**Assignment task - SAMPLE**

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**Introduction breakdown:**

**Grey=opening sentence**

**Blue=background details(general)**

**Green=Background (more specific)**

**Yellow= Thesis statement (bold) and outline**

Teaching, as many will agree, is a service rather than a profession, or at least it used to be. Teaching is not one of the best-paid jobs in most countries, neither is it in my country, therefore, it may be said that many individuals, if not all, who get into teaching profession may be driven by other factors, not necessarily by pay or promotion opportunities or holidays. The first practical teaching experience that many of the new teachers get in my country is the teaching placement, which is a part of the teacher training course, and upon successful completion of this placement, a trainee teacher becomes a licensed or registered teacher. I completed my teaching placement a few months ago. This piece of **reflective work** explains, evaluates, and analyses **an event in the first few weeks of my teaching placement** followed by a presentation of the lessons I have learned from it and how I will execute those lessons in real terms in the future.

**Description breakdown:**

**Yellow = when/where did it happen**

**Underlined=what happened (also blue)**

**Green= why were you there**

**Bold =who was present**

**Gray=What did you/ other people do**

**Pink= Outcome of the situation**

**Hope- not mentioned, but implied (the class teacher should not have intervened)**

I am currently on a teaching practice placement in an adult education college in the south-west of England, learning how to teach GCSE maths to various groups of adults. As my placement is in the early stages, I am mainly assisting the class lecturers and have just started planning and delivering a small part of each lesson. The incident **I** am reflecting on in this paper occurred in an evening class in which I was due to deliver my very first teaching session. **The class lecturer** had been teaching the learners about fractions, one of the commonly used mathematical topics, and my task was to continue with the same topic, looking specifically at how to multiply two fractions. However, when I was due to teach the session and got to the whiteboard, I became so nervous that I struggled to speak to the group. I felt myself visibly shaking and was unable to articulate even my first sentence coherently. **The students** were quite understanding, as they were all mature people who were aware that I was new to teaching and that I was nervous, but the teacher was unsympathetic and responded by taking over the lesson instantly. She did not even say a thing to me but started teaching the class as if nothing had happened there. Very perplexed and upset, I went to the back of the classroom and sat at one of the desks trying not to cry. I left the session as soon as the class was over and did not speak to anyone there that day.

**Feelings and thoughts breakdown**

**Yellow- Feelings before**

**Yellow and bold- Feelings during**

**Yellow and underlined- Feelings after**

**Grey- Thoughts before**

**Green-Thoughts after**

**Blue- Reflection and citation**

I felt excited and very much looked forward to having my first teaching experience. I had practised the lesson a few times and gone through the contents as well so was quite sure about what I was going to teach. **Although I was very nervous in the class, I somehow believed that I was going to deliver it.** However, I felt extremely miserable after the incident and even considered leaving my teacher training course as I thought I was going to be a disaster in teaching. I was also embarrassed and upset by my own inability to speak in front of the group, but I was also extremely angry with the class teacher for her response, or lack of it, in the presence of the learners. I felt afterwards that she had not given me sufficient time to compose myself, and that she should have allowed me to address my nerves. The situation left me very distressed, and I rang in sick the following week. It was only when I reflected on the experience that I decided I needed to speak to the placement supervisor. I also realised later that feeling nervous is a natural reaction to speaking in public (Jones, et al. 2012) which made me feel less embarrassed.

**Evaluation breakdown**

What was **good and bad** about the experience?

What went **well**? (UNDERLINED)

What **didn’t go so well**? (BOLD)

What did **you and other people contribute** to the situation (positively or negatively)?

How was the **overall outcome**? Good or bad?

Reflection

At the time, **I did not feel that the situation had been resolved at all. I very deliberately left at the end of the class without speaking to the class teacher or the learners because I thought that was the thing I could do then**; **I did not have the mental capability at that time to be talked to by anybody. I could not understand the way the class teacher treated me right after the incident; it may have been because I did not attempt to understand it, or I did not show the courtesy to go and talk to her**. Above all, she was my senior and a supervisor, too. However, after speaking to a fellow trainee about his own experience, I felt more positive. I realised that everyone feels nervous before their first few classes. This is clear in the relevant literature, as Greene (2006, p. 43) points out, ‘nine out of ten new trainee teachers found their first session incredibly daunting.’ It appears that most trainee teachers have moments of being ‘tongue-tied’ and ‘losing their way with the lesson’ (Parbold, 1998, p. 223). In summary, although I felt very disappointed with my own performance and the class teacher’s attitude to me, after talking to my friends and contemplating on the experience further, I felt positive a bit, not very much though.

