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Using Video Records and Journaling to Increase Reflection Practices

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Abstract

Every year my high school Human and Child Care Services class looks forward to working with community children and sharing their teaching knowledge, yet each time they fall short in the area of reflection. The purpose of the action research project was to integrate a means of reflection through video-taping to promote metacognition and increase the quality of reflections these students make on their lesson plans. Review of literature provided a clear avenue of components needed to guide student thinking through questioning techniques, peer discussions, and viewing video recordings of student interactions. All the factors together were designed to promote student awareness of their approach to teaching and how to improve upon it. Data collection tools included daily journal reflections, an end of term survey, and a final reflection assessment paper. Findings from this action research project established that student reflection practices increased over the duration of the playschool unit. The implications for practice clearly suggest the use of reflective data tools after viewing the video recordings increased student's depth of thinking.

Chapter One

Introduction

Teaching is a rewarding career. Everyday I see my students experience the light bulb moments and I feel a sense of pride knowing that they are obtaining and gathering knowledge that will aid them in their daily endeavors. Along with that pride comes another feeling, wonder. I wonder what I can do to get my students to go beyond the light bulb moments and make them deeper, longer-lasting, and linking to all the other knowledge they have accumulated. The education philosopher, John Dewey contended that “they (educators) should know how to utilize the surroundings, physical and social, that exist so as to extract from them all that they have to contribute to building up experiences that are worthwhile” (Dewey, 1938, p. 35). Now is the time in education to build these experiences for students. I want to facilitate for my students an environment where they are able to hold themselves accountable to acquire and process data. The purpose of my capstone action research project is to create lifelong thinkers through metacognition using video recording as part of the self-reflection practices.

I purposely chose my participants to be my Human and Child Care Services students because I believe they would have the most to gain from seeing themselves on the other side of a camera. Nineteen students from a rural high school enrolled in the same course participated in a self-reflective journaling unit.

Finding a new means of assessing student reflection was a tedious task. I always knew reflection was an important element of learning, but never acquired the depth I expected. My intention was to produce a curriculum framework to prepare my students to become reflective teachers themselves. Reflection was considered important to education by John Dewey as he said

“When an activity is continued into the undergoing of consequences, when changes made by action is reflected back into a change made in us, the mere flux is loaded with significance. We learn something.” (Dewey, 1944, p. 139). Through research I found methods of logging reflective thinking, notable questioning techniques, and the technology to address higher level thinking skills. All the reviewed literature cultivated the formation of my action research project.

To determine the importance of reflection in the education process I started my action research project during the months of October and November 2014. It began by video recording my students at work as teachers, interacting with young children from the community in our classroom. My students then used the video footage to engage in reflection activities with the goal of improving their teaching skills. By using this method of reflection my questions were answered. I question: 1) how will video recording enhance student reflection? 2) how will student learning increase through reflective journaling? and 3) will students be more metacognitive about their learning experiences? Data was collected by evaluating lesson plans, lesson plan reflections, journal reflections, final reflection essays, and a survey of students.

The research led me to raise the bar of educating my students. John Dewey inspired me by saying “To learn from experience is to make a backward and forward connection between what we do to things and what we enjoy or suffer from things in consequence.” (Dewey, 1944, p. 140). My students will thrive using the power of reflection in their future personal and professional endeavors. Other educators can use the same principle of my project to raise the bar of reflection for their students.

Overall, I consider my capstone project a fulfillment to my educator goal of meeting student needs to move them forward to deeper thinking and metacognition. With my teaching experience, the guidance of the school’s information technology department, and university

courses and staff guidance I have shown how integration of self-reflection using video recordings has the potential to raise student's teaching performance. The action research project will be beneficial not only to me and my students, but other school professionals as well.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

Education is changing at a rapid rate to encompass technological world impacting student achievement. Standardized Testing Assessment of Reading (STAR) Assessments have been put into school systems to test students more on their critical thinking skills instead of memorization of facts. Raising student achievement to meet the standards is the task educators need to embrace. Students are exceptionally capable of excelling in school, but for some reason many lack the drive and motivation to reach their full potential. Many high school students are unable to rationalize how information and knowledge presented in their classrooms will affect them outside in their personal lives. The research discovered delves into how reflective journaling increases metacognition while enhancing student learning. The findings of each study will unravel the query of motivation and achievement gains using different forms of self-reflection and journal writing through video performance practices. The theory behind how people learn, reflection methods, video as a reflection medium, and implication of strategies will be explored in this review of literature.

Theory Behind Learning

Prompting students to think independently while expanding their knowledge sometimes feels like a great task. Setting a developmentally appropriate practice for students allows them to self-regulate their learning. Researchers suggest that self-regulation practices in children will increase their “functioning in areas such as problem-solving, planning, focused attention, and metacognition, and thus contributes to their success as learners” (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009, p. 7). The authors also pinpoint traits that characterize excellent teachers. They point out the importance of using numerous learning formats to scaffold student learning to engage students to

think about their thinking. Not only are students learning content they are linking the background knowledge with new information presented to make better, more thought out, decisions. Those thoughts lead to the idea of metacognition where students are able to set personal goals for learning. Costa and Kallick (2008) believe people need to guide themselves to process information between past knowledge and knowledge that is new, and then reflect on how it relates to the world. Roberts (2008) proposes that the more experiences students have with reflective writing the more deeply they will be able to think and in time require less guidance. Reflection practices are activating higher level thinking taking intelligence a step forward. Various teaching methods engage students to reflect, some methods are found to be more purposeful than others.

Reflection: Writing to Learn

Writing is a powerful means of captivating thoughts for oneself or others to easily view ideas more clearly. Written assignments are an old means of gathering and explaining ideas. The authors included in my study are taking a different direction to the purpose of writing. They do not want the purpose of writing to solely meet the assignment standards, they want the writers to learn through their own words through reflection. Mixed results were found in the research findings. Some writing practices show higher success than others. Stephens and Winterbottom (2010) used “learning log” as their means of identifying their writing product. The authors wanted the students in the study to become more aware of their learning process otherwise known as metacognition. Two purposes were given to the study (1) “use of a learning log can prompt reflection on the learning benefits of classroom activities within biology lessons and increase cognitive control of learning strategies” and (2) “understanding of learning strategies may affect students’ motivation to learn” (p. 73). A class of thirty 14-15 year old students from

Suffolk, UK, 11 boys and 19 girls participated in the study. Over a five week time period the topics of digestion, respiration and breathing were taught. At the end of each of the three lessons students were given learning logs where they rated the work they completed. The learning logs were comprised of nine categories in which the students had to rate themselves as to the quality of work they did and how it helped their understanding. Two open-ended questions followed the rated categories. Another part to the study was an interviewing process using the following questions: “What makes you want to learn about biology? What types of activities in biology lessons help you learn? What do you do when you find something difficult to learn? In what careers do people use skills learnt in biology lessons?” (p. 75). The interview process was voluntary and the higher level students were more ready to participate. A questionnaire completed the process at the end of the five weeks. Questions related to the students thoughts about their motivation, success, failure and self-concept.

Stephens and Winterbottom measured the changes in motivation through the constructs of goal theory. Goal theory assumes students are self-disciplined and want to expand their learning. Changes in motivation were measured in the following categories before and after the study: task, ego, work avoidant, and alienated. All categories showed similar results. Overall they found motivation level unchanged from the beginning to end of the study. Even the learning logs of student reflection provided no clear signs of increased motivation toward their academic learning. The questioning technique could have influenced the lack of motivation by not directing the reflection part back on how the experience impacted the individuals. This shows that most students do not motivate themselves to reflect through the use of learning logs. More directives need to be given to produce more motivation for students.

