Since we are almost done with the whole class, the students’ put ups have gotten better. When we first started it, they would all say something like, “I like your shoes.” Now they comment on how well the student does his or her work or how much they like playing with the student at recess. The biggest problem during community circle is students talking when it is not their turn. I remind them that this is rude to the speaker. Any student that is talking out of turn is warned. If they continue, I ask them to turn their card. If the student does other things such as bother others or plays with things during community circle, I ask them to go to their seat and put their head down.

After today, I feel much more confident about my skills in the classroom. I see now that I can control the class without another teacher present. I feel much better about what I am doing in the classroom. I see now how the students are affected by my actions. I am looking forward to working with the class solo more often.
Thursday, October 02, 2003

Wow! Who knew that a field trip could be so much work? Luckily, we did not have any trouble. It is tough to get 80 plus first graders to walk about a mile in 35-degree weather. The route we took required use to cross the street four times. Fortunately, we had a police escort to stop traffic each time. However, it is hard work getting everybody to stay together to make the crossing go faster. We had to take the long route to the Interpretive Center because we thought the path though the woods might be muddy. The temperature was very cold and the kids were quickly tired of walking. Tony amused himself by waving at all the cars that went past. Mrs. Nichols and I walked in the back of the pack to hurry the stragglers along.

Initially, when we arrived at the Center it was confusing. We were told that we would be moving through four stations as classes. Eventually everybody figured out where they needed to be. Our class first went outside to play a game of Oh Deer. The park worker leading the station asked if any of the teachers had ever done it before and I was able to help because I have played it in my science methods course. The game is a lesson from Project WILD. While I like this lesson, it is not appropriate for first grade and that quickly became apparent. In fact, the Project WILD book identifies it as a middle school activity. The kids liked running around but they did not understand the concept of producers and consumers.

Our next station was about the food chain. When we arrived, the woman running it informed me that I would have to lead it because she did not know about it and she was not a teacher. She gave me the materials and I thought to myself, “I know about as much as she does and she works here!” I passed out the sheets with the water food chain on
them to the kids and tried to explain the terms producer and consumer in terms they would understand. I think they were beginning to understand, but they could not remember which term was which. I felt that I could have done a better job if I had known ahead of time what was going to be covered.

Mrs. Buller came in as we were finished with our station and we discussed the amount of time the centers were taking. At the rate we were going, we would not get back to school before noon as we had planned. We decided to only do one more station and the head over to the park playground. My class and Miss Everett’s class combined to take a nature hike. This would have been fine, except the ranger leading us stopped to discuss consumers and producers for a very long time. He kept talking and when he asked the kids a question, he would let everybody share an answer. The kids quickly became restless and cold. The hike was fine except there was very little to see other than plants and trees.

We let the kids play on the playground for about 15 minutes and fed them a snack of animal crackers. We then began the trek back to school. This time, we took the path through the woods, which saved some time. However, it had been a long morning and the kids did not want to walk quickly. A lot of them straggled and it was hard to get them to hurry up. I tried to encourage them by reminding them that when we got back to the school, we would be eating lunch. We eventually made it back to the warmth of the school just after noon.

When we returned, we let the kids have a bathroom break and then we passed out their lunches. The school had prepared sack lunches for them that we ate in our classroom. The kids enjoyed eating in the room, although they tended to talk more than
eat. I reminded them several times to eat and then talk when they were finished. We had planned for lunch to take only half an hour. However, since the kids were so talkative and tired, they took closer to 45 minutes. This meant that my math lesson could not be done today.

When the kids were done eating, we took them for another bathroom break and then it was time for computer. Today was collaboration day for the first grade team. We spent our time discussing the field trip and how it could be improved. It was nice to see that the other teachers felt the same way about the field trip as I did. We also found out the assembly today was only for the third through fifth graders. We had planned to have the assembly after specials. We had to quickly decide what to do for the last 45 minutes of the day. The kids were pretty worn out so we decided that whatever we did should not require them to do too much. Mrs. Bontrager decided to put in a video in our classroom.

After school, Mrs. Bontrager and I were worn out from the long day and decided that doing anything would be too much. We move today’s math lesson to tomorrow morning and decided that if there was time, we would have the math test. Tomorrow is a two-hour early release with teacher in-service in the afternoon. It is also a casual Friday so I get to wear jeans twice this week. It is nice to have some small perks in the week.
Friday, October 03, 2003

Today felt extremely long. When I was getting the students ready to dismiss, I felt as if it was 2:30 instead of only 12:30. The kids behaved moderately well for me. They got into trouble during recess and will miss lunch recess on Monday and Tuesday. Mrs. Bontrager let them know how disappointed we were with them. I cannot figure out why they are having trouble following procedures lately.

The day started with the usual journaling for half an hour. The kids are getting much better at writing sentences and stretching out words. I am impressed with how they use the word wall to help. Instead of doing word wall work as we usually do in the morning, I taught the math lesson. Mrs. Bontrager taped me while I taught. I hate being taped. I was very self-conscious the entire lesson. I already know what problems I am going to see when I watch it.

After I finished the lesson, I gave the math test. The kids really have problems with the no talking rule. I am constantly reminding them not to talk or they will have their test taken away. I also worry about them looking at each other’s papers. We give them their homework folders to put up on the table, but their eyes still roam. After the test, I explained to them why it is important not to talk during the test. Next time, I will just take their paper away if they talk.

While the kids were out for recess, Mrs. Billet and I graded the tests. If they get an 80% or below, they have to retake the test until they get above 80%. This week had three students that need to retake the test. One of them had to retake the last test. I hope that she can improve quickly. I will remember to pay special attention to her work during math from now on.
After recess, it was time to start centers. Since Mrs. Bontrager was not in the room, I explained the centers to the kids. We have already done these centers for two days, so I was just reviewing for them. However, when I got to the writing center, I could not remember what they were supposed to do at that center. My mind was totally blank and I could not find the center card in the room. I finally just asked the students if they remembered what to do. Luckily, Tiffany spoke up and it all came back to me. Overall, the kids did well during centers. I did not have to fire anybody, but I did have to remind the class to check their voices. I hope that Mrs. Bontrager and I can start reading groups next week.

After lunch, Mrs. Buller came in to do the fun Friday math lesson. She taught the kids how to shuffle cards and sort them into number and face cards. She also taught them the names of the symbols. Next week, she is going to teach them to play a math game with the cards. I think it was a good idea to give the students time to explore and play with the cards before trying to teach them a lesson.

The two hours left in the school day were used for teacher in-service. We first had a staff meeting for all teachers. Mrs. Garber led this meeting and it was about the required writing prompts. For the second meeting, everybody had a choice of three topics. I chose to go to a meeting about using word lists in writing, which was also led by Mrs. Garber. I learned a lot during these meetings. They covered some things that I had learned about in my English classes, but now I could see classroom uses. I enjoyed the meetings and look forward to learning more.
Monday, October 06, 2003

Today begins a somewhat unusual week. Everyday this week there is something special that does not normally happen. Today we had an assembly. Ronald McDonald came, entertained the kids, and encouraged them to read. The kids had a lot of fun. Tomorrow night is McPrincipal’s night at the local McDonald’s. The kids go to McDonald’s and Mrs. Tahara and other staff members will be there. I have never heard of this before, so I am not sure what exactly they do. The only problem with the assembly was that it interrupted our morning. We did not get to do any language arts work today.

