The Journey of a Teacher: Adjusting to a New and Larger School District

Lauren Conroy
lauren.conroy@go.mnstate.edu

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The Journey of a Teacher: Adjusting to a New and Larger School District

A Thesis Presented to
The Graduate Faculty of
Minnesota State University Moorhead
By
Lauren Conroy

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Masters of Science in
Curriculum and Instruction

August 2019
Moorhead, Minnesota
Abstract

Becoming an educator comes with many challenges. As an educator you are often faced with high or different expectations from administration and superiors, you work with a variety of student abilities, backgrounds, and socioeconomic statuses. Each day you are faced with situations where you might be challenged to use problem solving skills, or conflict resolution. You must also adapt to a new building, demanding schedules, meetings students’ unique needs, working with new colleagues, and implement and effective classroom management system. This study analyzes the adjustments that I, as an educator went through as I adapted to a new school district. The study was conducted through the use of an auto-ethnography. The goal of this study was to expose the challenges that newly hired teachers’ experience, and what adjustments and changes they make in the process in order to be successful within their first year of working at their district.
Acknowledgments

Primarily I would like to thank my boyfriend Dustin for supporting me throughout this entire project. His advice, support, and reassurance throughout these courses have helped to really bring this project together. I would also like to thank my family and friends who have helped to provide valuable suggestions and guidance as I worked through various phases of this project. Finally, I would like to thank my dog Shadow. His unconditional love, and ability to snuggle, has helped me to work my way through completing this project.
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

For the last four years, I have been a first grade teacher at a very small school district. Throughout my first several years of teaching I gained great experience and exposure to the education world, and I felt that I was prepared to make the transition to a new classroom. I decided to make the move to a larger city, and aside from the usual stress of moving, I began to consider the stress and adjustments that I might go through as I transitioned into this new teaching position. I decided to spend time recording my thoughts, experiences, and emotions as I transitioned from a smaller school district, to this larger school district. Although these school districts are just 45 miles away from one another, their enrollment numbers, school environment, and faculty size differ greatly. After several weeks of recording my thoughts, feelings, and reflections, I then spent time analyzing the data in order to find common factors and any other pieces of information that stood out. This helped me to better understand the phenomenology of the process for an educator as I transitioned into a new teaching position.

Statement of the Problem

Every school year, teachers prepare themselves for a new group of students. But what happens when that teacher is at a new school, with new colleagues, in a different district, and completely different students? How does a teacher adapt as he or she moves into a new school district? There were four areas that I focused on in this study. I considered how I adapted to the change of community of the district, the facility itself, my new colleagues and finally my students. A writing journal was used in order to record these thoughts. Once I completed the reflection process, I began to analyze the data in order to look for any signs of patterns or common factors. Finally, I worked to see what type of an adjustment this transition is for new teachers as they enter a new school district.

Purpose of the Study

Teaching at my former district was my norm; it became the only thing I that I knew. A graduated from college in 2015, and taught first grade at this district for four years. I became friends with not only some of my coworkers, but also some of the families within the district and community. Although I loved
my years of working at this district, I wanted to start a family so I decided to begin applying for jobs that were closer to my boyfriend. We were thrilled when I got offered a kindergarten position. However, the nerves started to build up as I began to think about meeting new colleagues, working with a new group of students, and familiarizing myself with a new school district. As I transitioned on to this new and bigger school, there were likely to be some adjustments and changes that I would have to make along the way. I conducted this study in order to help myself be reflective throughout this process so that I could ensure that I payed attention to the changes that were happening for me as a professional. I wanted to conduct this study because I felt it could have a positive impact on new teachers in the future, as I would have a clear understanding of the common patterns, the experiences, as well as the “dos and don’ts” for new teachers. This was important to me because I have always been someone who thrives on helping others and bettering myself. I wanted to ensure that I was continually providing my students with the best possible education they could receive. I felt that this study would help me to remain focused on being reflective, observant, and motivated.

**Significance of the Study**

The current study is an auto-ethnography; I myself was not only the researcher, but also the participant. Therefore this study is of extreme value, as it provided myself, future educators, and districts the opportunity to better understand the adjustments that an individual must go through as they transition into a new teaching position. I observed myself as I encountered and adapted to a different facility and community at my new district. I focused on my ability to adjust to new colleagues, as well as students and the curricular materials that we use each day (eg. manipulatives, curriculums, desks, chairs, etc.). This study will be extremely helpful in the field of education because it can help to better prepare schools, mentors, and new teachers as individuals adjust to the changes of a new teaching position. Schools and mentors will be better prepared as to how they might assist these individuals, while teachers will have more knowledge of various issues or obstacles they might expect as they transition into their new position. Hofer (2017) states that when teachers reflect on practice, and consider their actions and choices, they engage in epistemic cognition which involves one’s conceptions of knowledge and knowing.
Luttenberg, Meijer, and Oolbekkink-Marchand (2017) share the importance of an educator having an awareness of themselves in order to be successful in self-reflection and observation. Jaeger (2013) goes into great detail in regards to teacher reflection and its high relevance to the educational practice. As teachers become accustomed to being reflective, they are able to actively make choices, and even changes that might be needed in order to meet the needs of their students (2013). Totaro and Wise (2018) recommend orientation programs for new district employees in order to both attract prospective teachers and to retain teachers who have had great experiences from this district. My new district has similar beliefs, as they have a very strong mentor program. They work to ensure that their new employees are well supported and prepared as they transition into their district. They begin by assigning you a mentor, who you keep in contact with throughout the summer prior to the school year starting. They also have an entire week dedicated to new hires in order to help get them acquainted to the new district, routines, expectations, and procedures. Finally, the mentor program meets once a month throughout the school year to provide various supports and trainings for new teachers.