Metacognition was the second concept questioned in the research and measured in the

same manner as motivation. Categories included how the students assessed their personal *ability*, the *effort* they put forth, *teacher* influence, and *unknown* factors. The learning log did not increase the students' awareness of how they were learning. Stephens and Winterbottom concluded that the learning logs did not increase student motivation or heighten the students understanding of their own learning process. Recommendations to improve the study include further prompting of the students to what should be included in a learning log. By adding more reflective scaffolding and questions to the logs themselves the teacher might be able to better engage metacognition. The time frame might have been too short to initiate the higher level thinking. Learning logs in the manner used in this study did not reveal evidence of metacognitive thinkers. More focus on questioning and reflection needs to be addressed to drive student interest and motivation.

As learning logs were effect for submitting information for Stephens and Winterbottom, Beth Hurst added more with oral discussion to the process and in turn deemed more successful. Hurst (2005) used learning logs in her teaching of college students in the School of Teacher Education. She was intrigued by the fact that the logs worked best when she replied back to her students. The length of her responses correlated directly to the length of student entries. Through the logs she was able to see misconceptions students still had about the literature pieces discussed and could then bridge any gaps. As part of the experience students shared their responses with their peers. These discussions led to deeper thinking and learning. A survey followed to get a take on how students felt about their use of learning logs throughout the semester. The survey found that the students read more of the assigned text when having to submit a learning log, but using the logs as the only strategy got tiresome for all involved. Hurst explained that using learning logs "about three times in a semester" worked for her purpose. She

continued to report that “more than that becomes a bore for the students and a chore for me.” (Hurst, 2005, p. 45). The student survey also showed learning logs and discussions created a reason for students to read, which in turn was beneficial to 92% of the students understanding and memory. Other researchers are finding more reflection type elements need to be added to learning logs to raise learning standards.

Heuser (2005) found success with learning logs when using them with her first and second grade science students. Heuser like Hurst responded to the logs which pushed the students thinking outward and adding more meaning and knowledge. Heuser (2005) created a rubric for the learning log to include: explanation, application, generalization, and justification. In her rationale, she contends that “children should be encouraged to justify their conclusions with evidence” (Heuser, 2005, p. 49). Learning logs are deemed valuable as they pushed students past knowledge retention to inquiry based learning. These authors have given new insight to the benefits of using learning logs in the classroom. Reflection though still does not seem strong enough to produce metacognitive thinkers.

The use of journal writing is similar to learning logs, both obtain information on the events that occurred. Connor-Greene (2000) believe journal writing will capture more student thought than learning logs. Journals have been an outlet for thoughts and remain so, but can journals take students to a higher level, one in which they reflect on how they can use the newly attained knowledge? Connor-Greene used journals as a means of “balancing course content with application” (2000, p. 44). She wanted students to go further than just memorizing information; she encouraged them to be engaged in the process of learning. So she sought out to determine if journal writing affects student learning by assessing test scores. Connor-Greene used her own Personality Theories course to conduct the study. Students wrote journals using different media

around 15 theories. They had to “identify a theorist, describe a specific concept from that theory, and explain how the example illustrates that concept” (Connor-Greene, 2000, p. 44). Journals were graded including written feedback she provided using a five scale rubric. Three semesters of students were compared all classes being held at the same time of day, with the same textbook, comparable tests, and approximately the same class size. The first semester, students completed 15 entries submitting them on a weekly basis. The class participating in journal writing scored higher ($M = 79.75$) in test scores in comparison to the no-journal class ($M = 73.84$). The tests were comprised with multiple-choice, definitions, true-false with explanation, and essay questions. Even though grades were higher, students suggested lowering the number of submissions. With that suggestion, second semester Connor-Greene required only 5 entries. A questionnaire comprised of three questions followed both classes that submitted journals. Journal writing was found helpful to see any misinterpretations of information during the course. It was not confirmed that journal writing alone drives students to internalizing the information and applying it to other aspects of learning. I want to explore this concept further. It is this form of thinking regarding journal writing with reflection that drives students to think reflectively.

Gipe and Richards (1992) seem to take journal writing in the direction of metacognition. They set out to determine if “prospective teachers who in some way reflect about their work, or who extend their reflections to include broader educational concerns, will improve upon their teaching abilities” (Gipe & Richards, 1992, p. 53). At an inner-city school, 23 female elementary education majors enrolled in the 6 credit field experience course took part in the study. The novice teachers prepared and taught four 50-minutes lessons weekly throughout the semester. They were supervised by the classroom teachers, as well as the program supervisor. Each week the novice teachers reflected freely on their thoughts and feeling relating to their teaching

experiences that week without guided prompts. The program supervisor read and gave written feedback to the students prompting them to think further on what could have been done differently to obtain other results. Each student received five ratings of their teaching ability from the classroom teachers and program supervisor. Ratings were given once after the first month of teaching and again at the end of the program. Rating criteria included: (a) Creates and uses teacher-made games and learning aids, (b) Presents reading/language arts topics commensurate with children's cognitive development, instructional needs, and interests, and (c) Uses current research-based reading/language arts instructional strategies (Gipe & Richards, 1992). The grading scale had a rating of 4 indicating always prepared and appropriate to 1 being never preparing or presenting appropriate lessons.

The five teacher scores were averaged into three ability levels related to preparing and presenting appropriate lessons for the 15 novices at the initial first month and at the program's end. Teaching Ability Ratings found 6 novices initially scoring 3.5-4.0 = always appropriate with a final score the same 3.5-4.0. Another 6 novices initially scored 1.5-2.4 = occasionally appropriate with a final score of 3.5-4.0. The other 11 novices started with scores of 1.5 – 2.4 finishing with 2.5-3.4 usually appropriate lessons. The middle six novices with the most improvement were found to have written the most in their reflective journals. The researchers found all novice teachers tried to reflect, although some were more reflective than others. Those more reflective increased their teaching ability the most showing that reflection is a means to professional growth.

McFarland and Saunders (2009) conducted a study to determine how self-reflection, self-evaluation, and goal setting affect the attitudes and learning outcome of human development students as they work with young children. A Human Development and Family Sciences

undergraduate program in the southern region of the US was used for this study. It consisted of 63 participants (60 female, 3 male) averaging the age of 21.2 in their junior or senior year of study. The course focusing on positive guidance techniques, met for 2 hours of lecture weekly and 4 hours of practicum experience. The human development students interacted with children under the age of five. The results of the study were driven by a comparison of daily verbal feedback between students and the supervising teacher, a Professional Skills Inventory (PSI) test at mid-semester and end- of semester and a self-reflection goals sheet also evaluated at mid-term and course completion. Weekly the students spoke with the supervising teacher to share their thoughts on how their skills were developing. The PSI was a series of 40 items relating to positive guidance skills in the categories of “Professionalism and relationship with adults”, “Relationships with children” and “Guidance practices” (McFarland & Saunders, 2009). The goal sheets addressed three open-ended questions to engage the student to reflect on their learning. The questions targeted strengths in the areas of guidance skills, areas to improve upon, and steps on how they could reach new goals. To assess the goal sheet questions, another group of three questions were given at the end of the course “have you accomplished the goal or do you feel like you could use more work in that area?”, “What were your greatest challenges in reaching your guidance goals?” and “What area/skill do you feel like you learned most or made the most improvement over the semester?” (McFarland & Saunders, 2009, p. 508).

