

Metacognition: Importance of Reflection in the Pre-Service Teacher Journey

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Abstract

Metacognition has been a topic of study for cognitive theorists, behaviorists, researchers, and educators. Simply stated, metacognition refers to “thinking about one’s thinking” (Desautel, 2009). Examining one’s own thinking allows a person to better understand their thinking and learning. It also encourages the learner to take ownership of their learning and cognition. For the pre-service teacher, the information gathered from “thinking about one’s thinking” can be invaluable to their success in the classroom.

According to theory, metacognition consists of two processes: 1) the knowledge of cognition and 2) the regulation of cognition (Hacker, 2009). The knowledge of cognition has three components: awareness of the factors that influence one’s own performance, knowing different types of strategies to use for learning, knowing what strategy to use for a specific learning situation. The regulation of cognition combines setting goals and planning, monitoring and controlling learning, and assessing results and strategies being used. The practice of reflection has been proven to aid a person in becoming a “thinking thinker” and in applying the knowledge of their cognition to positively regulate their cognition in a growth mindset (Dweck, 2007). For the pre-service teacher, being given time to reflect and examine one’s thinking can lead to more effective application of learning theories, strategies, best practices, as well as time management both in and outside of the classroom.

The pre-service teacher is taught the importance of harnessing “curiosity” of the learner when working with the natural desire of children to learn. Ostroff (2012) says that learning is what humans do best throughout their lives by wondering, exploring, experiencing, and playing. It is important for the pre-service teacher to embrace their curiosity and natural desire to learn and share this with their students in the classroom. Making pre-service teachers aware of the importance of metacognition and reflection can be an important step in fanning the flame of curiosity in learning for all.

Eleanor Duckworth (2006) put it so beautifully in *The Having of Wonderful Ideas* as she described her reason for the enjoyment of working with teachers. As a former student of Piaget, Duckworth believes there are two main aspects of teaching. The first aspect is putting students in touch with phenomena, or information, related to the area to be studied. Duckworth is adamant that this be the real thing not lectures, books, or notes about the subject but real authentic hands on interaction with the subject. The goal is for the student to think and wonder about it; therefore, it would make sense that the teacher during preparation should also be caused to think and wonder about it as well. The second aspect of teaching is the act of having students explain what they are thinking and wondering about (Duckworth, 2006). Again, this step is critical for teachers as well as we reflect and apply metacognitive skills to our planning, instruction, and assessment. The same steps that excite students about learning also excite teachers as they prepare the learning environment for students. The two aspects of teaching depend on each other, when anyone (teacher or student) is engaged in the matter, they try to explain it, and in so doing you seek out more phenomena that will bring deeper understanding.

Spalding and Wilson (2002) use the work of Dewey (1933) to argue that reflective, metacognitive thinking is critical to identifying, analyzing, and solving the classroom issues that characterize our thinking in the classroom. The added value for investing in this type of reflection and metacognitive thinking is a professional educator who uses a more systematic process to understand the ways in which people learn most effectively. Barry and King (1998) promote reflection as an essential skill for those educators desiring to go beyond simple “pondering” to using metacognitive skills in true reflection. A move from pondering to reflecting requires positive teacher attitude concerning open mindedness, genuine enthusiasm, and a willingness to be responsible as you consider all the consequences of the learning journey.

The following is a checklist to help a teacher elevate reflection to a higher level above “pondering” (Barry and King, 1998):

1. What went well about the lesson? And why?
2. What have you learned about your teaching? To what extent are these strengths in your teaching?
3. What did not go well about the lesson? And why?
4. What have you learned about your teaching? To what extent are these weaknesses in your teaching?

