

10/3-5/16 - Teaching reflection, solo teaching

This was my first session of teaching completely on my own, and I was pretty nervous about it at first. However, when the 5th graders actually arrived, I found I wasn't as scared as I had expected to be. It seemed like I had practiced the Mountain School routine enough that I was able to move forward with some parts of it almost automatically. Rather than trying to narrate the whole day, I will focus on some of the things that did and didn't go especially well.

Things that went well:

- Starting with a game: I started the group with salmon/heron/otters, and it once again proved a good way to make them comfortable being at M.S.
- Talking about rock types: after the rock lesson, some students would keep looking for rocks during the rest of their time at M.S. and often brought them to me to ask which of the three types they belonged to. I interpret this to mean they got something worthwhile from the lesson.
- Hiking a lot: the group had a lot of energy, so on Day 2 I decided to try to use it up. They were enthusiastic about hiking, and I had them go from the top of Fuster Brown to the waterfall.
- Animal signs: after the animal signs lesson, some students were very enthused about looking for bear claw marks & other signs.
- Each one teach one: I followed Jahan's advice & had the students read back their EOTO facts to me after I showed them "their" plants, and perhaps as a result they seemed to retain the info better than other groups. Some of them spontaneously pointed out "their" plants along the trail later.
- Diablo East: I used this location for the silent hike and it worked really well.

Things to improve:

- Night hike: we did the Peninsula Trail, and finished it much too quickly. I didn't have enough other activities planned after that to last until 8:30, and we finished half an hour early.

- Circles: I decided not to use the "magnetic toes" routine, and this was probably a mistake. They had lots of trouble making circles and quieting down.

- Unselfish wish: I forgot to talk about this on Day 3.

- Variety of games: I relied over-heavily on salmon/heron/otter, because it's a game I know well and have used before. Some students eventually got bored with it, and I wish I had worked harder to use more different games.

- Wrapping up Day 3: at the end of the day I realized I wasn't sure where to bring the students - to the amphitheater or parking lot - or at what point I was supposed to leave them. There was some confusion as a result.

- Timing during silent hike: I had the chaperones "release" the kids at 1 minute intervals, and as a result some kids were too close together. I also should have done a better job instructing the chaperones about their role during the silent hike.