

Post and Ponder about Ways To Do What's Best for Students.

October 17, 2008

Greetings, Interns,

The hunter's moon begins to wane along with the month of October. In just another week, you will be the first MAT secondary group to experience the fall Intern Workweek — a new development in our program that makes you the envy of previous cohorts! Your opportunity to reflect, reenergize, and review should be credited to last year's group of interns. Your faculty listens to constructive feedback as we seek to improve the program for the benefit of our students.

“Students first and foremost” is my motto. No matter the situation or the challenge, I try to put all other concerns aside and ask myself, “What would be best for my students and their goals?” As professionals, we remain vigilant in keeping ever before us the well being and advancement of our students, who are the most important component of our career.

As you enter the last week of your first rotation, I ask you to reflect on two questions. Have you put the interests of your students ahead of your own? Have your mentor teachers modeled this essential professional attitude in your classroom?

Your Post and Ponder Assignment Lets You Share Real-World Solutions.

Questions and answers, issues and solutions, and the quest for personal excellence are at the heart of your current Post and Ponder Questions and Responses assignment. Your ideas and observations are biting at the bit to enter our cyber world forum. Your daily experiences at school reflect concerns and opportunities that most of us have seen in our own classrooms.

So, approach this assignment as an opportunity

to share real-world solutions based on your unique experiences. Make suggestions that your classmates can add to their repertoire of strategies and techniques for classroom management. Also consider that your response might focus on something not to do. Last year's interns found the Post and Ponder assignment to be the most helpful one they completed during the semester.

Consider These Key Questions as You Create Your Classroom Environment Plan.

By now, you have received your project description and rubric for the Classroom Environment Plan (CEP), along with an example of a well-written paper. The purpose of this assignment involves reflecting on what you have learned in our CMC course and in your public school classrooms about how to create effective space for student engagement.

The challenge of arranging classroom space for optimum student engagement begins on the first day of class. Here are some questions designed to direct your thinking about this

vital aspect of successful teaching. All these questions should be considered as you prepare your CEP paper.

How do you get to know your students so that you can plan for lessons that catch their attention?

Does your room arrangement reflect your personality or the personalities of your students?

Is the arrangement easily adjusted for different kinds of instruction?

What rules have you established to promote an atmosphere of respect and safety?

Did your students participate in establishing these rules?

How will your students know the procedures that are appropriate for varied tasks and work requirements?

Have you devised a system for managing student work?

How do you plan for instruction?

Do you have a system for conducting instruction?

How do you open and close instruction?

How do you get the attention of your students?

What techniques do you employ for a smooth transition between activities?

Remember, you have begun a transition of your own, moving from the state of emerging teacher to the status of a developing professional. The process of thinking about and writing your paper will give you the opportunity to provide evidence of this important shift in the early stages of your career. Good luck and good teaching!

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