After the assembly and recess, we finished the centers that we started last week. This week’s centers have a theme of apples. Every week the centers have a theme. Mrs. Bontrager told me what she plans the themes being each week. I think that my unit will be for centers and I will use one of those themes. I am getting many good ideas from Mrs. Bontrager and I am encouraged to look for my own ideas.

In the afternoon, I started with a community circle since we did not have a chance to do one in the morning. Since it was Monday, I had the students share what they did over the weekend. It did not take as long as I had planned, but I adjusted. I then did the A side of the math homework with the students. I taught the lesson on Friday, but we took the test instead of doing the homework. Since this did not take very long, I played some sorting games with the kids before I took them to art.

After art, we did a community circle for put ups. Today was the last name in the bag. From now on, I will have to come up with a topic or activity to do during that time. I read aloud Hooway for Wodney Wat. I chose this book because the kids are having
some trouble with picking on each other and fighting. They enjoyed the book and I love to read it.

After school, Mrs. Bontrager and I got centers ready for tomorrow. That took us almost an hour. As a result, we did not have time to do the Benchmark conference. I hope that we can get it done tomorrow some time. It needs to be done before Mr. Trout comes and he comes Wednesday morning!
Tuesday, October 7, 2003

Today was a fairly normal Tuesday. Mrs. Bontrager taught the morning today, while I taught in the afternoon. We did the timed writing today because we were unable to do it yesterday due to the assembly. We also started new centers today. On Tuesdays, all of the centers have to be explained. This usually takes a while because this is the first time the students will do these centers so the directions have to be specific.

After lunch, I taught the Saxon Math lesson, as usual. We also completed the A side of the homework sheet. Today's special was music. During our special time we had a planned fire drill, so I had to go meet my students outside to make sure everything went correctly.

After music, I continued the apple theme during community circle by having the students share their favorite foods made from apples. It makes me laugh when they cannot think of anything so they say whatever their friend said. I also read a book about picking apples to the students.

After school, we had a literacy connections meeting. These meetings are for the K-2 teachers and are lead by our literacy coach, Mrs. Garber. During the meetings, we learn new strategies to use in the classroom and we share what has been working in our own classrooms. I have been getting a lot of new information from these meetings.
Wednesday, October 08, 2003

It was a long day today. Mrs. Bontrager and I started our Benchmark Conference before school started but we only got through one principle. Mr. Trout arrived shortly before 8 a.m. He went over some things with me and I explained the morning to him. I taught the morning since he was there to observe me.

We did the usual morning work journal. I helped students stretch out words and fix mistakes as I usually do. I did not notice anything unusual or any problems. After the morning work, I had the students go to the carpet to help me with a shared writing. I added Mrs. Bontrager and Miss Schmitt to the name chart. The kids did pretty well with it. I then reviewed our apple poem. I used to poem to discuss adding -s to words to make them plural. After working with the poem for a while, I added two new words to the word wall. After playing some word wall games, it was time for recess.

While the kids were outside, I met with Mr. Trout and we discussed what he observed. He saw some things that I had not thought about. The discussion went well. It is nice to hear an outside opinion. We reviewed some things that I had written in my reflective journals. Mr. Trout will be coming back in two weeks.

The rest of the day went just as well. Mrs. Bontrager taught the afternoon. She started the math lesson and I will finish it tomorrow with the kids. I was glad for the break because by the end of the morning, I felt as if I was losing my voice. There are some bugs going around the school and I hope that I did not get one from the kids. I plan to be at school everyday unless a doctor tells me otherwise.

One thing upset both Mrs. Bontrager and me today. I got a note back today that I had sent home with Josh last week regarding his behavior. It was the standard form note
that goes home anytime a student goes into red. I write on it what the child was doing and I sign it. I usually do it if I was the one who the child turned their card for. Josh’s mom had signed the note, but then she had written me back a note. She wrote that Josh told her that someone else was involved and was not getting in trouble. Both Mrs. Bontrager and I asked Josh who else was involved. He named a girl that does not even sit near him. Josh gets in trouble the most at his table during lessons, which is why I moved him last week. Mrs. Bontrager explained to Josh that he was the one responsible for his behavior. She also stressed that any child not following the rules will be disciplined.

Josh’s mom then asked who I was and when I disciplined him. This upset me because it tells me that Josh did not explain to her that I am his classroom teacher. It also upset me because I took the time to write a letter to the parents explaining who I was and what my role in the classroom would be. This was sent home the first full week of school in the Wednesday folders. I was also at the Back to School Night, which Josh’s family attended. That night, I had some parents ask if I was an aide despite that I had a nametag on. At parent/teacher conferences in a few weeks, I will be sure to introduce myself to all the parents and explain my role. This will be convenient because that week is my first week of solo teaching.
Thursday, October 9, 2003

Our morning was filled with many of our usual activities today. However, today optometrists came to check the students’ eyes. At an assigned time in the morning, I took the kids down to the cafeteria where they lined up to have their eyes checked. When they were done, they sat on the floor and watched a nature video until the whole class was done. I was happy to see that all of my kids behaved very well the whole time.

I finished yesterday’s math lesson this afternoon and did the A side of the homework sheet. During computer, Mrs. Bontrager ran home while I watched the kids. She went home to get her new puppy that she has been telling the kids about all week. Since today was a nice day and the kids have been behaving well, we decided to let them see the puppy. We did not tell the kids about it. I just told the kids that they were getting a surprise and that we were going to go play on the playground. The kids were very excited to see the puppy and they all wanted to pet it. Mrs. Billet and I had fun playing with him after school too.
Friday, October 10, 2003

I did not believe the other teachers when they told me the full moon affects the kids until today. Tonight is the full moon and today my class was wound up. I think I ended the day with more students in yellow or red than green. They were constantly talking and messing around. It was worse than a normal Friday.

I started my morning at school at 7 a.m. due to a staff meeting. I attended an optional staff meeting about arrival procedures. We attempted to come up with solutions to the problems that are being seen. The meeting did result in some new ideas that will hopefully ease the problems.

Since today was picture day, we had a staff picture taken following the meeting. Unfortunately, we had some teachers missing today so it is not a complete picture. Our class had their individual pictures taken around 9 a.m. I had to fill out the order envelope prior to that. I watched as the kids posed for their pictures. Some of them were very natural, but Devin looked so scared. He was stiff and trying too hard to smile. The photographer and I were trying to help him relax and smile naturally. I think he looked a little better. After the kids were done, they watched me get my picture taken. They wanted me to be in their yearbook.

I started the afternoon by going to pick up the kids from lunch. I immediately had to discipline a couple of my boys for fighting. By the time we left the cafeteria, I had three students who needed to turn their cards. Mrs. Buller came in to teach the fun Friday math lesson. She taught them how to play War with the playing cards they worked with last week. After she left, I taught the Saxon Math lesson. It used apples to teach about
one-half. The kids each got to eat one-half of an apple and they put their seeds in a baggie to use in the next lesson. They were quite talkative and messy.

I was the supervisor in library today. The kids would not stop talking despite being asked to stop by three different teachers. I finally told them, if you talk, I will write down your name and you will change your card when we get back to the room. When we left the library, I had a list of seven names. This caused three people to go into red. I told the kids when we got back to the room how disappointed I was in their behavior.

