



Frustration-

While in 2nd grade I had a student who decided half way through my full time teaching he wasn't going to work until he was on his last warning before getting sent to the crisis room. His routine hadn't changed at school or at home. He was just getting more comfortable with his peers and teachers. This was one of my biggest frustrations because I was by myself with the para, my teacher was out of town and I had no idea when she would be back. The student demonstrated behaviors that were distracting to others which resulted in him leaving the room for a while. When he would return with his work it was done but it might not have been done 100% on his own like it was supposed to be. At the end of my placement I saw how much this student had connected with me. He balled one day during my last week when he walked out of school to his mom. She was concerned and worried that he had a bad day at school but sure enough it was because he was going to miss me and did not want me to leave!

During my second placement I had many students who were not motivated because they struggled at school. This was changed by saying anything was a game during math class. A new lesson was considered a game that we were going to learn and play. Luckily this worked but it will not work with every student or every class. Recess time was taken away and eating lunch in the room was brought up many times in order to get students to complete work.

Meaningful Experiences

One of my students has FA (Friedreich's Ataxia). We had him come into speak to our second graders at the beginning of the year. Little did I know I would reconnect with him and would actually have him in class! FA is an autosomal recessive inherited disease that causes progressive damage to the nervous system. The student uses a wheel chair and is one of the happiest and most hardworking students I met in 6th grade. He use to play sports, something I use to take for granted. It is heartbreaking to hear him talk about what he use to play but he can't anymore.

What did I learn?

Ask for help, guidance, and be a support system for each other.

When my teacher sent me a message at 4:30 AM telling me to call. I assumed she was sick. Little did I know she was going out of state and had no idea when she would return. I said what I would say to anyone, "Don't worry about anything. We (our classroom) will be fine." Although she knew I would be fine she still worried about her classroom and the students (who were now testing me). I had two subs with me who were both retired teachers. By the third day of my CT being absent the students were getting anxious and wanted her back! After three days she was back for a couple days.

During the next week we knew something wasn't right when phones were ringing in our classroom before the day even started. She was debating how long she could wait until she needed to leave. With support/guidance from other teachers she left. I hadn't talked to her since before the students came in that morning but I said, "Don't worry about anything. I'll take care of everything that needs to be done and I'll teach until you come back. Don't worry about writing any sub plans I'll take care of it." I was supposed to be done teaching the day after this and with the edTPA due this week I hadn't spent much time working on it.

My teacher kept thanking me. While she did not receive the administrative support that she felt like she deserved and needed she received it from me. She told me multiple times that I'm the one who made it easy for her to go because of what I said, "don't worry about anything. I will take care of it." When I wasn't sure what to do I went to my team teachers for advice and guidance. They helped me prove to myself I could survive no matter what was thrown at me!

I also learned how to be nurturing in my classroom something that I will not only take away for teaching purposes but for my personal life. Using the Nurtured Heart approach in the classroom helped create the positive and respectful environment that I wanted. While there is still so much to learn about this approach I will continue to research about it and hopefully take more classes on it.

At the end of student teaching I really feel like I am ready to officially have my own classroom. From struggles to laughter and joy. I've seen random tears start in the middle of a lesson, many outbursts, positive special education classrooms, and student growing. I've learned how much work goes into setting up a classroom, collecting data, and the frustration when materials are not available for you to teach from. I couldn't have asked for two better placements or schools. From the first day walking into Harding to my last day I felt constant support from everyone there. At Lincoln I feel support from my family and other teachers who I have connected with during my placement. It is a different atmosphere and I've accepted that my students are going to know me as Ms. O when I leave. Some also know me as Ms. Opheim, Ms. Open, Ms. Opentree, Brook, Brooklyn, Britney, Kay, and Britney. It doesn't matter if these students know my name right now what matters is that they are attending school and trying the best they can.