Metacognition and idea of reflecting on our own thoughts is not a new idea. John Flavell, a psychologist in the 1970s, introduced the term of “metacognition” (Fleming, 2014). Flavell used it to describe our ability to evaluate our own thinking. Metacognition, or reflection, is useful for identifying areas of limitations and strengths in our teaching. Schon’s (1983) work suggests that adult’s growth and development depends on their ability to use reflection to clarify and make sense of their own learning. Schon put forth a simple suggestion for the use of metacognition, or reflection (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001):

- *reflect on your learning
- *adjust behavior based on that reflection
- *develop a set of understandings based on your own experience

According to Hall and Simeral (2015), a working definition of metacognition, or self-reflection, includes an overarching concept and a series of very specific reflective behaviors. In their book, *Teach, Reflect, and Learn* (2015), they remind us of these specific reflective behaviors:

- *Gaining awareness of our educational surroundings (students, content, and pedagogy).
- *Planning deliberately and taking action with intentionality.
- *Assessing the impact of our decisions and actions.
- *Adjusting our course of action based on the feedback we receive from those assessments.
- *Engaging in this reflective cycle continuously.

Developing the skills used in metacognition and reflection, is an investment in time. In order to connect with your thinking, it may also require setting aside a time for solitude in order to truly “think about your thinking” and how your thinking and learning are working for you as well as the students in your classroom. This investment of time will pay great dividends in the long run as you become more thoughtful, intentional, and reflective about your practice. The goal is to bridge any gaps that may exist between your intentions in the classroom and what actually occurs in your classroom. Hall and Simeral (2015, p. 13) reference the following quote from Carole Miller and Juliana Saxton from the University of Victoria which sums up our need as educators for “the language of reflection that deepens our knowledge of who we are in relation to others in a community of learners.”

Goodman (1984) reminds us of Dewey’s belief that teacher preparation programs should be to help pre-service teachers reflect on their practice in order to understand the relationship between theory and practice. Research in the field of education has indicated for decades the importance of encouraging teachers to be reflective practitioners using metacognitive skills to examine their classroom practices (Gerhke, 1987). The following excerpts are from a pre-service teacher’s weekly reflection journal. These reflections help paint a picture of the metacognition that occurs as the pre-service teacher progresses through the weekly internship experience.

Journal 1

My first week in Mrs. Hudson’s second grade class at Barker Elementary has been wonderful! Within the first two days, I learned all 20 students’ names, met the grade-level teachers, and even some parents who have all made me feel so welcome. I have already gotten to go over the students’ morning work with them once, read two

picture books about Martin Luther King, Jr., and read a few chapters from their ongoing read-aloud chapter book about him as well. I have worked with one ELL student several times individually over the past few days, working on literacy and mathematics mostly. Most of the students love to read and draw! Most of them are very good about taking out their Accelerated Reader books when they are finished with an assignment or are waiting for instructions. They love going to the library and spending time in the reading center.

Overall, I have loved everything about my experience so far. Mrs. Hudson could not be more welcoming. She is always more than happy to answer any questions and has already given me opportunities to get in front of the class in just these first three days. There are a few things I have noticed so far that could be improved, which she and I have also discussed. One thing is the students' pencils and sharpening throughout the day. If she leaves the sharpener out on the counter, student are up all day long to go back there and sharpen their pencil. If she puts it up, however, the students do not need to use it nearly as often. Out of sight, out of mind is true in this case! I have mentioned a supply management strategy that she liked and said she may try to implement in the future. Another thing I have noticed, but not said anything about, is students talking while she is talking or drawing, writing, etc. while she is reading aloud. That is definitely something I will focus on as I am teaching to make sure everyone is on-task and paying attention during my lessons. I will say that most students are able to answer questions she asks about the story she is reading, even though they look like they are not paying attention. I am interested in asking her more about that in the coming days.

The teachers at Barker are allowed a lot of flexibility in their teaching (thanks to their trusting principal), so I still have some questions about how Mrs. Hudson and the other teachers determine the pace of their curriculum and their activities. I am sure I have many more questions that I have not even thought of yet! I am excited to see what the rest of the semester will bring and thankful to be working with such an excellent group of educators.

Journal 2

I completed my first full week this week and it was packed full of fun learning opportunities for myself and the students in Mrs. Hudson's class! This week's literacy focus was fact and opinion and the textbook story was "The Life Cycle of a Pumpkin." This week gave me lots of opportunity to get in front of the class during literacy instruction, which was great preparation for an upcoming teaching task. All week I went over the morning work assignments with the class and read the read-aloud stories, including the chapter book they read as a class. I have not gotten the opportunity to lead any math lessons yet, but hopefully I will start some over the next week.