We ended the day by playing telephone to practice active listening. The kids enjoyed it and it got the message across that listening is important. I then read to them Apple Fractions to tie in our math lesson and theme of the week. Overall, I think today was the worst day of the week in terms of behavior, but I think that I handled it well. I did not let it upset me and I took care of it quickly.
Monday, October 13, 2003

Today started off interestingly. Mrs. Bontrager usually arrives around 7:40. Today she still was not there by 7:50. Mrs. Billet and several of the other teachers were worried. Mrs. Billet was about to go down to the office and get the master key while I called Mrs. Bontrager to make sure she was up. I was not worried at all. I knew that she would show up and even if she did not, I knew the majority of the plans for the day. Sure enough, a few minutes later she walked in. Everything was ready when the students came to the room.

We had the usual morning; the students did a journal sentence for morning work. They are getting better at stretching out words and remembering punctuation. After cleaning up, Mrs. Bontrager read a book about apples and pumpkins since pumpkins are our theme for the week. We are taking a field trip to a pumpkin farm next week. Then we added words to the word wall and played some games until recess.

After recess, we did a 10-minute word test. The kids are given 10 minutes to write all the words they know in their heads. We do this every Monday instead of doing centers. While the kids watched a Reading Rainbow video on germs, I graded their word tests. I count all the words that they spelled correctly. Mrs. Bontrager then shows it to them and encourages them to improve next time by at least one.

After lunch, I taught the A side of the homework from last Friday’s math lesson. It was simple and did not take the kids long to complete. Dylan needed extra attention as usual, but I was able to give it to him while the other kids worked. When the homework was done, I took the kids in groups to make cookies in the kitchenette. This was a follow-up to the graphing lesson I taught a few weeks ago. It was nice to be able to give
the kids the experience they might not get at home. They enjoyed helping me make them and of course, they liked eating them.

After school, Mrs. Bontrager and I planned for tomorrow. Our morning is different because the firefighters are coming to talk to the kids about fire safety. The kids are excited about seeing the fire truck. We then started to set up centers. They are all focusing on the theme of pumpkins and fall. I think the kids will have fun with them.
Tuesday, October 14, 2003

Today, the firemen came to teach the kids about fire safety. Since they were coming in the morning, we had them color in coloring books the firemen had brought us last week. We continued to work on them while the firemen set up their “house” in the hallway. Miss Everett’s class came in to watch the video with my class. The video was about how to get out of a house safely. The firemen also talked to the kids about crawling under smoke and touching doors to see if they are hot.

Then the kids got to practice how to get out safely. The firemen had set up a “house” in the hallway. The house was actually just four walls made out of painted plywood. One of the walls had a door on it. The firemen blindfolded the kids before letting them into the house in small groups. Then they spun them around and had the kids crawl on the floor with one hand on the wall to find their way to the door. It was fun to watch the kids crawl around blindfolded. I thought the firemen did a good job of keeping the kids entertained while they waited. One of them played Simon Says with my students.

When the firemen left, the kids went out for the morning recess. After recess, we introduced this week’s centers. This week’s theme is pumpkins. We did not have enough time to finish centers due to the firemen so we finished centers in the afternoon, after music. Before music, I taught the Saxon Math lesson.

After school, we had a corporation grade meeting. All of the first grade teachers in the corporation came to West Goshen for a meeting that was lead by Mrs. Tahara. This meeting focused on the math standards and how to teach them in the curriculum. Overall, today was a busy, but fun day.
Wednesday, October 15, 2003

Today was a typical Wednesday. The morning went as it usually does. The kids colored in the coloring books from the firefighters instead of writing a sentence, but that was the only major difference. We added words to the word wall and had centers. I did not have much to do all morning. I put things in their Wednesday folders mostly.

In the afternoon, I taught a Saxon Math lesson on addition. Every lesson has been slowly building up to addition and today we actually wrote number sentences. I really liked the lesson because it followed the concrete, pictorial, abstract teaching style. The kids first used cubes to represent the apple seeds, then they drew pictures of the apples, then they wrote the numbers under the pictures.

The kids are very noisy during my math lessons and I often find myself talking over them to teach. My biggest problem is that I do not even notice that I am talking over them. I usually do not notice until Mrs. Bontrager makes a comment about how noisy it is. I am not sure why this is, but it is definitely something I need to monitor, especially since at the end of the day today, I had a sore throat. Tomorrow I am going to try to maintain the same volume and if I find myself speaking louder, I will stop and discipline the class.

After school, we had a staff meeting. Mrs. Nichols talked to us about poverty and discipline. This is a big issue because many of our children come from poor families. Our biggest concern is making sure that the parents are helping us enforce the school rules while we respect what the parents do at home. We do not want to tell a parent that they are parenting wrong. Mrs. Nichols showed us part of a video featuring Dr. Rita Pierson who was very entertaining and thought provoking. Mr. Holsopple then shared
with us a management plan that he has implemented for some of his students who are too casual at school. Mrs. Nichols was also kind enough to give us ice cream treats for the meeting which made it that much more enjoyable.
Thursday, October 16, 2003

Today was better than yesterday in some ways. The kids worked on their coloring books again in the morning. They were all at school today, which is nice not to have to worry about catching somebody back up with the class. Mrs. Bontrager taught a lesson today on narrative writing. I really like the way that she did it. She read a book that was written in the narrative form. Then, she drew a picture of a memory from when she was a kid. Then she explained her picture. She then had the students return to their tables and she gave them five minutes to draw their picture without talking. They then partnered up and were given two minutes to explain the picture and they had to talk the entire time. She did all this because we have to give the students a writing prompt by the end of the month.

Centers were a little different today. We took them off the timer. They now move whenever they are ready for the next center. They do not have to move as a group. This will take some getting used to. I had to ask some of the students to leave the computer center because they were there too long. While the kids were at centers, I graded their math homework and cut out leaves that they had painted in one of the centers.

In the afternoon, I taught a Saxon Math lesson on ordinal numbers. The script actually had me use the word “ordinal.” As soon as I said it, I knew I would have to explain what that meant. The kids handled the lesson well. As soon as I realized that my voice was getting louder, I stopped and told the students that I would not talk over them. At one point, I turned off the lights. This was good because the students immediately got
quiet and focused their attention on me. I think the pacing and management are my two weakest areas. Those are the areas I am focusing the most on right now.

I am disturbed by a case of lice in my classroom. One of my girls has had lice since the beginning of the school year. Today I actually saw one crawling on her head! Just thinking about it makes my head itch. It made me so paranoid that I had Mrs. Billet check my head after school. Fortunately, I am clear. Mrs. Bontrager expressed her concern to the school nurse, Mrs. Miller. Unfortunately, the health department no longer requires kids to stay home until the lice are gone. However, since this case is not getting any better, the school has requested that the child not return to school until the problem is cleared.
Friday, October 17, 2003

Today was a little unusual for a Friday. The morning was spent reviewing narrative writing. Mrs. Bontrager read a Mercer Mayer book to the kids and then she reviewed her picture. She showed them how they could add more to the picture. Then, the students reviewed their pictures and added to them if they remembered more. Then they shared their picture with a partner. I think that this will help them with their writing.

