

Competency #4 Reflection

At the core of any exceptional master teacher, one will find a plethora of sound teaching practices. For this reason, master teachers are always in high demand because of their innate abilities to convey information, encourage students, and manage a multitude of scenarios while engaging their audience. That is why I chose a video of myself teaching my second grade students a lesson during physical education. While I will say that I am, and should always be my own harshest critic, I do feel that there was a lot of good that came from the lesson. However, I realize that perfecting these skills will be a life-long endeavor, and there is always going to be room for improvement. Therefore, I watched with a critical eye to find ways that I can continue to grow, improve my craft, and to celebrate what is right. The following is a brief synopsis of what transpired, went well, and could have gone better.

I coordinated a time with our regular physical education teacher to come in during one of our scheduled class periods. He agreed to allow me to teach my class for the entire forty minute session. Having had a previous conversation, we decided that my class still needed some work on throwing and receiving skills. Therefore, my lesson involved teaching the proper throwing and catching cues while fostering a healthy and engaging environment. Having the NASPE standards in mind, I set out to create a lesson that would challenge my students' psychomotor, cognitive, and affective abilities. This lesson was developed with the students in my class in mind, but could have been modified to meet the needs of other classes or impaired students as well. The lesson was taught on a Friday morning and I was pleased with the overall results.

The first thing I noticed from the video was the learning environment itself. Being a classroom teacher, I have worked tirelessly to promote and maintain a community of learners that are kind and caring of each other. However, I was in a different position this day and it was important for me to make sure that I had a safe place, both physically and mentally, for students to learn.

I began by grouping students with others that were of various genders, races, and abilities as per my discussion with Jerry, our physical education teacher. I ensured that students would have the opportunity to work with those they deemed as close friends, but I also wanted to ensure that they would be working with students that they may not often associate with. Once the students were in their groups, I wanted them to find an identity. This was important, as it allowed students to work together to find a common theme for their team, and to encourage participation, unity, and teamwork. A regret that I have was not beginning my class similarly to an outdoor education class that Jim Stiehl had taught. I think that physical education classes could all benefit by going over the “five finger rule.” However, I did not implement that into this particular lesson.

Following the sharing of team names and cheers, we began the task of learning the proper throwing cues. Students were encouraged to seek out a partner and an object of their choosing following a brief period of practice against a wall. We then reconvened shortly to discuss the proper technique. This on-going questioning was invaluable to me as it continually gave me a greater sense of my students’ understanding of the skills.

We followed this period with some instruction on catching an object. Again, as a group we discussed the cues and techniques needed to successfully complete a pass with an object. The students were then able to practice this newfound knowledge with a

partner of their choosing. After an adequate amount of practice, I challenged certain students to use other objects and to move further away from their partners. Then, I tried to invite the group to do the same in an effort to challenge those that seemed to excel, and to make those that needed more practice feel welcome to do so. Again, we reconvened to discuss their knowledge of the skill and it allowed me to put the students back into their teams for a game of Sink the Ship.

The game incorporated the skills learned from the throwing and catching sessions. However, I did notice from the video that many of the students were simply trying to block the throws of their opponents, rather than to make the effort and catch the incoming throws. I did stop the students and reiterated the goals of the game, and the proper way to play, but I think this could have been done a little more thoroughly despite our limited time period. During the course of the game, I was confronted by some students who were accusing other teams of “cheating” which also allowed me to discuss with them as individuals, the importance of fair play and making sure that they took care of themselves first. These are just a few examples of the flexibility a master teacher must possess, and the ability to find and use teachable moments to help further a students’ knowledge.

I was pleased with the outcome of the lesson. As I have said, there are some things I would reconsider, omit completely, or include when I do this lesson again. However, I do feel that this is an appropriate barometer of my skills as a master teacher, and I think it does a good job of demonstrating my competency with sound teaching practices. I noticed that all of my students were engaged. I would have liked seeing them a bit more active, but they seemed to understand the cues and were able to verbalize

them. I also observed a group that was supportive of each other and genuinely wanted their classmates to succeed in the lesson. I assessed their psychomotor, cognitive, and affective abilities and allowed their actions and answers to help drive my instruction further. I fostered a learning environment that promoted safety, and was able to effectively teach a lesson that many of the students said they would try on their own with their friends at home. That is, perhaps, the greatest satisfaction I could have.