

Nicole Mumford
Artifact Reflection

Title of Artifact: End of the semester letter to the parents

Date Completed: November 2010

Artifact Description: For my artifact I chose a letter that I sent home to the parents of the students in my second and third grade pre-student teaching placement. This letter detailed the things I learned in my experiences in their child's classroom throughout the semester and my joys to have been allowed the opportunity to work alongside their child's classroom teach. I concluded the letter by thanking the parents for allowing me to be a part of their child's learning during the months of my pre-student teaching semester. After adding a note about each child individually, I sent the letters home in the final week of my pre-student teaching experience.

Alignment:

Wisconsin Teacher Standard: I believe that this artifact best aligns with WSTDKL Standard six that states, **teachers communicate well**. *The teacher uses effective verbal and nonverbal communication techniques as well as instructional media and technology to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.*

As a teacher, it is important to not only communicate with your students, but with their families as well. In order to have effective, positive communication with your students, their parents must know what is going on within the classroom and must know what is being expected of their student. Parents must know about the classroom rules, thematic units, and any other happenings within the school and the classroom. If parents are aware of what a child is learning and how they are interacting within the classroom, they will be more likely to be supportive of you, the teacher and of the school itself.

UW-Platteville School of Education Knowledge, Skill, and Disposition Statement

Alignment: I believe this artifact best aligns with KSD4.c Communicates with families. KSD4.c states that *the teacher candidate is able to provide frequent, sensitive, and appropriate information to parents and students about student's positive and negative progress within the instructional program and successfully engages families in the educational process when appropriate.*

I believe this artifact aligns with this KSD because by writing letters home to the parents at the beginning or end of the school year, you are giving them an introduction to your teaching style, your classroom expectations, and what their child is learning and what they are supposed to be doing outside of class. Being able to provide progress reports, newsletters, and information about their child will engage families in each child's educational progress. Communicating with families is a great way to build a support system within the community.

This artifact also aligns with the following KSD's:

- KS3.a COMMUNICATES CLEARLY AND ACCURATELY
- KSD4.f SHOWS PROFESSIONALISM

Personal Reflection:

What I learned about teaching:

From this experience I learned that like WSTDKL ten states, it is very important to create a relationship with not only the people you work with, but with parents and the community as well. Working with these children at camp is a large responsibility for all camp staff and counselors. I learned that in order to be efficient in teaching and learning about my campers or future students I must be able to communicate with parents and be responsible in the eyes of the community. At camp, we as counselors, met with each child's parents before and after each session. In these short meetings we learned of the personal needs of each child and in the end we assessed how things went meeting these needs. I had a camper that had created a lot of tension and problems in our cabin, at the end of the session I had to confront and discuss this issue with her mother. I learned here that it is very important to always speak positively and ask a lot of questions, to better understand the child. Through this meeting I was able to better understand ways of countering this specific child's behavior in order to make adjustments for the next session. This was a way to communicate with the parents. The knowledge I gained from this experience will help me in building such relationships in my school, community and with the parents of my students. I have learned the importance of documenting each camper's, or student's, achievements in a way that the parents would appreciate being informed of. This knowledge base of appropriate ways of contacting and communicating with parents will greatly benefit me as a future educator.

What I learned about myself:

From this experience I learned that as a future educator I must take into large consideration the concerns others have about the environment and methods I use. Parents and community members will always be concerned about what a child is or is not learning in the classroom or in other educational programs. I, as an educator, must be prepared to facilitate learning in my classroom, as well as prepared to have ready assessments, reports and letters to the parents and the community to inform them of the progress and experiences their children are gaining in my classroom. Also, through this experience, I learned that patience is a very valuable asset to acquire when working with children and their families, as well as the community. You have to be patient while informing parents of their child's progress and experiences, as they may have many questions, comments, or concerns. Learning how to be calm, patient, and responsive to all parents is something that will always be necessary in my classroom.