After library, we used a card game to help the students with their writing. Miss Everett had found a Clifford beginning, middle, end card game at a store and bought some for each of the first grade teachers. Mrs. Bontrager gave each child a card and the students had to find the other matches. When the three had found each other, they had to come up with a story for what was going on in the cards. We are trying to stress that good stories have a beginning, middle, and an end. I am anxious to see how they do on their writing prompt next week.

I cannot believe that I am halfway through student teaching already. The time has gone too fast. It is already time to request classes for next semester. I do not want to go back to classes!
Monday, October 20, 2003

This week is a short week because of Fall Break. It is also my last week of team teaching. I start soloing next week. I spent the morning mostly observing and assisting. I read the students a story after recess. I did not show them the pictures and when I was done, they had to go back and draw the pictures in their groups. This was to help them learn that pictures help tell the story. We have to give them the writing prompt this week.

In the afternoon, I taught a math lesson on adding doubles. The students now know the doubles from 0-5. They learned them quickly; I hope that tomorrow they still know them. Our math lesson went fast and I had to think on my feet to keep it going. I tried to make it fun to do the double flashcards. I think I am going to find some fun math games so that next time I have something in mind to do.

After art, I read another story and then the students had to journal for twenty minutes. During this time, they are not allowed to talk or get out of their seat. I cannot help them spell or write anything. This is how it will be during the writing prompt. The goal is to get students ready for ISTEP. Some of the students get frustrated that I cannot help them. Dylan shut down because he relies on somebody helping him. He does not realize that he can do it without help. I know he can. It makes me feel bad to watch him just get frustrated and angry.

After school, Mrs. Bontrager and I set up the centers for this week. She explained to me her plans for tomorrow morning. When I got home, I finally watched the video of me teaching from a few weeks ago. I kept putting off because I am uncomfortable watching myself on tape. Once I started watching it, I noticed many things that I had not noticed while teaching. I wrote notes while I watched it and then wrote them up on the
observation form. I will be thinking about what I saw when I am teaching tomorrow.

This is important because Mr. Trout is coming tomorrow.
Tuesday, October 21, 2003

Since this week’s theme is pumpkins again, we had some fun and carved one. I took the kids in small groups into the kitchenette during centers to help me clean out the pumpkin. I showed them how I had cut it open and then pointed out all the different parts like the stem, skin, pulp, and seeds. I made all of the kids put their hand in the pumpkin and scoop some seeds out. They all had a lot of fun doing it.

The rest of the day was fairly normal. Mr. Trout came to observe me during math time. I did the regular Saxon Math lesson today. Today’s lesson involved making shapes on geoboards. I brought in my own geoboard to use on the overhead so that the students could see my model. This was exciting to them and helped to make the lesson more fun. Overall, the lesson went well and Mr. Trout had some good suggestions for me. I like to hear his feedback on the lessons.
Wednesday October 22, 2003

Today was the first grade field trip to the pumpkin farm. My class went along with Mrs. Richer’s class in the morning. The farm was about 30 minutes away. I sat with Dylan on the bus. I knew that somebody would have to watch him throughout the trip and I tried to make sure that I kept an eye on him. However, he had some problems and Mrs. Bontrager had to take him to the bus and stay with him. Luckily, this happened near the end of the trip. It took me a minute to realize that without Mrs. Bontrager, I was in charge of my class. Suddenly I had 21 students and 3 parents looking at me. I felt comfortable and quickly took the lead.

When we got back, the kids ate their lunches in the room. They were quite noisy and messy. I really appreciate the cafeteria staff now. We did centers for an hour following lunch. I spent most of centers putting papers into the students’ Wednesday folders. I had some time to relax and talk to Mrs. Billet while the kids were at P.E. After P.E., we tested the kids on the writing prompt. These will have to be graded according to a rubric. I am unsure how we will grade them though because I cannot read many of them and neither can Mrs. Bontrager. It will be interesting.

We have Fall Break for the rest of the week. Next week I take over the class for solo teaching. I planned Monday afternoon today but I am not ready for the morning yet. Mrs. Bontrager and I will work on it Monday before school. It usually follows a standard schedule now, so I am not too worried.
Monday, October 27, 2003

I started the day tired and now I am even more tired. Although it is my first week to solo teach, I only taught the afternoon today. This is because last week was hectic and short and Mrs. Bontrager and I did not have time to sit down and talk about it. Today we sat down and talked about the rest of the week since we have three half days. We now have the entire week planned something that rarely happens so far in advance.

We gave a math test in the morning and I was not pleased with the results. Four of my students must retake the test because they got less than 80%. Very few got perfects. I taught a math lesson on writing number sentences in the afternoon. The lesson went quickly and I had to improvise a little. The students then got through the homework quickly so I had to think on my feet. I need to come up with some new ideas of what to do when we have extra time.

During art, Mrs. Bontrager and I planned. I also received a book order today so I opened that while the kids were gone. They were very excited to get their books. After art, Mrs. Martin, the counselor, came in to talk to the kids about feelings. She spent the rest of the day with them. I used my free time to observe the students and look over tomorrow’s math lesson.
Tuesday, October 28, 2003

Today was my first day to teach the entire day. Thank goodness today was the last full day of the week. It is going to take some time to get used to teaching the whole day. The students journaled today, but I did not give them any help so that we could pick up the journals to keep. We will be showing the journals to the parents during conferences.

This week’s theme is nocturnal animals, so I read the book *Owl Babies* to the students. We then reviewed our pumpkin poem and learned a bat poem. I took two words from the bat poem to add to the word wall. We have added a lot to the word wall and I am impressed with how many the kids know. We then played some word wall games until recess.

Mrs. Bontrager explained the centers since it is the first day we have done them and she was more familiar with them. The kids have fun during centers, but they often forget that they need to be quiet. We are constantly reminding them to keep their voices down. We sometimes have to fire a child from centers. This means that they must sit with their head down until we allow them to return to centers or until centers are over.

Since this week is Red Ribbon week, we have are having different themes for the days. Today was crazy sock day. I had a community circle after music for the kids to show off their crazy socks. Many of them had already shown them off during the day, but they were all anxious to see mine since I was wearing boots. They all found my teacher socks to be funny. After our community circle, I read them *Stellaluna*. We then got ready to go home.
Wednesday, October 29, 2003

Eleven hours at school wore me out. The kids were only at school for three hours this morning. I forgot since I am in charge now, I am the one that has to tell the kids what to do. I finally realized that I had to tell them to clean up 10 minutes after I was supposed to do it. As a result, we started centers late. We let the kids work through recess.

After I gave the kids a bathroom break, we had a community circle. There was a writing contest for Red Ribbon Week, so I told the students what the themes were and then we discussed drugs. I explained what drugs were and why they should say no. I also let the kids share comments or experiences. The kids did a good job with their writings. I also let them draw if they did not want to write. I am having a hard time just picking one for the contest.

The conferences started at noon, but our first one was at 12:20. We only had one parent not show up. It was nice to meet so many parents. All of the parents were interested in hearing what we had to say. They all wanted to know what they could do at home to help their child. It was nice to see such supportive parents. It was odd not to leave school until 6 p.m.
Thursday, October 30, 2003

Today was another long day. The kids were only at school until 11, but then we had parent/teacher conferences until after six. The good thing was that they did not start until two. After journaling, I took the kids down to the library to get books because they will miss their library time tomorrow due to the half day. When we returned from the library, I explained centers. Since we had spent so much time in the library, I had the kids work through the recess. They did not miss it since they got out of school early anyway. When they finished centers, we watched a McGruff video on saying no to drugs. The video was so old it featured a young Drew Barrymore. I passed out the mail while the students watched the video.