On Friday, I went with the class on a field trip to the Liberty Legacy kickoff. This is a program many schools in our area use for social studies instruction. The kickoff gets the students excited to learn about civics in their classrooms and lead them on their way to becoming "super citizens." I was very proud of my class' behavior from the time we left the school to the time we returned. There were roughly 500 students at the kickoff, so it was even more important for the group to stay together, but they all did a great job. I think I was way more worried about the possibility of someone wandering off or something like that than the other teachers were. The students have been on several field trips this year, so their teachers' expectations were already made clear long before this trip.

The most exciting part of this week for me was our science unit that I got to help plan and lead. The class has been discussing animals and recently got to birds. This summer I planned a week-long unit on birds for a small group of second and third grade students at the Science Enrichment Camp. I told Mrs. Hudson about the unit and she welcomed me to bring in whatever I had and teach as much as I would like. We watched live bird camera feeds, talked a little about how their beak shape indicates what birds eat, and read the story "Feathers: Not Just For Flying" to discuss the different types of feathers and what their varying purposes are.

My absolute favorite part of the week was beginning our "eggs-periment" where you submerge raw eggs (we did 5 eggs), still in their shell, in vinegar for 24 hours. The shell of the eggs reacts with the vinegar causing them to dissolve, leaving an egg surrounded only by its membrane. The eggs become soft and "rubbery" or "bouncy" as the class described it. Each student got to put on gloves and gently touch the eggs before we continued on to the next phase. Once the shells were completely removed, we kept one egg in the vinegar, placed two eggs in green-colored water, and two eggs in corn syrup. On Monday, we will finish up the experiment and see what happened to all the eggs over the weekend. The students have been recording their observations and have been making predictions from day one. The class has been genuinely interested in this project and I think it has gotten some of them more interested in science!

Journal 3

As the weeks go by, I am feeling more and more comfortable in the classroom. I am becoming responsible for more and more things and getting new experiences each day. This week, I got the chance to grade a few assignments. Unfortunately, I did grade the first four or five papers incorrectly (I was not using a key), but I quickly figured it out, fixed my mistakes, and let Mrs. Hudson know immediately. I was worried how she would respond, since I asked if I could help grade and then messed up, but she was fine with it. I have graded assignments that I have felt comfortable with, like fill in the blank or selected response.

I also got the opportunity to give the students their spelling test this week. I called out the words, read them in a sentence, and read one sentence for them to write at the end. They have cardboard privacy folders they put up during graded assignments, such as tests. This helps keep them from looking at other students' work, though some still try to. I have learned how important it is to walk around and monitor students during tests because if you are sitting at the desk, you can't see the students behind their privacy folders. I have found a few students trying to get papers out of the desk or peeking over the end of their folder to talk to their neighbor or look at their paper.

Each day this week I have led all the assignments and activities for about the first hour of school. This includes morning work, taking the whole class to the restroom, sending pairs to the library to check out books, and reading a chapter from their class chapter book with them. One of my favorite parts of the day is reading to the students. We also finished up our science experiment with eggs this week. The students loved observing what happened to the eggs over the weekend in the green water or corn syrup! I think they liked predicting what they thought was going to happen to the eggs and then seeing if they were right or not. No one correctly guessed what would happen to the egg in corn syrup, so it seemed to make it that much more exciting for them to see what actually happened. I am both nervous and excited to teach my lessons next week, but I know I am ready!

Journal 4

This week definitely did not begin as planned and has been challenging, but I made the most of it and am choosing to use this experience as a chance to learn. I used this week as an opportunity to spend more time teaching language arts, try new seating arrangements during circle time, and let the students get used to being recorded. The last three days I got to teach the whole morning language arts block, about 2.5 hours. This was a great experience! The students were well behaved and engaged in the lessons overall. I am so proud that she trusts me with her class this much and it makes me excited for the 20 days of teaching coming up!

I also got the opportunity to help a small group of students with their math assignment on money. They were having difficulty counting the sum of a group of mixed coins. By working with them as a small group, I found out they were able to determine the coin values from the top of the page, but were having trouble counting by fives when counting nickels and tens when counting dimes. They were able to find the totals, but it was just taking them longer than the rest of the class, so they were falling behind while in the whole group. This showed me the importance of understanding your students and their needs. By working closely with this small group, I found out that they need some additional practice counting by fives and tens fluently. Everything I am doing came full circle for me in that moment. I cannot wait to teach next week and am thankful every day for such a wonderful placement!