To assess the reflective question groupings students were asked to rate themselves on a scale from 1 (least helpful) to 10 (most helpful). The results showed the students found goal setting and reflection to be beneficial to their learning. The supervising teacher rated the students’ goal setting responses as “not thorough”, “thorough” or “very thorough” based on the amount of detail and critical reflection shown in the responses (McFarland & Saunders, 2009).

The degree to which the student and supervising teachers' perceptions of guidance progress were compared. The researchers found the percent of students who underestimated their abilities was 30.2%, students who matched were 22.2% and those who overestimated their abilities were 44.4% at the mid-semester point. When the semester ended the results showed 54.0% underestimated, 20.6% matched, and 22.2% overestimated guidance progress. The 3.2% missing is from the two students not responsive to the questioning sheets. The PSI test results confirmed there was no difference in student confidence of their guidance techniques by the end of the study. Though results from the instruments show self-reflection and evaluation was found to be an important tool for pre-service teachers' metacognition practices, but depth of thought was not at the same level for everyone. Those who were very-thorough in their reflection had better interaction with the children they taught. Researchers found reflective opportunities engage students to learn and evaluate their positive guidance techniques to better themselves in the practice of teaching.

Kremenitzer (2005) used self-reflective journaling to capture the essence of emotional intelligence in early childhood teachers. She believes teacher practices can become stale stating "The goal for teachers when faced with unanticipated challenges is to be able to have a mechanism that will allow them to "plow through" the difficult moment and continue teaching." (Kremenitzer, 2005, p. 7). To move forward Kremenitzer believes people should alter anything that could be done better. With a series of four branches of questions given to students throughout the semester thoughts were captured independently and shared within the group. A metacognitive essay is written to sum up thoughts at the end of the semester. This process of creating journal entries, peer discussing experiences, and summarizing learning was found beneficial in analyzing their own behaviors and making positive adjustments in teaching

practices.

Self-reflection has also been examined in other professions, in this case with a group of clinical nursing students. In this study, students took part in journal writing of their experiences on a daily basis for the semester. The purpose of the journal entries was to become aware of personal growth. Riley-Doucet and Wilson (1997) devised a three-step process to track clinical experiences and personal thoughts. The steps included critical appraisal of events, peer group discussions, and self-awareness to self-evaluation. During the last step students reflect on what they learned through the peer discussions. Collaboration of their thoughts was found useful to problem solve through their clinical experiences. This reflection on learning demonstrates the practice of metacognition as found in the study, “Students report an ability to recognize their strengths and their own growth more readily when they follow a self-directed approach to evaluating their learning” (Riley-Doucet and Wilson, 1997, p. 967). Journaling using the three-steps was beneficial for students, enabling them to think critically about themselves and their learning.

Using journal writing as a reflection tool to document changing perceptions was tracked for 31 software engineering students during a semester undergraduate capstone course. Every three weeks students submitted responses to guided journal questions. The rationale behind the questions is made clear when the researcher states, “I designed the questions to capture self-efficacy perceptions by asking students to reflect on their ability to organize and implement the actions needed to perform effectively” (Dunlap, 2006, p. 21). Through the journal writing process, students proclaimed positive changes in their self-efficacy. They were more prepared to join the professional community in technology. Dunlap concluded her study by stating journal writing “provides educators with a unique technology for assessing cognitive and perceptual

changes that are hard to measure with conventional evaluation methods” (Dunlap, 2006, p. 26). Reflection using journals was deemed important in all the research mentioned above. The level of importance, in reference to reflection, for every person remains scattered. No matter what profession metacognitive skills are essential to learning and continuous growth. Students need to be able to go beyond any concept and think critically about how it affects them and builds on where they have been and where they need to go.

Video Reflection and Assessment

One study added another component to reflective journaling that was well received by students and teachers and fulfilled the metacognitive thinking goal. Students enrolled in health services submitted 5-minute videos of themselves performing technical skills. Tutors provided feedback to the students stating strengths and weaknesses in their practice. Each week one outstanding example was chosen to post for all learners to view. Maloney, Paynter, Storr, and Morgan (2013) required students to complete a 200-word reflection essay comparing the ‘clip of the week’ to their own performance. Overall the students found the reflection process through video-taping to be very helpful. Some recommended more feedback and taping opportunities. The opportunity to revisit the clips for further discussion or reflection was another benefit to the experience. The goal of education “is to help all students become their own ‘metacognitive monitors’ as they master the lifelong dispositions of self-reflection and self-assessment” (Burke, 2010, p. 135). The use of reflection journals, peer discussions, and video recorded experiences together led to deeper thinking of students.

Implications for teaching with Reflective Journals

In order for self-reflection to work to its fullest extent four pieces need to be present: trust, purpose, feedback, and engaging learning strategies. Trustworthiness was one concept

made by Hubbs and Brand (2005) that was not mentioned in any other study reviewed. When reflective journals are written to be shared, students must sense trust from the evaluator in order to record. A second criteria to consider when using reflective journal writing, is to clearly state the expectations of the journal. A third recommendation, for example, is to address the length of response requirement indicating how much a student must write to be considered reflective. Upon instilling these three conditions reflective writing is better received. Hubbs and Brand (2005) found that through time journal entries became deeper and more critical, focusing more on process thinking instead of only the content. Reflection journals have the potential to provide documentation of progression in metacognition. Purpose is another element needed to be present in reflective. Setting a purpose for reflective writing allows students to rise to the challenge. When you know what is expected you are able to find the means to obtain the goal. Feedback sets out to challenge the students thinking. The more thoughts given to students addressing their work, the better they become at the task at hand. Addressing learning strategies has the potential to activate reflection in students no matter their learning style. Dunlap (2006) gave 16 recommendation points for making journaling a valuable practice. Some of her points recommended that teachers create open-ended questions, change the questions to reduce boredom, submit entries on a bi-weekly basis, revisit previous responses to increase reflection, provide teacher feedback, and model reflective thinking with the students. All four of the implications are seen as important to support students in the practice of being metacognitive thinkers.

Research-based Strategies for Young Children

Boud (2001) believes journals can enhance learning by clarifying questions the learner encountered during a task. To strengthen the traditional journal a reflective component should be

added. As one author states “Reflection has been described as a process of turning experience into learning, that is, a way of exploring experience in order to learn new things from it” (Boud, 2001, p. 10). Journaling introduces students to a system of recalling information. So when students take their background knowledge and accompany it with new information and reflect on how it all fits together they will become deeper thinkers. The challenge is finding inviting prompts to interest students enough to buy into their learning and this system of thinking.

