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Practicum/Field Study Reflection

December 4, 2013

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Specialty Endorsement G&T Field Study

Briefly describe your practicum/field study (include goals or outcomes intended):

I completed my field study at the school that I currently work at, Pacific Cascade Middle School, in the Issaquah School District. Since I teach 6th grade advanced humanities, I worked with my own students. My classroom is not a inclusive gifted program, since students get to self-select if the advanced track is best for them. Therefore, some of my students are gifted, and some students are not; although most of them are high achievers and highly motivated to learn. The unit plan that I planned in the differentiation class, and implemented during the field study, related to advanced social studies and related to the topics of geography and the tools of history. My goals with this unit was to provide differentiated readings, assignments, and projects for students at differing levels. I was hoping that with differentiation, students would be more motivated to work and achieve because they would be working at their ability level. They wouldn't be bored and they wouldn't be at the level of frustration.

List the number of hours in actual practicum or field study:

Since I completed the field study at my current job, I have been spent quite a bit of time in the practicum/field study. The amount of hours that I have spent teaching advanced humanities, planning differentiated units, and working on the endorsement work would be over 100 hours. I started implementing the unit plan at the end of September, and completed that unit four weeks later.

Briefly describe the individual/group/program you worked with:

I worked with 6th graders at Pacific Cascade Middle School. I taught two blocks of 6th grade advanced humanities. Block one has 31 students, and block two has 29 students. About 1/3 of the students were previously in the MERLIN or SAGE programs at the elementary

schools, which are gifted programs that are offered from 2nd to 5th grade. Out of my 60 students, about 78% of them are Asian, 20% are Caucasian, and the other 2% are of other ethnicities. This is a self-select program, so students do not need to meet any criteria to take advanced humanities, but most students have a Total Reading score of 70 or higher on the 5th grade Stanford Reading test.

Summarize the outcome of the practicum (include any evidence):

What did you learn:

Explain what you did to fulfill “positive impact” (effect on student learning):

How did you differentiate:

During the practicum, I worked hard to create assignments and projects that were differentiated. I have tried to try out many of the strategies in Winebrenner’s book, Teaching Gifted Kids in Today’s Classroom, which has become a treasured resource for me. One of the first strategies I experimented with during my practicum was the “Most Difficult First” strategy. Students were learning about the difference between primary and secondary sources, and when they were practicing identifying each type of source; they had the option to complete the five most difficult items first. If they got 4/5 of those correct, they could go on to the next section,

THE COMPACTOR
Joseph Renzulli and Linda Smith

Student’s Name: [REDACTED]

Areas of Strength	How Mastery Was Documented	Alternate Activities
Identifying Primary and Secondary Sources	Completed the Five Most Difficult First	Optional question about bias is mandatory
Mesopotamia Geography	Study Guide Method 3.1 Grade Cam Quiz – 10/10	Game Board (Standard #1) Poem (Standard #2)