Journal 5

This past week was pretty great for several reasons! The first half of the week was great because I taught and videotaped my teaching. The kids were engaged in the lessons overall and were very interactive with the activities I planned each day. It made me feel good as a future professional educator to know that I planned lessons that they enjoyed, but, more importantly, that they learned something from it.

The best part of the week for me was getting to lead the class all day on Friday! Mrs. Hudson was out and the class had a substitute teacher, so I got to lead all of the instruction for the day. I was a bit nervous, but saw it as a practice for my 20 days of full-time teaching and it went amazingly well! We were able to get everything done on Mrs. Hudson's lesson plan, including a reading assessment, spelling assessment, math review, science, and social studies. There was also an assembly that morning where the class got to meet an astronaut and hear about and see life in space. I loved that experience and it made me super excited to start my 20 days! I was able to see some things that I will need to work on before and during that time. Many students do not raise their hand when they

need something from me, but come up to me until I realize a small group is surrounding me, tapping me, and calling my name. I need to make sure I enforce the rules that Mrs. Hudson has already set and make sure the students know that all of those rules still apply when I am teaching.

There is still plenty of work to be done, but I feel like I am over one hurdle and that much closer to being a certified teacher.

Journal 6

This week was a short week for students with Monday and Tuesday off, and even shorter for me since I was out Friday presenting at a conference. The students focused on review work for reading and math. They did a page on fact and opinion in their interactive notebooks on Wednesday. I love everything about interactive notebooks, so to finally get to see them use them was exciting for me. I also learned about a great resource by Carson Dellosa that provides interactive notebook pages for each subject and grade level, along with blank templates for teachers to create their own pages. In mathematics, we are shifting from learning about money to time. There are still some students who are struggling with money, but we will talk about it more before the unit test.

The students also turned in their president trifold reports this week. Each student was assigned a president to research, including their family life, pets, accomplishments, interesting facts, etc. It seemed like a project each student was interested in and excited to share about. For the last two weeks, the students have come in to class sharing little tidbits of information about their president, from one who had a pet alligator to another who shot his sister in the 'rear end' with a bb gun. One ELL student is very shy about speaking in front of the class because of their accent and the fear that the other students will make fun of them. During the presentation, the student began to cry, so I told them we could go over it privately and present again the next day. Taking the time to rehearse it next door gave them the confidence to speak loud and clear and share their project with the class.

I have been thinking more and more lately about another ELL student's progress in particular. This student is excellent with math, but struggles a lot with reading. At the beginning of the year, this student had the lowest reading fluency score of the class and is still in a similar position now I would imagine. They have difficulty understanding the meanings of words in assignments and stories on a regular basis. One thing I think they could benefit from is more small group time. I think making sure the class has more small group time will be one of my main focuses during my 20 days of teaching. This additional differentiated instruction will not only help that one student, but each student in the class.

This coming week I will be teaching the language arts unit, as well as picking up the math lessons. I cannot believe that my 20 days of full-time teaching is almost here, but I am ready and look forward to it being a wonderful experience!

Journal 7

This week has been exciting as I began my 20 days of full-time teaching on Tuesday. On Monday, the second grade classes went to the Super Scientific Circus. It was exciting and informational for both students and adults. The students got to see fun things like Frisbee-throwing and bubble-blowing, while also learning the science behind these activities. It was also great for teachers to get ideas for engaging science activities within their classrooms. I learned things about bubbles I never knew and am excited to try later, such as blowing bubbles inside of bubbles and creating hexagonal bubbles. These types of demonstrations are my favorite instructional tool, especially for science. There is so much to be learned through observation and interaction.