Summary

All authors were trying to get to the heart of the matter linking journal writing to learning metacognition. They felt strongly that reflective writing is a beneficial means to collect information and assess where students stand in their learning. Learning logs were one means of gathering student thought to address their learning. The method was said to show justification of learning activities and misconceptions that needed attention to clarify (Heuser, 2005; Hurst, 2005, and Stephens & Winterbottom, 2010). Journal writing by students was able to capture more thought about one’s personal perceptions of learning. Many authors agreed journal writing to be beneficial to learning, but alone did not require learners to always think about their thinking (Connor-Greene, 2000; Gipe & Richards, 1992; McFarland & Saunders, 2009). Adding peer discussions and self-evaluation practices to the journal writing process showed further gains than writing alone (Boud, 2001; Dunlap, 2006; Kremenitzer, 2005; Riley-Doucet & Wilson, 1997). By reading the journals teachers examine gaps in learning, redirect thinking, or prompt further thought and evaluation on the students’ part. Students may learn even more when seeing themselves in front of a camera. Implementing video submissions as part of the reflection process enhances the learning allowing student to truly see where improvements could be made (Burke, 2010; Maloney, Paynter, Storr, & Morgan, 2013). For any reflection assignment to be

beneficial, a well thought out plan needs to be in place. My action research project entailed video recording my students teaching children age's birth to five years old. Students were given a writing prompt to respond to after viewing their teaching video daily. A peer discussion took place following each day along with instructor feedback to what was seen. At the end of the playschool session a final reflection paper was given to sum up the entire teaching experience. Multiple activities were given to direct students to reflect on their practice as a teacher.

Chapter Three

Methods

Teaching students to engage in reflective learning through journaling doesn't always lead to the level of thinking teachers expect. Based on my previous years of observation, students often made candid remarks like "I think it went well" or "it didn't work the way I expected it to" in their writing. Rarely did I find students expanding their thoughts to encompass what they need to do to make their experiences better or to build on newly found knowledge or even past knowledge. I believe more components should introduce the journaling process to make it more meaningful. Adding learning strategies that make the students really see their own progress of learning, such as, video recording and viewing, peer discussions, and instructor interviews would allow students to be taken back and become more reflective about their thinking, hence raising the bar to deeper learning. This action research project was developed to guide students to improve their teaching practices through reflection. The importance of action research as seen by Somekh and Zeichner (2009) taking views from many nations is that "A common feature in these 'variations' of action research is the importance each demonstrates of working towards a resolution of the impetus for action with the reflective process of inquiry and knowledge generation, to generate new practices" (Somekh & Zeichner, 2009, p. 18). My research involved a group of suburban high school juniors and seniors in a Human and Child Care Services class, video recording them, providing opportunities for peer and instructor insights, and creating reflective journals to promote reflection and examine student learning outcomes. The project ran during the months of October and November 2014.

Foundation

The Human and Child Care Services curriculum encompasses the developmental

milestones of children ages birth to twelve years old in all four areas of development: cognitive, social, emotional, and physical. Once the high school participants were familiar with those milestones the community children were invited into the high school classroom to be taught by the students. Playschool was held on Tuesdays and Thursdays for four weeks. Students were required to complete lesson plans, gather materials, and ready themselves to teach using effective strategies, content, and transitions. In the past students had looked forward to working with the children and sharing their lesson knowledge, but they fall short in the area of reflection. They usually planned for the entire duration of playschool upfront and were reluctant to sway away from their original lesson plans. This is where the problem lies and the curriculum development comes in to play. The students need to take more ownership in their approach to teaching. They need to reflect on how they can become better educators to benefit the children and their experience at playschool.

Context

The Action Research project took place in a child development classroom located in a rural high school housing 1,734 students. Of the 1,734 students, over 78% attend college after high school. Minorities populate 7.4% of the school enrollment, 10.8% of the students are identified as special needs, and 10.9% of the community is economically disadvantaged. The project ran during the months of October and November 2014 for a fifty minute class period Monday through Friday.

Participants

Participants included eleven high school juniors and eight seniors in a Human and Child Care Services class earning their Assistant Child Care Teacher Certificate (ACCT) through the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. The nineteen students enrolled were all female

students.

In line with guidelines for working with human subjects, I submitted a proposal to the University of Wisconsin - Whitewater institution's Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. Many documents needed to be formulated and submitted to the IRB to obtain permission to conduct my study due to the videotaping of minors. I drafted a Letter of Consent (Appendix F) for the parents/guardians of my students and one for the parents/guardians of the community children participating in the playschool program. A description of the research project followed by a summary outline of the content to be covered during the study was included for review. All the instruments and documents I used in the unit were attached in my application along with a signature from my UW Advisor. In the end the project was approved and my study began.

Questions

There were three main questions focused on in this investigation:

Q1. In what ways do students demonstrate metacognitive thinking in their reflection journals over the four week session? This question was addressed by comparing scores on the reflective journal from the first to the seventh entries.

Q2. In what ways will student learning increase through reflective journaling? This question was addressed by examining the reflective journal assessment scores for growth as the playschool progressed.

Q3. To what degree will video recording enhance student reflection practices? This question was addressed by examining survey responses.

Procedures

An outline of the procedures is presented in Table 3.1. The project began by introducing the Playschool Practicum experience using the Fall Playschool Responsibilities handout

(Appendix A). They were told the video component was added as part of my master's capstone project to explain why an Informed Consent Letter (Appendix F) was needed to be signed and returned. Groups were assembled by first asking to students to write a person they felt comfortable working with in class. I then considered student academic needs and ability levels as to how they would work within a group. I used student choice and ability needs to divide the class into groups. After groups were set the class together brainstormed ideas to create a curriculum theme. With that theme in place they could proceed to plan the classroom décor and activities. With the age range of preschoolers in mind, the Zoo theme was voted upon and lesson planning began.

Daily Lesson Plans (Appendix B) were distributed and explained with reference to the textbook examples on how to gather and address the information necessary. I created a modified version of the DPI lesson plan model (http://fccla.dpi.wi.gov/fccla_starevents) while writing my curriculum. Many of the target learning goals were similar, yet the student lesson plans and reflection questions varied on a daily basis. The lesson plans (Appendix B) began the student's thought process of what would be appropriate for the children to accomplish. Multiple resources were utilized to locate lesson and activity concepts. Once an activity was found clear objectives needed to be identified. Students had to determine the condition to which the children would perform the activity, the observable behavior they expected to see, and the desired outcome of knowledge. Students then compiled a list of materials required to carry out the activity. Tote bins were available to house supplies for quick retrieval. Another task to the lesson plan was to establish an engaging introduction to captivate the children's attention. The introduction motivates the participation in the lesson. After the introduction was laid out students provided a

Table 3.1

Timeline for Playschool Curriculum Development

Dates	Description
Aug. 1	Began developing lesson plans and aligning standards
Sept. 12	Finished planning, creating lessons, and developing worksheets and evaluations
Sept. 22	Prepared copies, reference materials, and project supplies for students.
Sept. 29	Sent out invitations to community children and parents.
Oct. 3	Introduced students to the playschool tasks and responsibilities. Dispersed handouts.
Oct. 6 – Dec. 5	Implemented the nine week curriculum unit.
Oct. 6 – 10	Student grouping, prepared activities, rules and regulations.
Oct. 13 – 17	Lesson planning (looked at examples, using multiple media sources as reference, discussion of age appropriate development, instructor modeling of expectations and quality reflection writing) was provided for curriculum development.
Oct. 20 – 24	Classroom arrangement, bulletin boards, lesson planning.
Oct. 27 – 31	Playschool Week 1 – video recorded, reflected, made improvements.
Nov. 3 – 7	Playschool Week 2 – video recorded, reflected, made improvements.
Nov. 10 – 14	Playschool Week 3 – video recorded, reflected, made improvements.
Nov. 17 – 21	Playschool Week 4 – video recorded, reflected, made improvements.
Nov. 27, 28	Cleaned classroom, assigned final reflective assessment.
Dec. 5	Final reflective essay assessment due date.

detailed description of the activity to ensure all group members knew what tasks were to be accomplished. In many cases more than one activity was needed per day. Student groups were

given three days to complete the first two lesson plans and two additional days to gather supplies and ready their materials for the preschoolers.