After the kids left, I went out to lunch with several other teachers and aides. When we returned, I helped Mrs. Billet and Mrs. Lewellen put up a bulletin board in the hallway. Mrs. Bontrager and I then spent the next several hours in conferences. We had a couple parents not show up again. It was nice to meet the parents that did show up though. Luckily for us, the PTO catered in food for us, so Mrs. Bontrager and I got to eat when the conferences were finally over. It was a lot of work, but I have learned a lot about how to do parent/teacher conferences.
Friday, October 31, 2003

Even though today is Halloween, we did not have a party or do anything special. We started the morning with a color page. The students then spent the time until recess doing centers. After recess, we read a book about bats and then they watched a Reading Rainbow video on *Stellaluna*. With the remaining time, we read the word wall and did some word wall aerobics. The kids were dismissed at 11:00. They were pretty antsy since it was a half day and I think they were excited about Halloween.
Monday, November 03, 2003

I think that today went well for my first normal day of teaching. We started out the morning with the usual journaling. The students now need to write at least half a page, which for them is four or five sentences. If they do not have half a page by the time I have them clean up, then they must go out in the hall to finish. Today I had to send several students out to finish. I think that tomorrow they will remember to get busy instead of talking.

Today's Language Arts lesson went faster than I had planned, but that was ok because in my plans it was a little tight. I read a big book to the students and had them find word wall words in the story. I then added two new words to the word wall. After we played some word wall games, we did a ten-minute timed writing. The students are given ten minutes to write down all the words in their head. We then count all the words and tell the students their total. Each week we encourage them to try for one more word the next week.

After recess, I explained to the kids how to play several games. They then had 10 minutes to play each game in their groups. They then rotated through the games for the next hour. Most of the kids knew how to play the games and a few of them knew how to cheat! I had to watch a couple of them to make sure they played fair. It was funny to watch how their minds work.

After lunch, we had our Saxon math lesson. Today's lesson was on measuring heavier and lighter things. I used a balance to weigh cups of objects. The kids could not see into the cups and they had to guess which ones were heavier or lighter. They had a lot of fun watching the balance. They will continue to explore the cups and balance
during centers this week. I filled some extra time by leading a discussion on seasons. I tried to connect the seasons with activities the students do during the seasons.

After art, we did a community circle on what we did over the weekend. I sent several students back to their seats because they talked out of turn. They know better than to whisper while somebody else is talking. Some of the students had a lot to share today and I had to cut them off without them noticing. I then read them a book about fall leaves.

After the kids left, Mrs. Bontrager and I set up centers for this week. This week’s theme is still fall. We are also doing some Johnny Appleseed activities. I also shared my plans for tomorrow with Mrs. Bontrager. I think I did a good job of planning; nothing major was changed. When I make the plans, I really feel like a real teacher. I feel more in control when the plans are my own.
Tuesday, November 04, 2003

Today started with the students writing their journal as they do most mornings. I did a quick demonstration on the blackboard of how to leave spaces in between words and between the lines. The students have to write half a page, but some of them write so close together that it takes them a long time to get that much. I told them that they should write 4 to 5 sentences instead of the one or two most of them write. Today I did not have to send any of them into the hall to finish writing.

I then lead the students in a shared reading of a big book. The book is simple enough that I think they could read it on their own. Many of the words are on our word wall and today I pointed out that if they did not know a word that they should look at the pictures for help. I added two words from the book to the word wall. There are now over 50 words on the wall. I had the students practice writing the words on marker boards. I also had them practice writing the ending -ing to words to make new words. I think that helped them to finally get that into their heads.

After recess, the students did centers. During centers, Mrs. Bontrager and I worked with three of the reading groups. I leaned how to lead the guided reading groups. This is something that I had learned about in EDRDG 400, but I never really understood until now. It helps to put into practice the various strategies and techniques that I have learned over the years.

The Saxon Math lesson today was over double addition facts up to nine. The lesson took a lot longer than I thought it would. As a result, we did not have time to do the homework. Instead of doing it later in the day, I moved it to Thursday afternoon. It
is not a big deal if it is done out of order. It took longer because in addition to learning new addition facts, the students made fact cards for themselves.

After an uneventful music class, I did a different kind of activity with the students. It was a coloring sheet that focused on following directions. The students had to listen to the directions I gave them in order to know what colors to use. They all looked alike so they listened to the directions. However, I often repeated the directions several times and they were printed on the page. Some students did ask me if they were supposed to color something that I had not said. I would like to do more activities like this, but next time I will only say the directions once and they will not be printed.

After school, we had a literacy meeting for the primary grades. Mrs. Bontrager and Mrs. Garber encouraged me to have Mrs. Garber help me with anything. I do not know what to focus on though! I think Mrs. Garber could help me with everything. Guided reading and writing workshops are new to me. I have learned about them in classes, but I am not sure how to actually do those things in my class.
Wednesday, November 5, 2003

Today started with the normal journaling. Most of the students are doing a good job of writing at least half a page. The biggest problem is students who talk instead of write and do not get half a page in the time that I give them to work. After cleaning up, I read the students a book about making apple pie. We then did a shared reading of a big book. I used the book to talk about how letters make up words and words make up sentences.

Before I could add two new words to the word wall, we had a fire drill. I knew that one was scheduled for this morning, but it still managed to surprise me. The kids do a good job of lining up quickly and staying together to get out of the building. We exit through Mrs. Robertson’s kindergarten classroom so I have to remember to turn off the lights and shut the door in both our classroom and Mrs. Robertson’s classroom.

Mr. Trout came today during our centers time. He observed me leading the reading groups. Mrs. Bontrager explained to him that we had not been doing this long and she stayed with me to help. I really like leading the reading groups and wish I had more opportunities to do it. Mr. Trout thought that I did a good job of leading the groups and watching the rest of the class. I think that that is the hardest part of reading groups. I cannot be so focused on the group I am working with that I forget about the rest of the class.
Thursday November 6, 2003

The students did better today with writing half a page for their journals. Overall, the morning went smoothly. I read the students a book about apple trees and then we read some poems. They like to do the poem about five little apples because there are motions that go along with it. I used the poems to add two new words to the word wall. The students’ new favorite word wall game is hangman. I cannot believe how excited they get whenever we play it.

Before recess, we also played the Hokey Pokey. They get very excited about playing this too. They enjoy laughing at us when Mrs. Bontrager, Mrs. Billet, and I join them. After recess, we had centers, but Mrs. Bontrager and I did not do reading groups today. We used the time to prep and plan for tomorrow and next week.

