



College of Arts and Sciences
School of Education -University of New England-Cooperating Teacher
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Strengths

What strengths is your intern bringing to the profession that are more apparent to you now as he/she completes his/her student interning?

Emma has the heart of a teacher and this has come through since the beginning of her internship. She demonstrates care and empathy for her students and works hard to build connections and a strong classroom community. Emma got to know the students right away, and she did a great job facilitating connection time as one of the first aspects of the internship that she took over. Emma learned from the CK Burns SEL team the importance of the first six weeks of school and actively used Responsive Classroom and the Regulated Classroom resources to engage students in connection time. She followed the structure of a morning meeting by beginning the day with a greeting, a share and an activity.

Emma worked with individual students to support their social emotional learning when behaviors and issues arose. She proactively communicated with families and appropriate school staff for support and updates about these students. She used a variety of behavior management strategies to create a positive learning environment, such as rewarding positive behavior with mustang tickets (a school initiative for positive rewards), using behavior stop signs as warnings when behaviors cropped up, and tried to manage a whole class reward system. She also helped address concerning behaviors and student needs during parent teacher conferences, which Emma participated in during both evenings offered for families.

Another area of strength for Emma is her understanding of summative assessment and the importance of scoring student work and holding students accountable for their work. Something that became apparent right away was Emma's eagerness to learn the benchmark assessments that our school uses to determine baselines for students. She took on the scoring of the narrative writing assessment, scored a multiplication and a division benchmark, and observed Fountas and Pinnell reading assessments before conducting a few. Emma is still learning a lot about utilizing formative assessments to determine students' understanding of the material learned and how to use these assessments to inform her teaching.

Professional Development

There are many areas where Emma would benefit from continued professional development, specifically in the areas of developing her content knowledge, planning for instruction, and the use of instructional strategies. Using planning time to learn the content before planning lessons would be one area that I would encourage her to reflect on and grow further to become a stronger teacher. This has been shown as an area for continued development as many of the lessons have been confusing for students and have not been clear in their focus, primarily in math and reading. Taking the time to plan for instruction with a backwards by design approach will benefit Emma's confidence as an educator and strengthen her lessons and units. Understanding the unit goals will also give guidance for daily lesson planning, as the big picture can help hone in on selecting teaching moves and the lesson activities that will move students toward understanding. I would advise Emma to continue seeking support in these areas from teaching colleagues by asking for help when she needs it and staying at school to collaborate with others. The best way to hone in on teaching is to utilize the expertise of experienced colleagues.

Developing a repertoire of teaching moves and instructional strategies comes with time and continued practice. I think Emma's student teaching experience has allowed her to see the moves that work and the ones that don't, so reflecting on this and deciding which ones to add to her teaching "toolkit" will help strengthen her approach to teaching and behavior management. For example, knowing when to continue teaching during a lesson or when students need time to practice new skills and work in flexible small groups will benefit the flow of future lessons. Furthermore, making deliberate choices in her questions for students by planning them ahead of time will further their understanding. Some questions are necessary to pose on the spot, but many can be planned for by previewing reading texts with appropriate stopping points and predetermined questions. In math, Emma can determine the essential *why* questions that deepen understanding, rather than rote memorization, yes or no questions. Though many scripted programs offer a lot of questions and wordy lessons, it is a teachers job to muddle through this and hone in on the most important parts when doing their planning. All of this will require a deeper understanding of the fifth grade content, which will in turn help Emma decide appropriate instructional strategies to use during lessons.