After two weeks of readying the classroom and curriculum building day one of Playschool arrived. Twenty-one children were listed on the attendance roster ranging in age of six months to five years. The children were grouped into four groups by age: infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and prekindergardeners. The nineteen high school students were placed in five groups; four groups to attend to the children and one group to record the daily activity on video. Four of the groups housed four members while the fifth group was smaller with three. Children were ushered in and chose small manipulative activities to play until all arrived. Children then congregated on the ABC rug in the middle of the room for a large group introduction activity led by one student group. After that five minute session the children were separated into the four groups by age. Nocturnal animals were the portion of the zoo lesson plans focused around for the first week.

After the first day with preschoolers, my students returned and sat with their groups to watch the video on iPads of their first encounter teaching the children. The purpose of watching the video was to analyze what worked and what didn't to make the next teaching experience surpass the last. Some groups held some very lengthy discussions while others independently reflected on the footage they viewed. Once journals were written and submitted, students began planning activities for their next lesson. During this time I circulated between groups prompting them with thoughts of tying the past occurrences with future ideas and procedures. The same cycle took place after the first seven playschool experiences. After the eighth playschool experience a reflection paper was assigned as the assessment piece of the unit. A survey also followed to conclude the project and determine how useful all the reflection practices were to

student learning and teaching success.

Instruments for Data Collection

To carry out my project I used three instruments, the Self-reflection Journal, Final Reflection Playschool Assessment, and Playschool Reflection Survey.

Self-reflection journal. Once the activities were carried out with the children, students viewed the video recording of themselves to complete daily journal reflections (Appendix C). A rubric aided in assessing the self-reflection journaling of students (Appendix C). The rubric scoring criteria and analysis are explained below.

Final reflective playschool assessment. In completion of the unit, students completed a final reflective playschool assessment (Appendix D). Students were asked to look back at all eight days of interaction with the children while answering the following question “What are your perceptions of your teaching?” They were to evaluate the children’s behaviors and reactions in class. They addressed their own actions and teaching approaches to show evidence of the successes in their teaching. The reflection had to be two pages written in length and a grading rubric was provided.

Playschool Reflection Survey. The last instrument for data collection was a Playschool Reflection Survey (Appendix E). I assembled the post-survey, which helped me evaluate how the students thought the reflection practices worked for them. Students were given 10 minutes to complete the survey with items that targeted the effectiveness of the unit assignments. Using a four category scale of strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, and strongly disagreed, students ranked the components of reflection. They reflected on the lesson plan procedure, the video-taping, peer discussions, and daily written journals as to how beneficial they were to personal achievement.

Evaluation and Data Analysis

To examine student reflection outcomes I evaluated scores from three instruments using rubrics.

Self-reflection journal rubric. Assessing the reflection journals was completed with a rubric composed of: reflection, further understanding, and presentation. The rubric levels ranged from 1 (minimal) to 4 (advanced). I scored the seven journal entries for each student by noting depth of reflection through critical thinking, further understanding by addressing a plan of action, and presentation showing a coherent flow of insightful ideas. Next, I created a table to display the number of students who scored at each level for all seven of the journal entries. I examined the number of students who received high scores (levels 3 and 4) early on, and compared those to the number of students who received high scores in the final entries (6 and 7) to address question one.

Final reflective playschool assessment. Student's final reflective papers were assessed with a rubric similar to the self-reflection journal rubric. Reflection, further understanding, and presentation were three scoring criteria areas evaluated with the same range of 1 to 4 as the journals. The added scoring category was conventions to evaluate spelling and punctuation. The total score was then multiplied by 4 due to the fact the paper was to be written at least two pages in length.

Playschool reflection survey. A survey was given to the students to show the results how well the reflective practices of the unit were received and valued. Students rated seven statements addressing the effectiveness of data collection instruments to the depth of their reflection using a four category scale. Strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, and strongly disagreed were the range of scoring choices for all seven statements.

The entire playschool experience workday structure was modified to take students on a

day-to-day journey of self-reflective practice. Students were guided to reflect on what worked, what didn't, and how to refine items to make more valuable. Using the video recording as a means to sharpen awareness of one's own actions, along with, journaling were designed to promote metacognition. The next chapter will show specific observations and results of the reflective process.

Chapter Four

Results

Reflecting on actions to refine a teaching approach in order to increase effectiveness is not always a natural or easy task. To ask this of high school students completing a four week yearly childhood teaching experience it became my prerogative. I hypothesized that by writing daily reflective journals after viewing individual performance videos students would expand the process of reflection to positively enhance their skill of teaching. I found that by completing the process, including Self-Reflection Journals (Appendix C) and the Reflective Playschool Assessment (Appendix D), students were able to reflect more deeply to make improvements in their planning and teaching.

Reflection begins by looking at the past. To promote reflection, the students were video recorded while teaching the children during the first day of playschool. The video was then viewed on an iPad in small groups during the following class period. Students individually reflected by responding to a writing prompt (Appendix G) that was distributed to them at the beginning of class. After the independent writing, students participated in a peer discussion group to share their thoughts of the video they watched of the previous day and discuss the answers to the reflection questions. Students gave feedback to each other offering suggestions to better their teaching practices. While peer group discussions were at work I met with each group, engaging in their conversations, and offering suggestions to where improvements could be made.

Each student submitted their full self-reflection on how they did the previous day in the form of a journal entry after each day they taught. Each week I read the reflective journals and provided written feedback to the students. The entire process continued for the next seven days that the playschool children were present; however, the reflection prompts changed daily, and

after the eighth day, students wrote their final reflection paper, the Reflection Playschool Assessment, in place of their journal entry. My goal for students was that they achieve the feeling of being an effective educator by the end of the playschool experience due to the process.

Level of Thinking in Self-reflection Journals

Below, I let known the major findings for Question 1: In what ways do students demonstrate metacognitive thinking in their reflection journals over the four week session?

The quantitative data collected was largely gathered through the Self-Reflection Journals (Appendix C) given after each playschool session (see Table 4.1). Each journal stated a question that required the students to reflect upon their experiences. A rubric was given to ensure the writing expectations were clear. The score of the journals was marked on a four point scale, with four representing an advanced level, “Demonstrates reflective and deeper thinking showing a connection of multiple avenues, creative solutions, and critical thinking” and one representing a minimal level of reflection, “No reflection is demonstrated beyond the description of events”. To show an example of how I scored the Self-Reflection Journals (Appendix C) I chose the third journal submission of Student O. She wrote “What I can do to be a better teacher is to have more fun activities. Have them get involved more instead of wandering off and doing other things that they’re not supposed to do.” She did not analyze what she meant by “fun” or why she thought they were wandering away from her teaching group, so in the Reflection category this was scored as a 1. For Further Understanding, she gains some insights on what she noticed yet did not go beyond to address what should be done next time to keep the children in her teaching group thus, this entry was scored a 2 on the rubric. Lastly, in the Presentation portion of the rubric Student O was vague on her response making it difficult to follow, which resulted in putting her with another 2 score. Holistically she came out with a 2 on a 4 point scale. In

examining all scores from the first journal entry to the seventh, a larger number of students received higher scores (3 and 4) on the third entry compared to the first entry. Results from students' journals indicated they grew in the depth of reflection evident in their entries.