My first few days of full-time teaching have been great! I can tell it will take the students a little while to get used to Mrs. Hudson being out of the classroom so much, but they all seem to enjoy the change so far. It has been easy to transition to the front of the class full-time because Mrs. Hudson has given me more and more responsibility along the way, rather than just all at once. She has been very trusting of my abilities, which has done nothing but help me in the long-run. With spring break and the holidays thrown in, this will be a long 20 days of teaching, but I am looking forward to learning as much as I can and gaining a wealth of experience along the way. There are many things I have thought about that I will be responsible for in my own classroom that I will not be responsible for during my internship. Getting the experience of teaching full-time will make me much more comfortable with that aspect of being a teacher and I cannot wait!

Journal 8

Monday was a teacher work day after spring break last week, so this is a four-day school week for us. This week, I had to teach a math re-engagement lesson. I had originally planned to use their Chapter 7 math test as my initial assessment, but I learned I needed to alter that a bit and add to it to include problem-solving questions. I gave the whole class the additional questions on Wednesday. Based on the data I already collected, I had 3 students in mind for the focus group and re-engagement lesson. The data after including the additional questions still indicated that those same 3 students could benefit the most from the re-engagement lesson.

I taught the lesson on Thursday with the 3 students. The lesson went well, but the students still struggled with the assessment at the end of the lesson. I believe the problem was that I included too much information in the re-engagement lesson, rather than focusing on one small area of instruction for the lesson. The instruction I gave was adequate based on their work when we were working together during the lesson, but was too much when they needed to complete the assessment at the end. While I wish it had gone better, I know that every lesson will not be a homerun, but there will always be something to learn from and improve.

I also did a science demonstration for the class this week. Our lesson was about how oil spills affect the environment and it discussed birds in particular. From our summer science camp field experience, I knew that Dawn dish soap had produced a series of short videos on YouTube that showed how their products and company initiatives help save wildlife. I showed the students a clip and did a demonstration showing how feathers float on water when clean, but in oily water, they absorb the oil and sink. We discussed what that meant for birds and I showed them how the Dawn dish soap gently cleans the feathers where they can float again. I think this was definitely more meaningful and memorable for my students than just reading the lesson from the book. It helped them see and understand just what happens in the environment in that type of situation.

Journal 9

This week was another 4-day week for us. We were out on Friday for a weather day. Monday I submitted my certification work to be scored. It is embarrassing to admit, but tears came to my eyes when I pushed the submit button. It was not just the fact that I had worked hard on that assignment and was now finished. I immediately thought about all the work, time, and energy I have put into becoming a teacher since August 2015 and even before that as a preschool teacher. In that split second, I thought about how much I have been through personally since then, which is the hardest part of all. It has been a journey that I would wish on no one, but it makes me proud of myself and thankful for those people who helped me all along the way.

This week was special to me in my internship because the students took a math and science test where I had taught them the whole chapter in both. I felt like I was partially responsible for their grades based on how well I taught them. The math test went wonderfully! Each student earned a B or higher and Mrs. Hudson said I did a great job teaching the material. The science chapter was longer, so I was worried about some of the material we covered in the first lessons being forgotten. Every student earned a D or higher on the science test. I felt like I could have done a better job reviewing the earliest material and making sure it was talked about more. In the future, I also want to try to incorporate more hands-on activities for them to learn from. I am glad that it is instinctive for me to reflect on my own teaching and figure out what I may be able to improve on in the future in order to help my students the most. I am looking forward to beginning new chapters in math and science and improving on my science instruction.

Journal 10

This week has been busy, busy busy! We had two field trips this week. On Monday, all of the second grade classes went to a nearby school for the closing ceremony for Liberty's Legacy. This is a social studies program the students have been completing for about 10 weeks now. The students have learned about important American monuments and symbols, including the Statue of Liberty, Mount Rushmore, the American Flag, and more. They have also learned about what it means to be a good citizen and how they can all be good citizens. I enjoyed this program and the students loved it as well. The lessons and videos are engaging for them and make it fun for them to learn about social studies.

On Friday, all of the second grade classes went to the local art museum. The students were divided up by classes and participated in a guided tour through the art exhibits and the kid's area. They also got to create art of their own in the studio. The guided tours focused on our state, including the state's upcoming events and geography (ridges, valleys, plains, etc.). This trip was a favorite for me because it showed how subject material can be integrated across the curriculum. I would never have expected that the students could learn so much about social studies at an art museum. This got them out of the classroom and presented them with meaningful information that they are more likely to remember since they had fun while learning.

