

Practicum Reflection

During my practicum at Hollymead Elementary, I worked in a second grade classroom taught by Ms. McGhee. The classroom was calm, structured, and very routine-driven, which helped students feel settled and confident throughout the day. The class consisted of a diverse group of learners with varying academic abilities and behavioral needs. Many students were independent workers, while others required additional support in reading or staying focused during instruction. The student composition included several children who received pull-out reading intervention services. These students often needed more explicit instruction, additional modeling, and repeated practice with foundational literacy skills. Other students performed consistently at grade level but still benefited from clear expectations and guided transitions. There were also a few students who required frequent reminders to stay on task or to limit side conversations. Overall, the classroom felt balanced, with a mix of personalities and learning needs that required consistent but gentle structure. Based on what I observed, the group I would need to learn more about and plan intentionally for would be the students receiving reading intervention. They often needed more time with phonics, decoding, and fluency, and I would want to differentiate instruction to ensure they had multiple ways to access the content. I would also give a bit more attention to students who struggled with impulse control or transitions. Visual supports, predictable routines, and chunked instructions would be helpful tools to keep them engaged and supported during lessons. On average, the classroom experienced a small number of disruptions each day. Most disruptions were minor, such as talking during instruction, difficulty settling after recess, or occasional off-task behavior during independent work. Ms. McGhee addressed these issues calmly through verbal redirection or by using her tally system. Students who received tallies completed a reflection slip at the end of the day, which promoted accountability without interrupting the flow of instruction. Observing this helped me understand how important it is to manage behavior in ways that maintain learning time. Knowing the typical types of disruptions and how well-equipped the classroom was helped me think about my own lesson planning. Because the room was organized and routines were consistent, I would plan instruction that takes advantage of that structure. Clear modeling, smooth transitions, and proactive behavior strategies would help maintain student engagement. Understanding where disruptions tend to occur allows me to anticipate needs and build in movement breaks or quick resets when appropriate. Instruction in this classroom was mainly whole-group and teacher-centered due to the scripted curriculum for literacy and math. Students received direct instruction, participated in guided practice, and then completed independent work through workbook pages or writing tasks. Even within this structure, there were still student-centered elements. Students worked with partners, shared ideas during discussions, and participated in hands-on activities during specials. Differentiation occurred through pacing, intervention services, and teacher modeling rather than through flexible grouping. Some integrated instruction appeared naturally, such as combining writing with social-emotional lessons or using math surveys to make learning more meaningful. Overall, my practicum experience at Hollymead allowed me to observe strong classroom management, clear routines, and a supportive learning environment. It helped me better understand how instructional decisions are shaped by student composition, classroom structure, and the daily flow of a real elementary classroom.