When compiling scores for my study I focused on the number of students falling in each point scale (1, 2, 3, and 4) for each written reflection. To focus on growth in reflecting practices I then compared the first reflection data with the seventh day data to show how viewing themselves on video generates further learning targets. Table 4.1 shows six students performing at a score of 3 or 4 where at the end of the experience thirteen students scored a 3 or 4, illustrating more students performed at a higher level of reflection toward the end of the project compared to the beginning.

The first and second reflection questions remained the same for the first week. The question "What did the children enjoy doing and in turn not enjoy doing?" was given to familiarize students with the likes and ability levels of the children. Common enjoyment responses included "activities with music, play dough, dress-up, kitchen area, sandbox, singing, hands-on, and climbing". The not enjoyable activities sighted were "coloring, reading books, bowling, taking turns, staying in one place and duck, duck, goose". When holding conversations with the groups they noticed the children enjoyed gross-motor activities over fine-motor. The game, "Duck Duck Goose" was not reported as enjoyable for the preschoolers, which was initially surprising for the high school students. However, in examining the video of the lesson we noticed that the rules of the game were never stated, students assumed everyone knew how to play that particular game. For many of the children it was their first time playing and they did not understand how long to chase, where to sit back down, or why they had to sit in the middle of the circle. With the video, writing, and conversation the student group was able to learn from their

mistakes and produce more age appropriate activities for the next lesson. Most of the reflections on the first two lessons were lower-level (rubric score of 1 or 2); there were only 6/17 students who scored a 3 or 4 on the reflection rubric.

The third day's question focused more on the student's behaviors. The question read "What can I do personally to be a better teacher?" The responses were specific and genuine, "plan age appropriate lessons, be more excited myself, give more praise, interact more with the children, be more assertive, lead, focus on transitions between activities, energetic games, and figure out what they like". The quality of reflection was evident on day three as 9/17 students scored at a higher level (3 or 4) on the rubric. While conversing in groups we spoke more about why it is important to incorporate those ideas when working with children.

On day four the question read "Describe how you have made a positive connection to one child. How could you connect better with the rest of the children?" Many students realized that building rapport with the children was crucial. Giving some personal attention to each individual established stronger relationships. The students needed to exert more energy making their activities more fun to connect with the children. Rubric scores continued to increase as 12/17 students received scores of 3 or 4 for their reflections on day four.

The reflection prompt for day five went back to the idea of transitions. I noticed that the activities in their lessons were becoming more age appropriate and engaging, but there was difficulty in blending one to the next. I prompted the students with "What guidance techniques worked well with getting the children to transition from activity to activity?" and "What will you do differently to transition the children smoothly Thursday?" They responded thoughtfully with "have all materials ready, better voice quality, prompting what is next, remove distracting objects from view, always be engaging, and use songs". Watching video, discussions, and written

reflections were all activities that appeared to be driving the depth of reflection. Data on the entry for the fifth lesson showed 10/15 scoring a 3 or 4. Many students did not submit a reflection after day five affecting the data numbers.

Table 4.1

Journal Results: The Number of Students Scored at Each Level (1 = minimal; 4 = advanced)

Journal #	Journal Score				Total # of Students
	1	2	3	4	
1	1	10	5	1	17
2	0	9	5	1	15
3	0	8	8	1	17
4	0	5	11	1	17
5	0	5	8	2	15
6	0	4	11	2	17
7	0	4	6	7	17

*Note: Due to chronic absences for one student and intermittent absences for four other students the total for each row does not add to 19, that is, fewer than 19 students completed the playschool reflection for that day.

After the sixth day of playschool, I wanted students to recognize their successes. I prompted them by asking “What do you feel you are better at when working with the young children?” Answers were well beyond what I expected them to be. They felt they could keep the children’s attention while leading the group as a whole. They found how to monitor time and to “think on their feet”. They felt activities were well liked by the children highly due to being age-appropriate lessons. Many also commented on how they felt they found ways to nurture the children when under their care. Seeing themselves and reflecting was really driving student teaching practices placing 13/17 in the 3 and 4 range on the grading rubric.

Achievement was the focus during the last week of playschool. The students had taken each experience, reflected on it, and transformed their teaching. Metacognition is the highest form of thinking. When able to visualize how to attain a goal, true reflection is accomplished. The writing prompt after the seventh day made students reflect on themselves, “What makes you a great teacher?” A wide range of answers were presented and explained. The students dug deep to exhibit their finest traits to include “love of kids, helpful, patient, communicate effectively, create comfort, adjust lesson plans, show care, practice questioning, positive attitude, and smile”. Assessing the writing revealed 13/17 students were able to reflect at higher levels. There were 7/17 students who scored at the highest level 4 for effective reflection. Repeating the process of viewing video, discussions, and writing made a positive difference in the depth students reflected. Below are two examples from Student A that demonstrate this growth.

Journal #1 “The children enjoyed doing very hands on activities. For example they were using playdough and the kids were focused and had fun with it. Also I noticed that the babies liked the songs.”- Student A

Journal # 7 “There are many things that makes someone a great teacher. But what makes me a great teacher is my positive attitude and openness to interact with the kids. Throughout this time I’ve noticed improvement with my interaction with them, being able to react quicker and know how to handle their emotion. Also staying positive and happy makes the kids happy and overall enjoy their activity more.”- Student A

Final Reflective Playschool Assessment

Below are major findings for Question 2: In what ways will student learning increase through reflective journal writing?

A formative written assessment was administered to the students after the eighth and final day of playschool. The grading rubric replicated the previous daily rubric with an additional column of conventions. The Reflective Playschool Assessment (Appendix D) was a two-page paper addressing the question “What are my own perceptions of my teaching?” Many students

itemized thoughts from previously written journals elaborating further on their growth as a teacher. When comparing the writing from the first few daily reflection journals to the final assessment the depth of student reflection was evident. Students were no longer stating the events that happened, they were explaining the changes they made and the impact that had on the children. All 19 students achieved a score of 3 or 4 on the rubric depicting gains in using reflection to increase learning.

Table 4.2

Reflection Paper Assessment Scores

	Holistic Score			
	1	2	3	4
# of Students	0	0	10	9

*Note: The holistic score reflects the depth of reflection, further understanding, presentation of information, and conventions.

Playschool Reflection Survey

The following are the major findings for Question 3: To what degree will video recording enhance student reflection practices?

I did not want my grading by rubric to be the only factor showing the impact on student reflection, so I concluded with a student survey. The Play School Reflection Survey (Appendix E) listed seven statements to rate on a spectrum of Strongly Agreed to Strongly Disagreed. Surveys were submitted anonymously and I received sixteen from the nineteen students in the course. The survey listed all the reflection components asking the students how useful they were in the process of increasing their teaching performance. Table 4.3 shows the breakdown of responses. What I found most interesting was that even though each reflection component did not have the highest marks the majority of students felt that the reflective methods impacted their planning, thinking, learning, and teaching.