In the afternoon, I did a different activity with the students. I did another lesson on following directions. I gave every table some pattern blocks and then gave directions to make a picture with them. I said things like, “I am putting the triangle above the square.” I did my picture on the overhead and when I turned it on, we all compared our pictures. It was interesting to see who had followed my directions. I then had a drawing activity to go along with following directions. It was a nice activity because it goes along with Indiana standards.
Friday, November 7, 2003

Today was exhausting but very interesting. Instead of starting the day by journaling, I had the kids do a coloring page about fire drills. This sheet was left by the firefighters. We also talked about fire drills since we had a fire drill earlier in the week. After they cleaned up, I read the students a book about a squirrel. I got to a part of the story that talked about the squirrel eating peanuts and one little boy shouted out, “Nuts? Like in the private spot?” I was shocked. Luckily, none of the other kids heard or understood what he had said. I immediately told him that what he had said was inappropriate for school and sent him to his seat. Mrs. Bontrager then talked to him. That was something I was definitely not prepared for in any of my classes.

Lately, it seems as if the students are constantly talking. I feel as if I am using most of my time trying to gain the attention of the entire class. I am always clapping or ringing the chimes, or turning off the lights. I have even tried some new techniques for getting their attention. These all work for a few minutes and the noise just starts again. If it is not all of the students talking then it is students shouting out without raising their hand. It is not just with me either; my students have this problem no matter who is teaching them. I have had comments about their behavior from a couple of the specials teachers as well as cafeteria staff.

Because of this behavior, Mrs. Bontrager and I came up with a new idea. This afternoon, any time the students talked without permission, we made a tally mark on the board. We wanted the students to see just how much talking they do. At the end of the day, they had 31 tally marks. The kids were shocked at how many marks they got in just the afternoon. Starting next week, I will be using this system to monitor how much the
students talk. If they get more than 10 tally marks on Monday, they will lose five minutes from their recess. As the number of marks goes down, so will the limit before five minutes is taken from recess. When the students reach a day of zero marks, they will receive a prize, but I suspect that day is at least a week away. I think this will help the students take more ownership of their behavior and be more aware of how they act in the classroom.
Monday, November 10, 2003

Today proved to me that no matter how much you plan, things will not always go the way you want them to. I had planned on Mrs. Garber coming in to do an interactive writing with my students so that I could learn how to do it. Unfortunately, Mrs. Garber’s grandfather died and she was not at school today. Since the funeral was this morning, Mrs. Robertson went to the funeral and needed someone to teach her class for a few hours. Mrs. Bontrager volunteered to teach Mrs. Robertson’s class while I taught our class. This was good practice for when I have a class of my own.

I had the students watch a video during the time Mrs. Garber was supposed to be in our classroom. It was a nice break for them and me. After the video, we worked on highlighting words from our word wall. We have green, red, and yellow transparent tape. If all the sounds can be heard in a word, we make it green. If one or two of the sounds are tricky, we make it yellow. If the word cannot be figured out by sounding it out, we make it yellow. I then did a 10 minute timed writing.

After the morning recess, we played Around the World and then did a math fact sheet. I then taught the students about tessellations. I was a little worried that it would be hard for them, but they did a good job. I provided patterns and they worked in partners to trace and rotate the pattern. They then decorated the tessellations. They turned out very nice.

After art, I had a birthday party scheduled, but the student was not at school today. Luckily, we had some things that we had not done in the morning, so I moved them to the afternoon. We had our community circle about the weekend and then I read a
book about a chipmunk. Although my plans did not go as planned, I think the day went very well.
Tuesday, November 11, 2003

Today was back to some normalcy. After cleaning up following journaling, I started my unit on feelings. I explained to the students that this week we would be talking about feelings. I read to them the book, *My Many Colored Days* by Dr. Seuss. We then had a community circle to talk about how the students were feeling. They used the colors from the book to describe their feelings. Before recess, we highlighted some more words on the word wall and played some word wall games.

After recess, I explained all of the centers. This takes a long time because I have to give detailed directions. It was exciting though, because this is the first time that I have planned the centers all by myself. I really enjoy the centers and want to use them in my own classroom.

After music, we reviewed our math fact cards and then the students did a fact sheet. We then graded the sheet together. The students are really improving on their math facts. Since today is Veteran’s Day, I read a book about the Vietnam Wall to the students. They understood that it was a serious book for a serious day.
Wednesday, November 12, 2003

Today started off right with an unexpected 2-hour delay due to fog. It was nice to be able to sleep in a couple of hours. I arrived at school around 9:30 a.m. the same time as Mrs. Bontrager. Because of the delay, I decided to just skip the first two hours of my plans. I ended up moving most of them to tomorrow morning. As the students came into the classroom, I told them to read a book until the bell rang. Breakfast was not served so the kids came to the room quickly.

After the bell rang, I quickly went over the agenda for the day and read the monitor to the students. I then reviewed centers by going over the work from yesterday. I pointed out a lot of good work, but I had a few students that did not follow directions in art. Centers were pretty average. It got noisy at times and I had four interruptions. I thought that reading groups went well. Mrs. Bontrager is still teaching the reading groups. I am not quite ready to do it all by myself.

After lunch, I taught the Saxon Math lesson on writing subtraction number sentences. The kids were noisy throughout the lesson and I put many marks on the board. They could only get five today and by the end of the day they had ten. Tomorrow their limit will be still be five. William gave me the idea that maybe I should take away the same number of minutes as marks. I am considering that idea if they keep getting marks.

After P.E., I continued our weekly theme of feelings by reading I'm Gonna Like Me! We then had a community circle about what we like about ourselves. The students all shared good things, but they were chatty throughout. That is when they got the marks that took away part of their recess tomorrow.
After school, I prepared the math lesson for tomorrow. I put twenty pennies into cups for each of the students and got out the 100 number charts. Tomorrow morning, I will prepare for calendar and I need to make copies for my portfolio. I want to start taking more pictures for my portfolio.
Thursday, November 13, 2003

I started today by having the students do a math fact sheet for their morning work. I had thought that this would not take them as long to complete as a half page journal entry and we would therefore be able to cleanup earlier than normal. I was wrong. I had at least five students come in late because they were at breakfast. Some of my students still do not know the facts by heart so they used their fingers for each one. In the end, we cleaned up at the same time we always do.

Today we did our calendar time for the first time. It was a little rough because I have never done this before and I was unsure of how to explain things at first. I attempted to explain that there are six jobs and that each week six new people will have jobs. I think they understood that. The students seemed excited about it. I then started with the date. I need to find a way to mark the current date on the calendar. The students do not have a concept of what date it is. They understand the days of the week though. The date person writes the month, date, and year for us on the marker board. I have the class help by spelling the month. Then the day person identifies what day of the week it is as well as what yesterday was and what tomorrow will be. There are signs for each of these.

Next, the weather person identifies what the weather was like when they came to school. They turn the arrow on the weather chart to the appropriate choice. Saxon math provides a pattern for each day, so the pattern person finishes the pattern and as a class, we check it. Saxon also uses coins during calendar time. I put the coins in a little pocket chart and the coin person counts how many there are. They then write the number on the board. Today I had to teach the students about the cents sign. Saxon also has a counting
activity for each day. Today we counted to 100 by 1s. I enjoy calendar time and I think that as we continue to do it, I will develop a smoother routine.

Mrs. Garber, the literacy coach, came in to do an interactive writing with the students. She is doing this so that I can learn how to do interactive writing. They are making a class book about feelings. She will come back next week to do some more of it and then she will observe me. I am excited to learn more about interactive writing. The rest of the morning was filled with recess and centers

In the afternoon, I taught a Saxon math lesson on counting backwards from 10 and adding one to numbers. It used pennies and hundred charts. The lesson ended up taking longer than I thought and I had to stop it early. However, I feel that the students grasped the concepts well. They did well on the homework although they were noisy despite my warnings and punishments. By the end of the day, they had 15 marks on the board.