This week, Mrs. Hudson and I rearranged the desks in the classroom. In the original group setup, many students had their back to the board or the teacher if we were at the front of the room. Many students were talking during the teaching when they were supposed to be listening and several children complained that they did not want to be in the same group anymore. After Mrs. Hudson and I talked, we "shopped" around other classrooms for ideas and came up with a new layout for the desks. The students are still in groups of four but straight across in a row. The students seem to enjoy it so far. They are certainly less talkative during the lessons when they are supposed to be and seem to be more on task throughout the day.

My absolute favorite part of the week was an activity we did on Wednesday afternoon. I was speaking with a 3rd grade teacher on the playground a few weeks ago and she told me about something she does from time to time called "I wish my teacher knew..." In this activity, students are given a blank slip of paper and write the sentence starter "I wish my teacher knew..." Then, they are able to write anything they wish the teacher knew. She said at the beginning, it might be that their favorite color is blue or that they have an older sister. As time goes on, she learns more about her students as their trust grows and they share more. She said she has had students share things like they are hungry most of the time. The most amazing part of this story was that one student wrote about another student who harming themselves, which turned out to be true and the student was able to get the help that they needed.

We completed this activity and I told the students they could write to me, Mrs. Hudson, or both of us. Whatever they felt comfortable with and wanted to share. I told them it could be something simple like their favorite color or something more personal like if someone was not kind to them on the playground, etc. Many of the responses were that I was their favorite teacher, their favorite color, or where they had travelled to or been born. One student anonymously wrote that they did not like school. This is definitely something I want to incorporate in my own classroom.

Journal 11

My 20 days of full-time teaching are complete! I had such a wonderful experience teaching full-time for the past month. The best part about it was that I got to become truly comfortable in front of the class and really felt like it was my own. I felt responsible for the quality of the instruction they had, which was personal motivation to always do my best. I did not want to let my supervising teacher down or my college professors down, but I especially did not want to let the students down. I listened to them many times to better understand their interests. I was able to understand when they were feeling overwhelmed or bored and when they truly enjoyed a lesson or activity.

Even in the difficult parts of the 20 days, I tried to look on the positive side of things, which I think everyone should do whenever possible. When the students were talking to one another during a lesson or when I asked them to read quietly, I often stopped and thought about what a wonderful classroom community had been established. No matter where any student sat in the classroom, they would always talk to someone next to them. That may not always be good during instruction, but it is excellent for the class to have that sort of cohesiveness overall. When a student is reading when they should be listening or doing their work, I would tell them "I love that you love reading, but right now it is time to ____." I never wanted to discourage a child from reading, so redirecting them in that way seemed the most appropriate for my students.

Even though my 20 days are up, I am still teaching full-time. Mrs. Hudson has been out for training most of the week, so I have been teaching while the substitute teachers are here. I had one student tell me today "I don't want you to go. I want you to be our teacher." While I know the students will be glad to have Mrs. Hudson back, I never thought I could create such a strong relationship with these students. I feel like this class made me a teacher. My professors through the years have instructed and guided me through the "how-to", but this internship allowed

me to put it all into practice and transform from student to teacher. I am so thankful for such a wonderful opportunity and experience. I hope that the thoughtfulness and care that I put into my teaching continues through the years.

Journal 12

Well, the last day of my internship is here! This week has been a special week for me. Mrs. Hudson and I have been “tag team” teaching. Even though my full-time teaching is over, we have gone back and forth throughout the day teaching different subjects. I have still been going over morning work, handwriting, and mathematics.

I am proud to say that I taught the class how to write all of their lowercase letters in cursive! They have really enjoyed learning how and I have loved the book that they use to practice. It teaches them the letters in a methodical way, rather than having them learn them in alphabetical order with no understanding of how the letters are formed. I think this made it much easier for me to teach and for them to understand. They were so excited when I told them they could now write every lowercase word they could think of. When I told them that, the class cheered! One student raised their hand and said I should be glad that I got to finish teaching them their cursive letters on my last day. It made me smile to know the students were so thoughtful.

