older students. For example effectively balancing classroom management, group dynamics and maintaining engagement regardless of the attitudes of the students is something I still need to work on but I think overall working with adolescence can be a very rewarding experience and I appreciate how much I learned from the students while teaching on Sucia.

2. How is our overall SB group functioning? Are there some things you would like to change or intensify during the last trip? How are you feeling about all this "group stuff"?

Within the explorations group I felt like we had a pretty good dynamic. We communicated well and worked together to get things done smoothly and to solve scheduling troubles that arose throughout the week. We encouraged and supported each other within our lessons. We have been doing well on making sure everyone's voices are being heard during group discussions but I still think we could individually work on stepping up or stepping back within the group and making sure each person in the group has a role to fill. In the next portion of the quarter I am looking forward to reconnecting with the job corps group members. I feel like we have not had much time to interact with them since the first Sucia trip.

3. Do you have any thoughts to share about your project groups... how they worked? How were they different that the larger group? How did you function within your teaching group?

See question number 2.

Please grade yourself for this class

Grade: A-

Signature _____

Date _____

Attach Peer Responses to the back of this evaluation.