After computer, we finished our day with a read aloud about feelings. I then led a community circle on what makes us angry and how to respond to anger. After school, I prepared calendar for tomorrow and started cleaning up the pennies from today’s math lesson. Vitaliy’s dad came in to talk to Mrs. Bontrager and me about his behavior. He called us to ask for the meeting. It was nice to see a parent so concerned about his child. Vitaliy is not a naughty child; he just has trouble following procedures. I think that the communication between his father and us is clear and I am glad that Vitaliy will be getting support at home and at school.
Tuesday November 18, 2003

Today was a little different from most days. The teachers at West Goshen have to spend a day observing one of the other teachers in their grade level. On the day that they observe, a substitute is hired for their classroom. Today Mrs. Bontrager was supposed to observe Miss Everett. Nobody had said anything to us, so we assumed that there would be a sub in our room and that I would teach the whole day. However, a substitute never came to our room this morning. I guess that the school decided that since I was in the room, there was not a need for a sub. I was excited to have the class to myself.

Mrs. Garber came in during the morning to finish the interactive writing. I watched her do it again because I wanted to see it more before I did it on my own. The kids do a good job of participating and coming up with ideas for the book. After music, I gave one of the pages of the book to each table and had them illustrate the page. Mrs. Garber told my students that when the book was finished, they could come read it to her kindergarten class.

Overall, the day went well. Mrs. Bontrager was out for the morning, but she came back in for parts of the afternoon. I feel comfortable teaching the kids alone. Working alone with the kids makes me feel like a real teacher and makes me feel more confident about teaching in a year.
Wednesday November 19, 2003

Today I had the students do a coloring page as their bell work because we had an assembly 10 minutes after the bell rang. The assembly was to explain the reading program that we will be doing for the next week. Whenever a student reads a book, they will write it down on a feather and then put the feather in a large turkey in the lobby. Next week, we will have another assembly and feathers will be drawn to award prizes. The kids are excited about winning prizes.

When we returned to the room, I had calendar time. I then read a book about Native American tribes to the students because we are talking about Thanksgiving this week and next week. We did a pocket chart activity and then read our poems. We also highlighted some of our word wall words. I am hoping to finish that this week so that I can add more words next week.

Mr. Trout came today during the math lesson. I am not nervous anymore when he comes. I feel comfortable teaching in front of him. I also like to hear what he has to say after he observes me. He often has good advice for me that I try to work on for the next time he comes. We had plenty of time to talk while the kids were in P.E. We discussed the upcoming student teacher meeting that he is having for us. It is planned as the same day as our upcoming field trip, so Mr. Trout said that I could go on the field trip and then come to the meeting. The meeting is only about an hour away.
Thursday November 20, 2003

Today went well. After journaling and calendar, I read the students a book about grandparents to go with our family theme. After reading our poems, I had the kids read their feelings book since they were going to read it to Mrs. Garber’s class in the afternoon. I picked three students to hold the book and turn the pages. I did not think it would take them long to practice it, but I was wrong. The students did not read with feeling, so we had to practice that. We also practiced walking in the room, sitting down, and starting together. That took us until recess.

The kids spent the recess on the wall due to their marks yesterday. We then did the usual centers and reading groups until lunchtime. I taught a math lesson and we did the math homework until it was time for computer. After computer, we went to Mrs. Garber’s room to read our feelings book to her class. The kids a good job of reading together and they remembered to read with feeling. It was cute. At the end of the day, the students only four marks on the board so I was pleased about that.
Friday November 21, 2003

This week has been a long one, however today went by quickly. Mrs. Buller could not come to our classroom in the afternoon to do a fun math lesson, so she came in after calendar time. The kids behaved well for her. I had planned to highlight the rest of the word wall words after her lesson, but we did not have time.

Today was the last day for this week’s centers. Mrs. Bontrager is letting me plan next week’s centers again. I have learned a lot about centers and I enjoy planning them. I am getting many resources for my own classroom.

After lunch, I read the students a book about being thankful. We then had a community circle to talk about what we are thankful for. I explained that Thanksgiving is next week and people think about what they are thankful for at this time of year. The kids did a good job with this topic. It was obvious they put some thought into their answers. Many of them said they were thankful for their family.

After library, we had a birthday party for Lynnsey. Her mom brought in cake for the kids. Whenever we have birthday parties, Mrs. Bontrager lets the kids play Heads-Up 7-Up. I let the kids play the game while Mrs. Bontrager found something for Judith to do since she cannot participate in birthday parties.

After school, I cleaned up the centers and changed the job chart. I also talked to Mrs. Bontrager about my plans for Monday. Next week, we only have three days of school because of Thanksgiving. Planning is a little difficult because we have a lot to fit into three days. We will be busy next week.
Monday November 24, 2003

This morning felt very long. After the kids wrote their journals and we had calendar, I read a book about moms and dads. We then had our community circle about the weekend. I finally finished highlighting the words on the word wall. Now we can add more words.

Because Mrs. Welty came in to help with the monthly testing today, I did not have the students do a words in 10 minutes test. Instead, we practice the word wall words on the whiteboards. I then started an interactive writing class book. Mrs. Wilson gave us pictures from our field trip to the pumpkin farm, so I am using these pictures to make a book about the trip. We finished half of it today. I then used some of the words from the book to add to the word wall.

After art, Mrs. Nichols came in to talk to the students about what is formal and what is casual. This is a new concept that the school is using. We are trying to teach the students that formal behavior is how we behave in public and school is a formal setting. This is important for our field trip to the movie theater next week. Tomorrow, we are going to set up a mock movie theater and have the students practice their formal behavior.
Tuesday, November 25, 2003

I spent my afternoon frustrated with my students. I tried not to let them see how upset I was by their behavior. I feel as if I repeat myself all day long. I am constantly telling them to follow procedures or not talk out. I was most upset after library because they could not stand in a line properly. They were arguing and talking loudly and some of them were messing around in the bathroom. If I had been alone, I might have just sat down and cried. Instead, I took some deep breaths and continued to correct misbehaviors.

The morning went somewhat better than the afternoon. Journaling and calendar were fine. I did not have any problems during those times. After I read a Thanksgiving themed book, I finished the interactive writing that we started yesterday. I do not know why but the students were not into it like they were last week with Mrs. Garber. I did many of the same things she did. I wanted to get the book finished today and I really had to fight to keep their attention. I tried to make it fun and ham it up, but they were still restless.

Centers were noisy, but the students seemed to enjoy them. When I cleaned up the center work I saw some things that will need to be reviewed tomorrow, but most of the work looks great. One of my students is a Jehovah’s Witness and does not celebrate Thanksgiving. I tried to make centers that did not focus on the holiday, but she still told me that she could not do some of the centers. I will have to come up with something for her to do tomorrow so that she does not feel left out tomorrow.

The math lesson took most of the hour that I plan for math, so we will have to do the homework tomorrow. I had a feeling that the lesson would take long because it
involved the kids making fact cards and every time they have done it before, it had taken awhile. I just had the student practice the fact cards with a partner for the little bit of extra time before library.

