

Throughout this semester, and ones previous, I can identify areas that I consider strengths to my future as an educator. First, my ability to plan and organize. These skills have helped me through my college career with time and class management. In my practicum, planning and organizing helped me separate my schoolwork from the lessons I created in the classroom. It also helped me feel as prepared as possible for my lessons. As student teaching approaches, these will carry through to my classroom experience and help create a positive environment for me and the students.

Something I have found to be almost more important than planning is flexibility. I have learned from my previous clinicals and practicum that not all activities are perfect, but our ability to change them instantaneously is what carries us through. For example, in my preschool experience, as my advisor was observing, my student decided he was going to hide under the table as I was trying to teach him. Of course, that is not something I had planned for, but I had to be quick and flexible to still complete this lesson even though it did not go as planned. I have had a lot of experience with having to be flexible in my planning and lessons, in both my coursework and in my job working with kids with disabilities.

One skill that will help me connect and build relationships with students is kindness, compassion, and patience. I have seen influential teachers, which is the goal of almost all educators, build meaningful roots between them and each student. This bond will create a trust and allow students to feel safe, to create a more open and positive environment. I have seen that when you are kind to a student, they feel more comfortable being around you and are more willing to work with you, especially if they know you have their best interest at heart.

Even though we all have areas of strength, we also have areas for growth. Throughout my time at MSU, I have grown in confidence in my work and myself. However, I do not feel I am as

confident in myself as I should be for my future in the elementary classroom. Because of the circumstances of the past few semesters, I have not had the opportunity to teach an entire elementary class. I feel this lack of experience is what affects my confidence the most. During student teaching, getting the whole experience of elementary will help me gain perspective and confidence.

I also feel a challenge for me is teaching to the high level of students. By this, I mean including problem-solving skills and combining information from multiple disciplines for students to piece information together and relate it to their current or future lives. I have created very few but heard of many lessons that combine multiple subjects in one lesson. In the coming semester of student teaching, getting more experience with completing and creating these types of lessons would be beneficial.

The characteristics stated above, for both strengths and areas for growth, are important to me and my future in the classroom as a student teacher and in my career. My goals for student teaching are stated below:

1. I would like to further grow in confidence by after each lesson, internally or out loud stated at least 3 things that went well.
2. I would like to improve my ability to design lessons by integrating conceptual thinking and interdisciplinary concepts to further engage and connect content to students lives by reading *Interdisciplinary Instruction: Unit and Lesson Planning Strategies K-8*, by Karylyn E. Wood and collaborating with my cooperating teacher.
3. I would like to improve my understanding of strategies and ability to manage students throughout a school day by observation and collaborating with my cooperating teacher and listing one new strategy each week in my journal.