

**5 PB PRE-LEARNING ASSESSMENT (PLA) SECONDARY
PART THREE CLASS REVIEW (for each class you teach)**
Class Review
Teacher:
Mr. Orton
Class: Science 9

Classroom Strengths: What are the strengths of the class? What are the positive things about this group as a whole?

This is a large group of energetic, social young people. A few individuals are very good workers, very interested and trying to do their best academically. They are willing to share their thoughts privately, seem to tolerate science as a whole, and enjoy the experiments we do.

Classroom Needs: What are your concerns about the class as a whole? What do you wonder?

This classroom has quite a few individuals who have behavioural challenges. A few individuals have learning disabilities or some sort of special need. Getting the class to behave is a work in progress; the students need very detailed instruction and seem to enjoy a more structured, less free environment. Activities with a more creative approach (such as coming up with answers themselves) are generally received poorly. The class has issues transitioning from activity to activity, and so it is best to have less focused activities instead of a sequence of learning activities. I wonder how these students would respond with a more one-on-one approach; I may try to do something different in my final practicum and see how it works out. I am planning on bringing a large paper pad, sitting in the middle of class and simply teaching the subject, stopping to ask interactive questions, to see how the kids respond (as opposed to a lecture from the front). I wonder how 30 kids would react to this intimate approach, and if it would work.

Goals: What are your main goals this year? (These goals may be based on the strengths and/or concerns, or on an area of interest, or a new grade level or new curriculum. Each teacher may have three or four.)

- *Dominate classroom management when taking into consideration a class which does not cooperate*
- *Creating class content that is exciting and makes science fun, while not turning off students who need a more structured approach to learning*

Decisions: What decisions will you make based on the information gathered?

I need to prepare classes with more direction and less transitions, at least in the beginning. I also need to transition from one activity to the other very carefully. I need to continue the journal idea, as the kids really opened up on their journal and shared issues, likes, dislikes and plans for the future, which helped me break through the seemingly impenetrable barrier the class originally put up.

Individual Concerns
What are the individual needs in your classroom?
Medical
Language

Two students are ESL students and have trouble with the content.

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Learning	<i>The class has a large number of kids with learning disabilities (5).</i>
Socio-Emotional	<i>A large number of students seem to have issues at home, and rely on school to provide a more stable environment, which makes it difficult to jump into inquiry based learning and creative activities without proper planning and failsafes. One of the students has a history of violent behaviour, fights and anger towards women; his parents are separated and he lives with his mother.</i>
Other	<i>One of the students is particularly unengaged; after analyzing his journal, he seems to be bored by the current subject matter and be quite advanced. He was one of the biggest disturbances in the classroom, but he has calmed down on the second week of practicum and we started working together, also thanks to dialogue through our journal and his extra engagement on experiments.</i>

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PART FOUR - IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING**

1. SUMMARIZE THE MOST IMPORTANT IMPLICATIONS THAT YOU DRAW FROM THIS ASSESSMENT THAT WILL BE OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE TO YOUR PLANNING & TEACHING.

After spending my first practicum with this classroom trying to incorporate a more creative approach to teaching, I realized halfway that the classroom was quite different from my previous one; I had based my assumptions on my previous classroom, but as it turns out, this classroom is particularly challenging. On the second week of practicum, seven of the students were in a form of detention as punishment for behavior. My supervisor, Mr. Venables, after watching me teach this class, told me this was the hardest science class he had seen, and he agrees this was a great learning experience; however, he also gave me great insight into the possible reasons why the class is a bit more challenging. He pointed out that some kids have a very unstructured and uncertain home life. They may rely on structured, even rote methods of learning to ensure that they feel some sense of safety and security in their lives.

After going from bump 1 to bump 6 in my very first day of practicum, I understand now how utterly different two class arrangements can be from each other, and how important it is to mold your methods of teaching to each specific classroom. I also was able to understand the emotional need for connection that some of these kids display, and will continue using the journal and the writing back and forth as a method of continuous connection with the kids. It is quite a bit of work, but they need someone to show they care. I also realize that while my sponsor teacher usually cuts off the space and solar system sections from his 9th grade curriculum, I may need to work on it for at least half a week, as several of the students expressed a great desire to learn about these subjects in the journal.

Another important implication is that my natural way of being does not work with this group entirely; they need to have a more structured environment in all senses and that includes me having a firmer approach, at least when I return to the practicum after this month off. During my five-week practicum, I plan on starting off a little more strict, and only after falling into a routine, I will expand into more creative and experimental methods of teaching.