Table 4.3

Playschool Reflection Survey Results: The Number of Students at Each Level of Agreement

	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Disagreed
1. The lesson plan procedure prepared me to work with the playschool children.	6	10	
2. Watching video recordings of myself teaching was beneficial to my learning.	4	9	3
3. Discussing my teaching performance with my peers broadened my depth of thinking.	4	12	
4. Writing reflective journals was a positive means of expanding my thinking and success as a teacher.	6	9	1
5. Using reflection methods throughout the playschool experience made me more aware of my teaching abilities.	10	5	1
6. Using reflection methods throughout the playschool experience helped me become a better teacher.	7	9	
7. Reflection is an important aspect to learning.	11	4	1

Note: Only 16/19 students completed the survey due to absence. No students chose Strongly Disagreed, so it was not included in the table.

Results Summary

Through multiple reflection practices throughout the playschool experience, I concluded that students became more metacognitive as time progressed. This was evident in the number of students who received higher level scores on the rubric, which increases over time. Reflections became richer and deeper for more students, which appeared to guide them in changing their approach and content to meet the needs of the children under their care. By doing that they discovered the attributes that describe and make a successful teacher, for example, effective communication, flexibility, positive attitude, and resourceful.

The data compiled through journaling showed increases in the depth of reflection when working with children and revealed the changes that were needed to engage them fully. Viewing the videos of the students teaching drove the success of the study. They could see first-hand what teaching approaches worked and what didn't, also seeing behaviors they may not have noticed if the videos were not taken and viewed. Students pursued practices to increase their awareness of running a developmentally appropriate classroom.

Survey results also confirmed growth from reflection. Continuous exposure to viewing themselves teaching led to efficient transitions and time management. The Daily Journal Reflections, Final Reflective Playschool Assessment, and Playschool Reflection Survey all facilitated positive results of utilizing reflection for increasing student teaching practice.

Chapter Five

Theorem, Hurdles, and Reflections

Use of reflection to improve teaching practice was the purpose of my research.

Throughout the research I explained the theory behind reflection, shared the hurdles my students endured, and now share my reflections on the findings. Hence the title of this chapter.

Changing the way one processes their thoughts is a difficult concept to wrap one's mind around. My action research project was designed to do just that, and more. Using questioning techniques to pin point desired behaviors and responses guided the students during the study. Using the technology of video recording became an asset to student reflection over what I initially expected to see. Through implementation of reflective journal writings, discussions, and viewing video the data collected and analyzed showed gains in reflective thinking.

The question prompt after each playschool session was carefully chosen to highlight specific teaching traits. These traits encompassed the following concepts that prepare individuals to become successful when working with children. The traits included: knowledge of developmental ability, personal responsibility, building positive rapport, positive guidance techniques, seamless transitions, lesson rational and flow, and strong teacher qualities. Copple and Bredekamp (2009) expressed similar traits that lead to be an excellent teacher. The Self-Reflection Journal Entries began with only 1/17 students scoring proficient in reflecting. Many just summarized the events that took place during the session. In the end, 6/17 students scored a 3 and 7/17 scored a 4 on the rubric showing critical thinking leading to changes in teaching performance. Students demonstrated higher levels of reflection at the end of the unit.

Reflective writing was not the only component driving the increase in thinking, video recordings of student performance deemed also valuable. On the survey submitted at the end of

the experience 15/16 students agreed or strongly agreed viewing video recordings of themselves teaching strengthened their learning process. Students were able to observe their teaching, reflect on the guided questions, and act on areas needing improvement. The reflection process made students aware of the importance of transitions between activities. By shortening the transition time, students were able to make improvements in their lesson planning and teaching procedure. Students did implement the changes before the next encounter with the children.

The final Reflective Playschool Assessment paper (Appendix D) encompassed a wide variety of responses as students reflected on their teaching. On the grading scale of 1 – 4, 1 being the lowest, 19/19 students scored on the top half of the grading spectrum. Specific results showed 9/19 scored at a level 4, while 10/19 scored at a 3. All students were proficient or above on their summary reflective writing.

Throughout the playschool practicum unit several important conclusions became evident. The first is the students saw the positive impact of the video recordings. They could easily pick out what worked and what improvements were necessary. While they were timid in the beginning to see themselves on tape, hesitant to watch, but in the end they looked forward to seeing all the positive interactions and improvements they made. The videos became an asset to them, their teaching, and the children.

The second conclusion I drew refers to my assignment requirements. The daily writing prompts enabled the students to glance at different aspects of teaching. They assessed what learning level the children were performing at, what theme areas and topics peaked the children's attention, sought out activities to engage and challenge the young minds, while building positive rapport with the children all along the way. While the unit requirements initially seemed lengthy with writing, it all was seen as positive steps in mentoring their skills.

Hurdles

Data shows my action research project was successful in finding that video recording student performance increased the depth of reflection and performance in teaching, although there were a few hurdles along the way. One could argue the student survey questions were written in a way to guide students to answer in the way I wanted them to answer. All the survey statements were worded positively using words such as beneficial, broaden, expanding, aware, and important. I realize I should have mixed it up and posed an equal amount of negative statements as positive. I'm a person who invests in the positive side of situations which is the catalyst of all the upbeat survey statements. An even mix would exhibit more objective feedback from students.

Reflections

The students were not the only ones reflecting during the playschool practicum experience. Webb and Scoular describe action research as working through a process of steps. The first step is to "reflect on practice and identify problem or area for investigation" (Webb & Scoular, 2011, p. 470). As I reviewed the outcomes of my research I noticed time seemed to drive even the best thought out plans. In my initial list of student requirements I included a "clip of the week" activity for the students to complete. I intended to choose a short video clip of a student group engaging the children in a positive manner and show it to all student participants. We would then discuss what made that clip outstanding. As the first playschool day came and went there was not enough time to show the "clip of the week". Watching the videos, completing the reflection journals, group discussions, and future lesson planning needed to be the focus for us to be ready for the next teaching day with children. I still see "the clip of the week" as a worthwhile practice as does Luckenbill (2012). She used a digital camera to take still photos and

short videos of her students. She stated that her students seemed more “Tuned-in” to the children’s cues after viewing the camera images. One picture could capture the best teachable moments. In the future I would like to use a digital camera instead of an iPad to capture moments. The iPad did not seem to have enough storage capacity and downloading four different videos a day was very cumbersome of a task. Having a photo or short video footage downloaded to a class site such as Moodle would allow the students to view the photos at their leisure making comments as a Blog. I would require students to submit one comment per week on the “image of the week”.

Reflection has always been a key component to my personal and professional lives. It has allowed me to assess where I stand with the goals I have set for myself and what I need to move forward. Looking back to see how I arrive at a particular venue has been reassuring and rewarding. Finding a way to instill reflection practice in my student’s learning has also deemed a valuable experience. I believe that reflecting on endeavors makes one a stronger person. A strong individual often becomes an effective leader. In that leadership role others follow and vast in their knowledge. Through reflection one can modify thinking to enable growth and intellectual achievement.

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Appendix A: Fall Playschool Responsibilities

1. **Daily Lesson Plans – Zoo Theme**

Week 1 – Nocturnal Animals	Due Wed. Oct. 22 (Oct. 28 and 30)
Week 2 – Animals of Africa	Due Wed. Oct. 29 (Nov. 4 and 6)
Week 3 – Aquatic Animals	Due Wed. Nov. 5 (Nov. 11 and 13)
Week 4 – The Aviary	Due Wed. Nov. 12 (Nov. 18 and 20)

(Value: 80 points)

2. Keep a **self-reflection journal** of your daily experiences in playschool. Minimum entry length is one-half page written. (Value: 126 points) One entry is due each playschool practicum after viewing your video. See the rubric for grading criteria.