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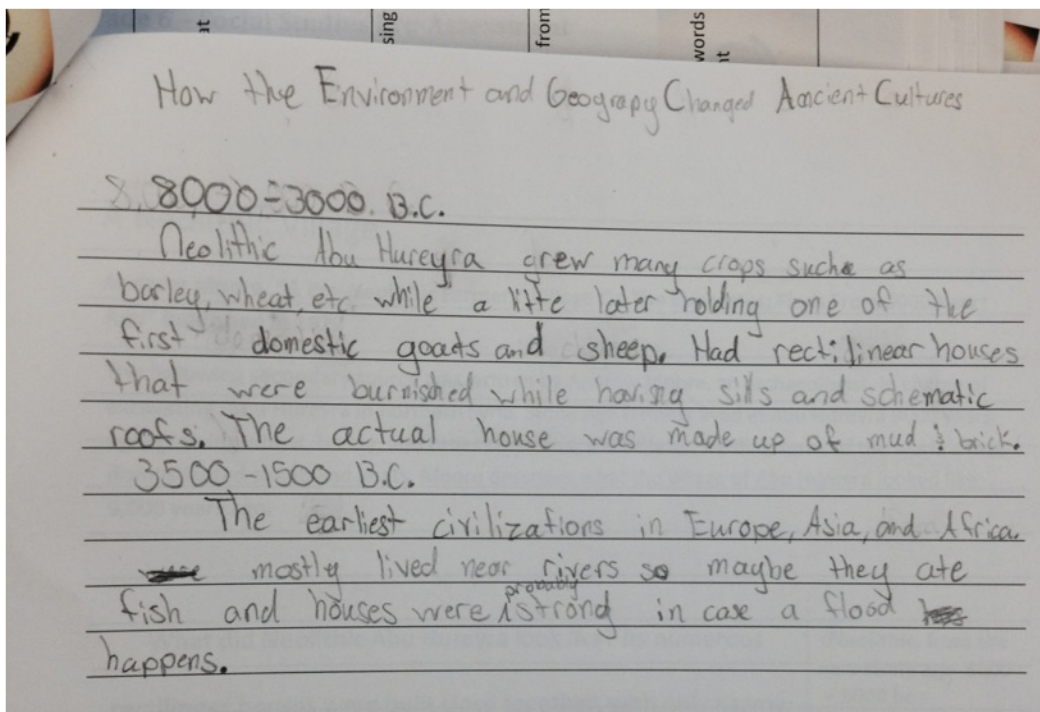
Areas of Strength	How Mastery Was Documented	Alternate Activities
Identifying Primary and Secondary Sources	Completed the Five Most Difficult First	Optional question about bias is mandatory
Geography of Mesopotamia	Study Guide Method 3.1 Grade Cam Assessment – 9/10	Weebly Website (Standards #1 and 2)

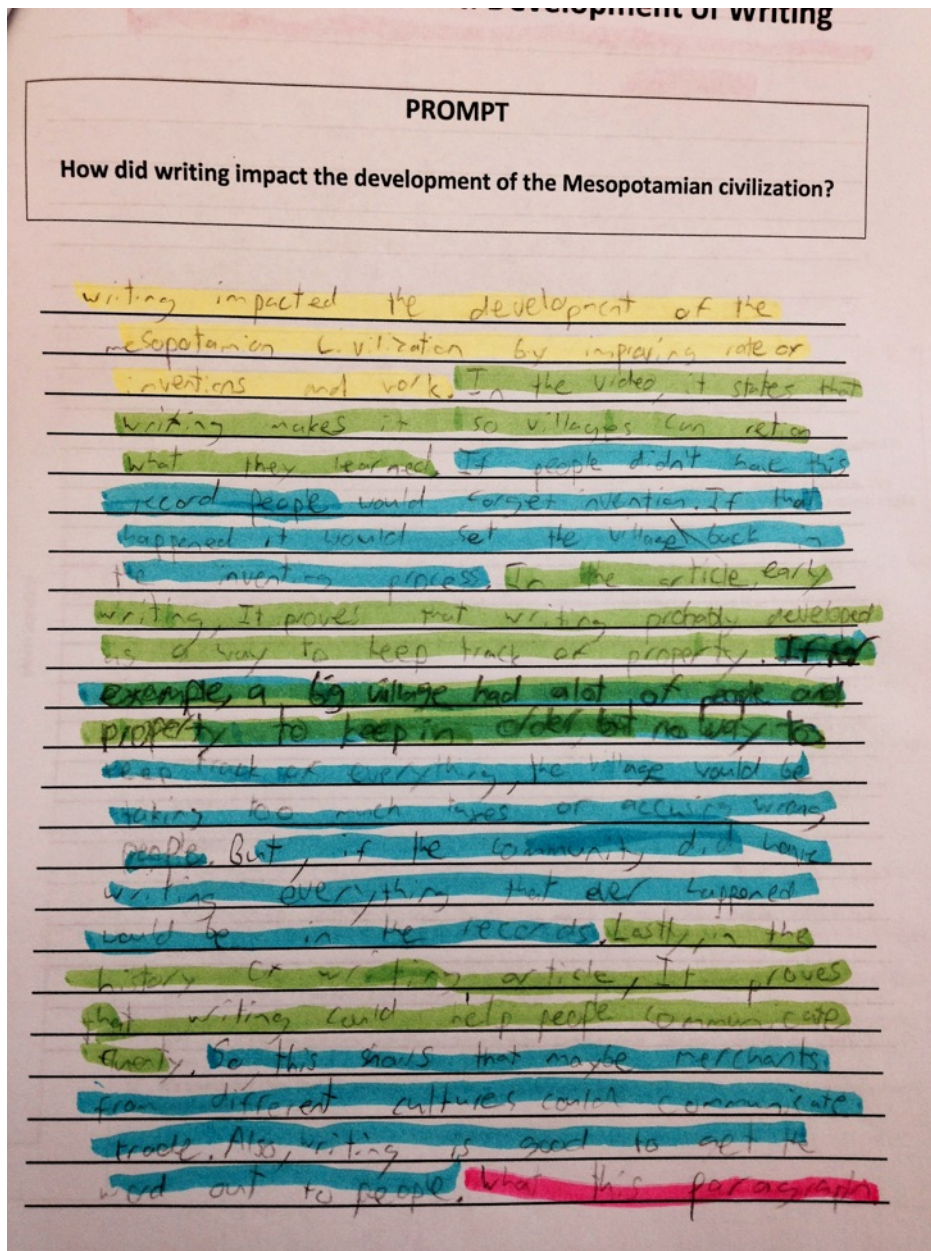
which was more challenging. I used the The Compactor to keep track of the students who were able to document mastery more quickly (passing the Most Difficult First), and have kept those on file electronically. Below, you can see two examples of current forms that are being used in my class.