**Analysis breakdown**

**What sense can you make of the situation?**

**Why did certain things go well? N/A**

**Why did other things not go well? (BOLD)**

**Were the experiences of others involved similar or different?**

**Could you have responded in a different way? How? UNDERLINED AND BOLD**

**What might have helped or improved things?**

**What knowledge – your own or others (for example academic literature) - can help you understand the situation?**

**What does the literature say in relation to these aspects?**

The situation **was made worse by both my own actions and those of the class teacher. I feel that I should have stood up to her**, rather than letting her take control of the lesson, and that I should have spoken to her immediately after the lesson about how I was feeling. Dealing with situations like this immediately is preferable, as Cooper (2001) points out. Instead, I spoke to my placement supervisor several days later, and did not see the class teacher again until a formal meeting consisting of myself, the teacher and the supervisor. Daynes and Farris (2003) point out that, by not dealing with situations immediately and personally, and instead taking it to an authority figure, the situation can be made worse. The class teacher could have felt that she was being ‘ganged up on’ (Thomas, 2003, p. 22), which could have led to future problems. The teacher’s actions also made the situation worse, because she did not give me time to overcome my fears and she deliberately embarrassed me in front of the class. She claimed that she had thought she was helping me to overcome my anxieties, but I do not believe that to be the case. However, as we only spoke about the incident over a week later at the meeting with the supervisor, she argued that **I should have said something to her at the time.**

**Conclusion breakdown**

* What did I learn from this situation – generally and specifically?
* How could this have been a more positive situation for everyone involved?
* What skills do I, and others, need to develop to handle a situation like this better?
* What could I, and others, have done differently?
* What else could I, and others, have done?
* Source and citation

In retrospect, I would do several things differently. Firstly, I would establish more cordial relationship with my students; they are all adults not children. Therefore, maintaining professionalism, I could still have a friendly rapport with them which, I believe, could have helped me in that situation very much. Secondly, I should have spoken to the class teacher immediately after the session and voiced my opinions. I should also have been more assertive by advising the teacher that I could continue with the lesson. However, the incident made me realise the importance of building up a relationship with the teacher, a skill that Hughes (2011)

stresses as fundamental to a successful teaching placement. I feel that, had I developed a professional relationship with the teacher in the preceding weeks, I would have been able to explain to them how nervous I was beforehand. This would have provided me with the opportunity to discuss strategies for dealing with nerves and perhaps the incident could have been avoided entirely. Finally, even though I had practised the teaching beforehand, I believe a real delivery of the session, possibly in front of my friends or family, could have helped me overcome the unexpected nerves.

**Action Plan breakdown**

**What will you do if this situation happens again in the future?**

**Who do you need to talk to make your plan feasible/possible?**

**Overall, what are your final thoughts on what you have learned?**

In future, I will ensure that I build up a relationship with my colleagues. I am working alongside several different teachers during my placement, and I intend to speak to each of them about my nerves. I have already had a beneficial conversation with one teacher and together we have developed a programme of team-teaching for the next few weeks so that I do not feel so pressurised. I plan to do this with other class teachers too, as it will help them to understand how I feel. I also need to speak to my fellow trainees more often about how they feel, as I think I will be able to learn from them. In terms of training, I have booked onto a presentation skills workshop at the University, and I intend to follow it up by attending further practise sessions afterwards. This experience has made me realise that I need to gain more confidence with presenting, and I feel addressing my presentation skills will help me do this. Then, I will do everything I can to form a friendly but professional relationship with my learners as it is they that I am going to spend half my day with, therefore maintaining a good rapport with them will be crucial to my success as a teacher. (1514 words)

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***(Adapted from ELTC website at Salford University,*** [***www.salford.ac.uk***](http://www.salford.ac.uk)***)***

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