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Auto-Biographical Sketch

Educational Background

I attended Trenton High School, in Trenton Michigan. At Trenton High School, I played varsity softball, was a member of National Honors Society, and belonged to a number of clubs such as Varsity Club, Pep Club, SADD, French Club, and Student Council. I graduated from THS in 2000. After high school, I attended Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant, Michigan (Fire Up Chips!). While at CMU, I completed a midtier for ten weeks in Shepherd, Michigan in a first grade classroom and my student teaching in a combined third and fourth grade classroom in Wyandotte, Michigan. I graduated from CMU in 2005 with a BS in Education (Elementary Emphasis) triple minoring in Geography, Language Arts, and Planned Program (Elementary K-5 All Subjects (K-8 Self CC), Language Arts (BX) 6-8, Geography (CB) 6-8). I am highly qualified in Elementary Education, Geography, and Language Arts. I began my graduate work at Michigan State University in the fall of 2009. I am currently working on my MA in Educational Technology. I plan on graduating from MSU sometime this year.

Teaching Experience

After graduation from CMU in 2005, I substitute taught with Trenton and Wyandotte Public Schools, all subjects, from May-June. I received my first instructional position with Summit Academy Middle School in Romulus, Michigan. There I taught sixth and eighth grade Geography, Reading, Writing, Career Pathways, Keyboarding, and Study Skills. Even though I enjoyed teaching middle school, I really missed the elementary atmosphere. After the 2006-2007 school year, I was hired at the Academy for Business and Technology in East Dearborn, Michigan where I am currently still at. At ABTE, I teach fifth grade all subjects. ABTE is a multicultural melting pot comprised of 60% African American students, 35% Hispanic students, and 5% Arabic/Caucasian students. We are a Title 1 school and 98% of our students receive free or reduced lunch. ABTE is a full inclusion school, so all of my students are with me the entire day. Although it is a challenging environment it is also very fulfilling.

Special Interests with Literacy

As a school, the majority of our students are below grade level in Reading and Math and lack the crucial basic skills for both core subjects. Most of our students are from Detroit Public Schools and are at least two grade levels behind if not more. Reading, Writing, and Math are areas that my staff is constantly focused on. I have three main interests when it comes to literacy. My first interest is motivation. What will make a child WANT to read when they are so behind where they should be? I am always looking for new and different ways to motivate my students to WANT to read and develop a LOVE for reading. As a school, we have incorporated some programs/practices in the classroom to support motivation. One is technology-we have various software that the students enjoy that is both fun and serves a purpose (Study Island, Reading A-Z, Raz-Kids, Tumble Books). The second is our pull out system. They are made aware of their current reading level (we use the DRA system) and are told of their progress. They soon realize where they are and where they need to be. Third, we have been ordering many books for our library that is geared toward our student's interests to show them that reading can be fun. My

second interest is technology. As I mentioned above, we utilize internet based programs such as Study Island, Reading A-Z, Raz-Kids, and Tumble Books. Every classroom in our school has a Promethean Board which we also use. Many games, flip charts, graphic organizers, and lesson plans for ELA are available on Promethean Planet. This interest also led me to pursue my masters in Educational Technology. My third interest is how I can assist my ELL students. My Spanish and Arabic students are the most behind grade level. This is due to them coming to us from other countries and thus no English is spoken in the home. These students are pulled by our ELL instructor weekly and are part of RtI (Response to Intervention).

My Experience with Struggling Readers and Writers

All of my students struggle with reading and writing. Out of thirty students, I have five that read at grade level. Most of my students are one to three years behind where they need to be. About one-third of my students are Hispanic. We are a full inclusion school. As I said before, I have to modify/accommodate my lessons to include and instruct everyone. This year I have four special education students. Last year I had eleven. One of my special education students this year is cognitively impaired. He reads at a kindergarten level. Fluency, for the most part is not an issue with my students, its comprehension. My students also struggle greatly with informational text. My students, especially my ELL students have a very limited vocabulary. I work very hard to build my students vocabulary and teach them valuable reading comprehension skills. With Reading A-Z, I am able to provide my students with leveled stories on the genres we need to cover for fifth grade. I DRA test my students four times a year to track and monitor my students progress. Across the entire state of Michigan, writing is a problem. Two years ago, my school adopted WriteSteps to assist with writing. My students have no problem orally expressing their ideas, writing them down on paper is the problem. Many of my new students who have not been utilizing Write Steps have never written more than one paragraph on a topic. WriteSteps provides them with the five square paragraph organizer and also goes into depth how to revise and edit their writing. I know the main focus is on ideas/voice, but my student's grammar, spelling, and punctuation is terrible! Another concern I have is that when we stray away from WriteSteps and have to write a response say in Science, Social Studies, or Math they can't transfer their WriteSteps skills to writing that response. My students have a difficult life outside of school. When there is little support outside the school, it presents another challenge to strengthen reading and writing skills.