On Tuesday, I met with Ms. Gordon, the school principal for my administrative interview assignment. It was very nice to get to sit down and speak with her without the pressure of being in an interview of my own. She was happy to take the time to answer the questions I had and had nothing but kind, wonderful things to say about my teaching and interaction with the students. At the end of the interview, Ms. Gordon gave me her card and told me to add her as a reference to all of my applications. I was very proud to have her offer that without my asking or even mentioning it. I can only hope I end up working for a school with a principal as wonderful as her.

On Wednesday, Mrs. Hudson, along with other faculty and staff members, had a surprise for me. They had gotten a cake, candy bouquet with a “Good Luck” balloon, and a gift basket full of supplies. I got the book “The First Days of School” by Harry and Rosemary T. Wong (I have read it before and wanted to purchase it), cardstock, paper, Expo markers and eraser, pencils, sticky notes, etc. It was a wonderful, thoughtful surprise! I shared my cake with the class and other teachers after lunch, so they enjoyed the little celebration. The students also made me cards and signs with hearts and messages about how much they will miss me. I do believe I will keep the cards forever. The students have begged me to stay, but I have promised them I will come back to read with them and go on their upcoming field trip if I can.

I am full of emotions right now as this experience has ended. I am happy and thankful that it was so wonderful in every way possible. I am sad to leave my students and cooperating teacher, who I have been with over three months now. I am sad that the students are sad that I am leaving. At the same time, I am also hopeful for what the future holds and I cannot wait to begin my journey in my own classroom very soon.

Journal 14

If you would have asked me six months ago about my thoughts on internship, I would have told you I was terrified. I could not possibly imagine that I was ready to step in front of a class full-time. I was nervous about where I would be placed and who my supervisor would be. The funniest part to me is that I was not worried about certification tasks and projects for some reason. I had a “favorite” for who I wanted my supervisor to be and where I would like to be placed, but I am so very glad things didn't go my way. I could not have asked for a better intern supervisor or cooperating teacher throughout this internship. They have been there since day one of this internship journey and have given me nothing but confidence and support.

The saying about being your own worst enemy is so very true, at least for me. I often think negatively of myself for various reasons and I doubt myself often. Hearing my supervisor, CT, substitute teachers, and even the principal tell me the exact same things about my teaching has made it sink in that I really am meant to do this. I like to say that I did not choose education, but that it chose me. I have been in school in various capacities for all but about five years of my life. It is what I know. I love learning thanks to my parents instilling its importance in me and growing up with excellent teachers who were passionate about what they were doing day in and day out.

This has been more than a classroom internship experience for me. It has been an experience of self-discovery. I know many of these journals may seem sappy and whatnot, but they are honest. I have gained the confidence to

stand in front of a classroom of students and share my love of learning with them. I have learned to trust what I know and put the care and effort into sharing that with my students. The greatest gift I have found in myself is being reflective. Sometimes I can think about something too much, but taking the time to understand what went right and wrong is so beneficial. What is important is that, by recognizing what could have been better or different, I can use that information to improve in the future. That will not only help me, but my students as well. I hope I carry that quality with me throughout my entire teaching career.

I am leaving this internship on such a high note and it feels incredible. I am thankful that everything went so well overall and I am proud of all my accomplishments throughout my graduate school experience. I cannot wait to have a classroom of my own this fall!

These journal entries exemplify Dewey's (1933) definition of reflective thinking defined as active, persistent, and careful consideration of belief or knowledge. Redmond (2014) refers to Lipman (2003) who explains that reflection involves recursive thinking, metacognitive thinking, self-corrective thinking as it relates to the learning process. All of the various facets of metacognition used to reflect on teaching practice are woven throughout the previous journal entries of the pre-service teacher during internship. The intentional act of reflecting provides the pre-service teacher a chance to have a meaningful dialogue with herself that leads to learning and growth. Redmond (2014) references Rogers' (2002) six criteria used to describe the nature of metacognition, and reflection on practice:

1. Reflection as a meaning-making process
2. Reflection as a rigorous way of thinking
3. Reflection in community
4. Reflection as a set of attitudes
5. Reflection requires curiosity
6. Reflection for a desire to grow

These six criteria are well represented in the pre-service teacher reflection journal in this chapter.

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