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Weekly Reflection 9/13/15

My first week student teaching first grade was filled with interactive modeling and setting classroom expectations. On day 1, my role was observing the classroom. The day consisted of how to put on name tags, getting the students into color groups, a read aloud, and many discussions about the classroom expectations. The students socially adapted to each other very well. No student was left playing alone at any point in time. I liked that my teacher read the book “First Day Jitters” to the students and then made an anchor chart with them about things they worry about on the first day of school. That is something I would like to take to my classroom if I were to get a first grade teaching position.

One huge thing I learned this week was that interactive modeling is crucial when setting the expectations of the classroom. I was able to do this with my students for lining up at the door as well as putting books away. I reflected on the fact that nothing can be assumed at the beginning of the year. After practicing how to transition to the door a few times, the students did it perfectly without a sound. This was a proud moment for them, and they continued to line up nicely the rest of the week. Without the modeling and practice from day 1 to get it right, the students may have had a hard time lining up appropriately all year.

This week I was able to take on the Read-to-Self part of the students’ day and work on building reading stamina with them. I made a large bar graph to display how long the students could read independently in the classroom without interruptions. I was able to have the discussion with them about what stamina is, what reading stamina looks like, and also set a reading stamina goal with them. The lesson went well and the students look forward to filling out the graph with me each morning after silent reading.

Another lesson I was able to take on alone this week was the rule setting. I read “No! David” to the students, had a discussion with them about events in the book, and then tied the book in with how we need rules in our classroom. One thing I would do differently is make sure I have my questions to ask the students memorized. After reading the book I wanted to ask the students a few questions and I drew a blank. One thing I think went well was my ability to converse with them in a way that they gave me the answers I was looking for when setting our classroom rules. For example, when a student gave the answer “no hitting” I was able to ask them “what does no hitting look like in our classroom? Can you say it without the word don’t?” This led them to the answer of being kind to others.