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InTASC 10 Reflection

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Entry Summary: This portfolio entry includes School Culture Interviews with 6th grade teacher Kerry Sancomb and high school teacher Megan Pahr, and how they have impacted my teaching confidence, experience, and attitude. The time I spent in their classrooms was an incredibly rewarding and I will always have that experience to reflect upon in the future.

Rationale: This reflection is not only evidence of my growth as a teacher, but also a self-reflection of my teaching experience, starting when I was in high school. I have grown into myself as a teacher and Megan Pahr and Kerry Sancomb have been an immense impact on that.

InTASC 10 Reflection

There are two mentors that have impacted me the most through my pre-service teacher career: Kerry Sancomb and Megan Pahr. They are fantastic teachers, mentors, and they truly have shaped me as a teacher in all different ways. Kerry is incredibly observant, even to the point that she noticed students were more engaged with my lessons when I vary my pitch when I speak; she is also incredibly organized and has helped me become so as well. Mrs. Sancomb is always willing to help me out if I get stuck, and she includes me in all of her activities, meetings, and emails. But most importantly of all, her advice is never ending. Kerry makes time almost every day to give me constructive criticism even when she admits things are “nit picky”. I value her advice and constructive criticism because I believe that while advice and feedback about improvements is key to reflection.

Megan is relaxed and freeing. I have grown the most when I am with her because she allows me to develop my own style as a teacher. She is full of both advice and encouragement, which I believe has exponentially improved my self-confidence in the classroom. Every day I am with Mrs. Pahr she gives me the freedom to make my own teaching choices; she is very open minded. Megan Pahr has helped me grow immensely. She values my opinion when planning lessons and has taught me to be a confident teacher. Not only does she observe me in order to prepare me for my future, she tells me about her past experiences and helps me to learn from them. She is willing to relinquish control of her classes and grading so that I can become the teacher that I have the potential to be and I am incredibly thankful for that, and her.

When I was a high school intern at a middle school, I had a lot of fun in the classroom and thought that teaching could be a stream of rewards. The students would almost always

understand if you taught a lesson well, and being in the classroom would be a happy time. Although this is true to a degree, at the beginning of my college career I began to fear that teaching would very rarely be a happy and rewarding experience. My self-confidence and assurance that I wanted to teach plummeted. But when I started to be in Kerry's classroom full time, I realized that there is a happy medium in the middle and I feel confident both in myself and in my choices. Being in Mrs. Sancomb's classroom and at Ridgely Middle School in general has made me surer than ever that I want more than anything to teach in a middle school, and being in Mrs. Pahr's classroom has helped me grow to my full potential as a teacher.

Mrs. Pahr's teaching philosophy is that a teacher never stops learning. I am a passionate believer in the same exact thing. I truly believe that a teacher should learn from every experience every day, should always be adapting for improvement. She constantly asks students to give her feedback on her teaching and I want to have a classroom with a similar environment where students feel safe to give constructive feedback. Mrs. Sancomb's teaching philosophy is this: all children are unique and grow at their own pace; I will provide a safe and stimulating and exciting environment so students can meet their full potential. Taking risks, growing and learning from mistakes, and providing a growth mindset approach to learning is key. This impacts me because it is a really great summary of what a teacher should always keep in mind: the students. Teaching is not about doing what you want to do; it is about giving opportunities to each student so they can learn in their own unique way. This is why individualized differentiation is so important. I have seen these things in her classroom; although the curriculums are rigorous, Kerry has a way to try and make sure every student is doing the very best they can. She also contacts parents for both good and bad reasons as often as she can, and she emails with them constantly giving updates and talking about students. This is not only a

wonderful way to help students, it is also a fantastic communication technique to integrate into the community.

Community is important because although teachers may not live in the area, they are a part of it. As a beginning teacher community is the biggest thing that I need to integrate myself into. Parents, students, teachers, neighbors, they all make a community a wonderful place to be. Volunteering for school events such as dances, sports, concerts, and clubs are a great first step to integration into an already fantastic community. Taking opportunities in general to interact with the people already in the community such as parents and other teachers means a lot to me because wherever I teach, I want to make the biggest and most positive difference that I can.