We had library today instead of music because we will not be in school on Friday and we have already missed several Fridays. The kids behaved fairly well. I had to remind them about their behavior a couple of times, but it was not as bad as it used to be. Mrs. Bontrager had suggested to the student that they might want to get a Dr. Seuss book since our field trip is next week. The kids were excited about that idea, but when I got to the Dr. Seuss section, there were not many books there and I knew that last week there had been a lot. It turns out, that the other first grade teachers were checking them out to use next week. I was a little upset that they took so many. It was unfair to my students who really wanted to read them.
Wednesday November 26, 2003

Today was busy but it went by quickly. Since this was our last day of the week and we did not do the math homework yesterday, we spent the morning doing both sides of the homework sheet. When we did both sides together, I did both of the sides with the students. This way, they did not have any homework over their long weekend.

In the afternoon, we had an assembly. This assembly was to end the reading contest. Today, names were drawn to award all the prizes. The kids were very excited and got very noisy in the gym. There were all kinds of prizes: books, shirts, and toys. The big prize was a ride in a hot air balloon. Although all of my students had several feathers in the basket, only one of them won a prize. When Mitchell’s name was drawn, all of my students were excited. The brother of one of my students won the hot air balloon ride.

After the assembly, I had to calm the kids down so that we could take a math test. They were still wound up from the assembly. We worked off some of the energy by playing word wall games. After school, I cleaned up the centers and graded the math tests. Mrs. Bontrager and I wanted to leave as soon as we could since we have the next two days off.
Tuesday December 2, 2003

It was decided yesterday that the movie, The Cat in the Hat, was inappropriate for our students so we did not go on the field trip today. Since the field trip was cancelled, I did not go into school. I went to a meeting with Mr. Trout’s other student teachers in Columbia City. It was about an hour away from my house, but I still arrived early.

Although I was sad that I was missing the fun Dr. Seuss day that my students were having, I liked the meeting. I learned a lot about getting a job. The Director of Personnel for Whitley County Schools talked to us as well as a principal from one of the elementary schools. Also at the meeting were three teachers from Whitley County schools. The two elementary teachers had graduated from Ball State last year. They showed us their interview portfolios and talked to us about sending out résumés. I learned a lot of new information from them.

After lunch, Mr. Trout talked to us about searching for jobs and preparing for interviews. He gave us a lot of good advice about interviews. I now have several lists of possible interview questions to practice. I also had some time to ask Mr. Trout questions about my showcase presentation. The meeting did not end until 3 p.m., so I did not go into school at all today.
Monday, December 08, 2003

I cannot believe that my student teaching is nearly over. It is hard to believe that this is week 16. Mrs. Bontrager and I are busy getting everything ready for my showcase presentation on Wednesday and doing all the final reports. In addition, we are teaching 22 students all day! I did all of the teaching today. Mrs. Bontrager videotaped me during part of the morning. It was my final time to do that. I hate knowing that I am being taped. It made me nervous for some reason.

The rest of the day was normal. We did centers since they did not get finished last week. The students were fairly well behaved. The morning was great, but the afternoon got rough. However, everybody did stay in green. I did not even realize that until the end of the day. Looking back, I do not think anybody should have changed his or her card.

I spent my prep time getting my showcase portfolio ready. I worked on it all weekend, picking out artifacts. I went in early this morning to start making copies of everything. I finished the copies while the students were in art. After school, I made copies of the journals and word wall tests that we have kept. I am also using these in my portfolio. I will also be able to use these in my interview portfolio. I am getting nervous about this presentation. Tomorrow, I will practice it so that my pacing is down.

I got a new haircut over the weekend and of course, all of my students noticed. I was not sure what to think about their comments. Mostly they asked, "What did you do to your hair?" And "It looks crazy." I decided that they were just trying to express that it was different. All of the teachers and staff liked it, so I will just ignore what the kids said.
Wednesday December 10, 2003

Today I gave my Showcase Presentation. I was very nervous all morning and then I got even more nervous when Mr. Trout arrived. I decided to only do the presentation for Mr. Trout and Mrs. Bontrager. I think I would have been more nervous with anybody else in the room. I made copies of all my artifacts and gave the copies in folders to Mr. Trout and Mrs. Bontrager. I also flipped through my portfolio throughout my presentation.

Since I only had the time while the kids were in P.E., I kept my comments to the point, but tried not to rush. I used note cards to keep track of the INTASC Principles and my thoughts. I did not read from them but glanced at them from time to time. I concentrated a lot on smiling and making eye contact. Because I know Mrs. Bontrager and Mr. Trout, I relaxed as I went through the presentation.

I first talked about my philosophy of education. I talked about the changes I had made to it and then highlighted my beliefs. I then moved on to my artifacts. I had two artifacts for each principal except principal number five, for which I had three artifacts. For each artifact, I identified the INTASC Principle and why I felt this artifact showed my competence in the principle. Finally, I gave an overview of my unit. I explained what my unit was about and showed some work from the unit.

When my presentation was over, Mrs. Bontrager and Mr. Trout left to talk about the presentation and my evaluation. I taught a lesson on descriptive writing when the kids got back from P.E. I felt very relaxed now that the presentation was over. After school, Mrs. Bontrager told me that she was impressed with my presentation and felt that I did a very good job. Mrs. Nichols expressed an interest in seeing my portfolio because
her son is a Ball State student teacher also. I am happy that the presentation is over and I think that I did a good job.
Monday, December 15, 2003

It is hard to believe that this is my last week of student teaching. It has flown by so quickly. I cannot believe that I will be graduating in 5 months. I certainly feel more prepared for teaching than I did 16 weeks ago.

Since it is my last week, I am phasing out my teaching. Today I taught mostly in the afternoon. In the morning, I observed, but I also administered the writing prompt to Brianna since she was absent last Friday. I also reviewed centers and taught a couple of reading groups. Tomorrow, Mrs. Bontrager and I are going to do running records so that I can practice.

I have been using my last week as a bargaining point with some of the kids. Today, I asked Dylan if he would have a good week for me since it is my last week with him. I think this will work because he really respects me and is willing to work with me if I explain things to him.

I am really going to miss these kids. I plan to visit them throughout the spring. Maybe I can go with them on the zoo field trip. I am also thinking about writing them letters either through the regular mail or by emailing Mrs. Bontrager. I am very close to these kids and want to know how they continue to progress.
Today was my last day of student teaching. I was sad all day, but I tried to make the best of it. I did not teach at all today. This morning, I took the students down to the library in groups of four to return their library books and get new books so that they can read over the long break. I found out today that William is moving over the break to Kentucky.

In the afternoon, we had an assembly. During the assembly, we sang Christmas songs and one of the third grade classes acted out the Nativity scene for us. The kids had been practicing the songs during music class and they did a good job. It was a lot of fun.

After the assembly, we had a party in our classroom. Several of the parents had sent in cookies and treats for the kids. Mrs. Bontrager and I gave the kids gifts. I gave each of the kids some play-dough. I told them they could unwrap it, but they had to wait to play with it until they got home. I took many pictures of all the kids.

The students, Mrs. Bontrager, and Mrs. Billet surprised me with a scrapbook. Each of the kids wrote me a note and it has all of their pictures in it. It also has pictures of me teaching in it. I love it and I had to try hard not to cry in front of the kids. Before they left, they all hugged me and said good-bye. I am going to miss those kids a lot.
References


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