

Diversity Practicum

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The most important aspect of teaching, in my opinion, is creating relationships with your students, fellow instructors, and the parents of the students you teach. This was the main focus of my diversity practicum. Learning about student's backgrounds and stories for how they got to where they are today is very interesting to me and I am beyond blessed with the opportunity to help students from different cultural, ethnic, or socioeconomical backgrounds. Learning is such a key part of teaching and I want to continue to learn about all my students in the following years. I really focused on connecting with the students in different ways from the typical teacher.

The demographic of the students I was able to teach were mainly Caucasian with some exceptions in both the middle and high school levels and age ranges from 11-17. At the high school level, I was able to work with a couple students whose first language was not English which was challenging at times but helped me learn in a different way. These students were probably some of the highlights of my experience. Cognitively, the students were about middle of their class with some outliers in both directions which was great experience for my special education major.

From the first day, I felt welcomed by the students and the AVID instructors, Tana and Lori. They were such great mentors and gave great advice for my future classroom. The classrooms were both very large and easily adaptable. We moved tables and chairs for tutorials which helped the students stay on task and engaged throughout the lesson. It almost felt like a mini classroom within a larger classroom. Within each classroom, there were posters of what AVID embodies and different resources students could use for success.

One of the greatest parts of AVID at the high school level is that it is a requirement to do a certain amount of community service hours. Tana explained to me that this creates connections for students within the Bismarck-Mandan communities. This is not the only requirement of the students. They also are required to take certain tests, volunteer within the school, and create relationships in the other AVID programs at Bismarck High School, and other middle schools in Bismarck. This aspect ties in with my primary goal of teaching, creating relationships with others. The classroom embodies these ideals and it is through the help of Tana.

The outcome that most aligns with what I observed would be the ICSI.2.S1: Create a safe, equitable, positive, and supportive learning environment in which diversities are valued because throughout my time at Bismarck High School and Simile Middle School, both Tana and Lori created environments within the classroom where students could feel safe with their problems for school. They were not going to be judged because of something they did not understand or because of something different about themselves. They both exemplify what I want to do for my students because whether it was their intended goal or not, they both created relationships with every single student. They know so much about each individual and help them all in the best ways they know.

Like I stated in the first paragraph, the most important aspect of teaching, in my opinion, is creating relationships with your students. This aspect was shown to me in so many different, unique, and successful ways by both Tana and Lori. They have taught me much more than any other class could have which is how to begin creating relationships with your students. Not only have they showed me how to teach, but more importantly how to teach with different learners. I

want to show others in my shoes what they have shown me. The most important aspect of teaching is not the standards or curriculum, rather it is the forming of great students who will challenge, learn from us, then teach us new things about teaching we never thought could happen. This was such a great experience and I cannot express enough gratitude for Tana and Lori.