3. **Individual Participation** – when children are here! Factors for grading each day:

- Age appropriate activities
- Readiness with activities
- Participation with children
- Awareness of what to do
- Independence
- Attitude
- Cooperation in group
- Responsibility
- Clean up – your area and classroom

(Value: 20 points each day = 140)

Note: If you miss a playschool day they can be made up by working with children for one hour outside of school. A special lesson plan would need to be designed and completed with children and pre-approved by Mrs. Schalow.

4. **Group Project of Major Room Decoration** – Possibilities include:

- Dramatic play area
- Table tags
- Cubby tags
- Ceiling decor
- Parent newsletter
- Bulletin board
- “Welcome” door

(Value: 20 points per person)

5. **Blue Lesson Plan Chart**: Summarize all your daily activities on the large room chart weekly on the day lesson plans are due. (Value: 5 points each day = 40)

6. **Reflective Assessment**: After completing all four weeks of playschool you will reflect on your role as a teacher. See rubric for grading details. (Value: 64 points)

Appendix B: Daily Lesson Plans

Theme: _____
Teacher(s): _____ Date: _____ Responsibility: _____

Lesson Objective: State your behavioral objective. Given 1) the condition under which the students will perform the objective, 2) an observable student behavior, and 3) a statement that specifies how well the student must perform the behavior. Example: Given a 10 –piece puzzle, students must put it together correctly with 90% accuracy.

Materials Needed: Make sure you have all of your materials collected and organized so your lesson will flow smoothly. Ensure that everyone in your group knows their part and the parts of others.

Anticipatory Set: How are you going to motivate your students... assess background knowledge... introduce your lesson?

Activity: List between 3-5 age appropriate activities.

Description of Activity: Explain what teachers and students will be doing during each activity.

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Appendix C: Self-Reflection Journal Rubric

Name _____	4	3	2	1
Reflection	Demonstrates reflective and deeper thinking showing a connection of multiple avenues, creative solutions, and critical thinking.	Shows ability to analyze issues from multiple perspectives.	Includes little evidence of analyzing issues/content.	No reflection is demonstrated beyond the description of events.
Further Understanding	Creates a personal plan of action or personal challenge based on commitment to class or insights into teaching.	Creates a 'next step' based on previous events or progress in teaching.	Gains affectively from the 'experience' but insights based on conscious reflection are few.	No progress. Repetitious thoughts and reflection.
Presentation	Well focused perspective; coherent flow and insightful ideas.	Perspective is clearly stated but not deep enough to be very insightful.	Perspectives are vague and ideas are difficult to follow.	No original thinking; unorganized display of ideas.
Total				

Comments:

Appendix D: Final Reflective Playschool Assessment

You have now had multiple experiences of being the teacher of young children. In your own words write a two-page essay answering the following question. You will be graded using the rubric below.

Question: What are my own perceptions of my teaching?

Possible ideas to address include: Did the children understand the directions you gave? How were they acting in class? What things did you notice that needs to be addressed? What did you do well? What makes you think that? What evidence shows you successful as a teacher?

Grading Rubric

	4	3	2	1
Reflection	Demonstrates reflective and deeper thinking showing a connection of multiple avenues, creative solutions, and critical thinking.	Shows ability to analyze issues from multiple perspectives.	Includes little evidence of analyzing issues/content.	No reflection is demonstrated beyond the description of events.
Further Understanding	Creates a personal plan of action or personal challenge based on commitment to class or insights into teaching.	Creates a 'next step' based on previous events or progress in teaching.	Gains affectively from the 'experience' but insights based on conscious reflections are few.	No progress. Repetitious thoughts and reflection.
Presentation	Well focused perspective; coherent flow and insightful ideas.	Perspective is clearly stated but not deep enough to be very insightful.	Perspectives are vague and ideas are difficult to follow.	No original thinking; unorganized display of ideas.
Conventions	Flawless spelling and punctuation.	Few or no spelling errors; some minor punctuation mistakes.	Several spelling and punctuation errors.	Many instances of incorrect spelling and punctuation.
Total x 4				

Appendix E: Playschool Reflection Survey

	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed
1. The lesson plan procedure prepared me to work with the preschool children.				
2. Watching video recordings of myself teaching was beneficial to my learning.				
3. Discussing my teaching performance with my peers broadened my depth of thinking.				
4. Writing reflective journals was a positive means of expanding my thinking and success as a teacher.				
5. Using reflection methods throughout the play school experience made me more aware of my teaching ability.				
6. Using reflection methods throughout the play school experience helped me become a better teacher.				
7. Reflection is an important aspect to learning.				

Appendix F: Informed Consent Letter

Participants

Human and Child Care Services students: incorporating reflective practices, including video, to enhance metacognition to improve teaching skills and awareness.

Introduction

The purpose of this research is to determine the impact of reflective journaling practices on student learning. You are invited to participate in this study to inform the profession of the impact reflective journaling using video-taping has on novice teacher success. It is hoped that the information gained from this study will benefit future students and teachers by using reflective strategies to improve learning. The results of this research will be incorporated in educational programs for improving the preparation of teachers at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

Description of Procedures

The study will be conducted under Mrs. Schalow during the regular class period in October – November 2014. Data will be collected from students' work and results will be reported through professional conferences and publications. No extra work is required on your part and there are no foreseeable risks from participating in this study.

Data and records identifying participants will be kept confidential and kept in a locked cabinet. Participants will remain anonymous through the entire process; names will not be reported with any data. You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study by contacting me, Mrs. Schalow, the Principal Investigator (Dr. Katrina Liu), or the Director of Research and Sponsored Programs (Laurie Taylor) concerning participants' rights and treatment (contact information on the printed copy of your records).

Subject Signature

Your signature indicates that the study has been explained to you, giving you time to read the document, to ask questions, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the study. You are free to withdraw from the participating at any time. Thank you for considering participation in research expanding the teaching profession.

Student's Name (print)

Parent/Guardian's Name (print)

Student's Signature

Parent/Guardian's Signature

Date

Date

Ranae Schalow-Instructor

Xx

Informed Consent Letter: Participants Keep this Copy

Participants

Human and Child Care Services students: incorporating reflective practices, including video, to enhance metacognition to improve teaching skills and awareness.

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Ranae Schalow-Instructor

Xx

Dr. Katrina Liu, Principal Investigator

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Phone: 262-472-5820 Email: liuy@uww.edu

Laurie Taylor, IRB Administrator, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

University of Wisconsin Whitewater, 800 W. Main St. Whitewater, WI 53190

Phone: 262-472-5212 Fax: 262-472-5214 Email: taylor@uww.edu

Appendix G: List of Playschool Journal Prompts

Day One: What did the children enjoy doing? What did they not enjoy doing?

Day Two: What did the children enjoy doing? What did they not enjoy doing?

Day Three: What can I do personally to be a better teacher?

Day Four: Describe how you have made a positive connection to one child. How could you connect better with the rest of the children?

Day Five: What guidance techniques worked well with getting children to transition from activity to activity? What will you do differently to transition the children smoothly Thursday?

Day Six: What do you feel you are getting better at when working with young children? Elaborate!

Day Seven: What makes you a great teacher?