Students are also offered differentiated options each week for vocabulary study, and I have just started using the Study Guide Method for our current unit on the Mesopotamia civilization. Students have been very receptive to the differentiated options because they show an appreciation for what students already know. One student commented to his parents, during our student-led conferences, that he loves the vocabulary options because he knows he is not wasting his time. I currently have four students who are trying the study guide method, and one in particular is highly engaged in the creation of a website where he plans to link all of his work for the unit. Other students are also interested in his work, and it is becoming a site that can be shared with other students for their own enrichment as well.

When working on writing skills, I have used differentiated grouping strategies to help students who need more assistance without repeating unnecessary practice for students who have demonstrated mastery. I have seen increased writing skills with my struggling students, because I can work with 5-8 students at a time; providing them with more targeted instruction. Below you can see one struggling students argumentative writing before differentiated instruction, and their writing after instruction.

Before Differentiated Instruction





After Differentiated Instruction

This practicum has allowed me the opportunity to apply the strategies that I have been learning throughout the specialty endorsement. My students are much more engaged and motivated than they have been in the past. They are getting more targeted help in the areas that

they need help, and understand the concept of differentiation and why we have incorporated it into our classroom.

What would you do differently if you were to do it again?

If I were to do the practicum again, I would try to spend more time reflecting on the strategies that I'm using in writing. Many of my reflections on the unit plan were completed days after the lesson was completed, due to issues with time, and by that time I may have forgotten some of my thoughts and feelings from the effectiveness of the strategy/lesson. I would also like to create the unit plan while I'm teaching the unit, so I can reflect and adjust while I'm teaching it. I found that I didn't use some of the unit plan that I originally had planned because it didn't fit with what my 6th grade team wanted to do.

If you were to continue, what would you do next?

Since I am still working with my current students, I will continue to implement strategies from my endorsement classes. I'm also working with a colleague of mine to create and teach a professional development class about how to differentiate for gifted learners. I want to become an expert in the field of instruction for gifted and talented learners, and provide support for my school district; which does not have a lot of support in this area.