Service Learning Essay:

It is hard to say what I originally thought service learning would be like, other than initially thinking it would be hard to fit into my busy work and school schedule, because I had formerly done Service Learning during my senior year of high school. I could say that I thought college Service Learning would be a little more in depth then my high school, but during high school I was able to construct lesson plans and teach in front of the kids, so I feel like I might have been a little more ahead then some students this semester due to my previous experience. Service Learning this semester was a lot of observing and helping around the classroom. I did a few assignments with the kids; I read books to them that were related to their lessons that day and then we had a worksheet that followed. Every time I went in I would have the kids quietly sit down on the carpet and then I would read the book and try and get the kids as involved as possible. Then I would have all the kids go back to their desk, and the helpers would handout the worksheets. I would then have the children pull out the supplies that were needed and I would walk them through their worksheet using the document camera. I really think that is a neat tool to use in the classroom. You are able to take the worksheet the students are using and put it up big enough so they can actually see what that small picture is that you’re coloring in.

My teacher ran her classroom very smoothly, she had the kids on a “set schedule” everyday. When they walked in that door in the morning they knew exactly what to do. She always planned bell work and had it sitting on their desk when they walk into the classroom in the morning. They would set down their backpacks, put away their lunch, and start on the work. During that time she took attendance and lunch count for students who were purchasing lunch that day. They would end bell work and start the rest of the day with a fun song and the pledge. She would then continue her day with the same routine as in the morning and everything just seemed so organized. I learned when running a classroom, especially full of little Kindergarteners that you must keep everything organized and the same each and every day. If you switch the schedule around too often, they will start asking a million questions and won’t really be able to focus because they will be too concerned about what the teacher will be doing next, and what assignment they will have. I also learned that you need to stay compassionate while also standing your ground. If your too nice, even the Kindergarteners will find a way to step all over you, but if your to mean they will never enjoy class and you have to keep in mind that you are what sets their standards and expectations for school in the years to come.

There are so many ways to deal with children and their many situations that come up during school. With Kindergarteners you have situations from losing an eraser to breaking an arm and they always cry about it no matter how small or big it is. You need to keep in mind to always be concerned about the situation no matter how small and compassionate. Everything you say they take to heart at that age and being concerned means the world to them. I learned you need to just tell them that everything is going to be ok and if they need to see the nurse, send them. Unless it’s that student who loves going to the nurse every day after lunch, then that’s when you need to stand your ground and tell them no. There will be those students who can never focus and try and distract every student in the classroom, my teacher dealt with those students by putting them in an “island” and that are when their desk was in the back alone and not with anyone else next to them until they learned how to behave and control themselves. It’s all about patience when it comes to taking care of and handling kids at such a young age.

When I did Service Learning in high I did the service in Kindergarten and couldn’t have loved it more, and just doing it this semester confirmed of how much I want to be a Kindergarten teacher. This grade level is defiantly for me. I may want to try 1st grade and just see how it is, but Kindergarten is defiantly my calling. I love all the little kids, and silly questions, and I love being able to be their first ever teacher and kind of set those expectations and fun experiences for school. The kids always find a way to brighten up my day. I feel like going to class everyday and being as excited as they are to be there means I’m on the right path. I want to have compassion for the job I am doing, and with teaching I feel that way. I love that feeling when a student doesn’t understand something and you say one word differently that makes that math problem just click in their little heads. They feel so accomplished and it makes me feel so wonderful that I was able to help them out with that.

While working with my Service Learning teacher I was able to learn and gain so much experience with her. She has been teaching for 13 years now and still has the same passion for it she did the first day she walked into a classroom. I really enjoyed her and hope to have her again in my future semesters. She allowed me to do so much with the kids including teaching a few lessons, give out tests, and help decorate her room for the holidays. I feel very connected with the students and I love the CTA school system. I like how each grade level is one step ahead of the other schooling systems; because I love working with the kindergarten age, but I also like working with the more advanced schooling material rather than coloring worksheets all day. When I become a Kindergarten teacher, CTA will be my first place to look, and with interning there during high school and hopefully the rest of my college career I will have a good in because of my connections with the teachers and staff.