Subjects

I am the primary participant and focus of this study. This study focuses on the emotions, choices, behaviors, feelings, frustrations, challenges, and adjustments that I went through as I transitioned into my new teaching position.

Setting

This study was conducted in a city in northwest Minnesota. The city’s population is currently about 13,592. This town is mostly known for the many lakes it has, and tourists that they attract. This city also provides many opportunities for families to enjoy golfing, racing, shopping, and various attractions. There are currently 441 students enrolled at this K-5 elementary school. There is very small diversity at this school including 91.4% students being white, 3.9% Hispanic, 2.9% multiracial, 1.1% African American, and .7% Asian. There is currently 40% of our school district enrolled in free or reduced lunch services. There is currently a 15:1 student-teacher ratio. I am one of the four kindergarten teachers at this district this school year.
Informed Consent

Protection of human subjects participating in research will be assured. Confidentiality will be protected through the use of pseudonyms (e.g., Student 1) without the utilization of any identifying information. The choice to participate or withdraw at any time will be outlined both, verbally and in writing.

Permission and IRB Approval.

In order to conduct this study, the researcher received MSUM’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to ensure the ethical conduct of research involving human subjects (Mills & Gay, 2019). Likewise, authorization to conduct this study was approved by the school district where the research project took place (See Appendix J).

Theoretical Framework

With the assistance of an auto-ethnography approach I was able to put myself at the center of cultural analysis. With the use of descriptive and analytic self-reflection I recorded my experiences as I entered this new teaching experience. I then analyzed the data in order to categorize common patterns that occurred throughout my data collection process. These forms of self-observation allowed me to better understand and critique the cultural beliefs, practices, and experiences of those in my new school district, as compared to my previous one.

With the use of content analysis I was be able to indirectly analyze my own behaviors, choices, feelings, and emotions as I reflected in my journal. This process assisted me in being able to see how I was able to adjust to the new teaching position from month one, all the way until month three. In order to form conclusions in my study I worked to seek patterns and common links between my daily reflections regarding the facility, community, colleagues, and students that I interacted with each day. I worked to see if these reflections seemed to correlate. I also payed close attention to the timing of the reflections in order to help determine if the transition or adjustment became easier as the school year continued, or if they seemed to remain the same.
Conclusions

Moving to a new school can be scary and stressful because of the many changes, new faces, different routines and procedures, and new expectations that are presented to a teacher. I conducted this research in order to discover what common factors and patterns might impact these stressors in order to help me better understand how a teacher can be more successful as he or she transitions into a new school district. With the use of my journal I was able to write about my everyday experiences within the new school district. I then analyzed these experiences and determined what various factors might have an impact on the transition that an individual goes through at his or her new teaching district. In the following chapter, I will provide a review of literature in order to better explore the information that was already available on auto-ethnographies and their application in the field of education.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Today, teachers are faced with many challenges both within and outside of their classroom walls. First year teachers must meet the expectations and requirements of the school district that hires them. Veteran teachers must continue to keep themselves well informed of the best strategies and new techniques in order to engage their students in a 21st century classroom. Then of course, those teachers who decide to make a move from one district to another. How are these teachers able to adapt to the change in administration, the different environment, and the variety of student needs? This study focuses on the adjustments that a female, middle-class, white, single, Christian, teacher goes through as she transitions into new teaching positions.

Canagarajah (2012) shared that his narrative allowed him to explore some of his hidden feelings, motivations that she had forgotten, as well as suppressed emotions as he studied the ways in which teacher practices and professional cultures differed around the globe. His goal was to highlight the importance of multiple identities for voice in the professional discourses and practices in the educational world. As Canagarajah met with various professionals in a staff lounge, they found themselves spending a great amount of time reflecting on their own teaching experiences. Hoppes (2014), states that this form of study provides the writer with the dual role of researcher and research participant, which in turn facilitates the exploration of identity. As they record their experiences and data, they are the research participant, and as they analyze this data they are the researcher. As the individual works to identify patterns and common characteristics they are able to explore various identities, in turn learning even more about their habits, behaviors, choices, and culture. According to O’Neil (2018), auto-ethnographies can be used as tools in order to support professional development. In this study, two beginning teacher educators made the transition from classroom teacher to university-based teacher educator. The goal of this study was to investigate the individuals’ transitions through their instructional encounters, their decision making processes, and the merging off their former identities as classroom teachers with their new identities as
teacher educators. With the use of journals and interviews, these individuals were able to reflect on their experiences in the classroom. Upon completing this study they found that as the two individuals entered the new work settings they began to construct new knowledge, and formed new identities. Some of this was based off of their past experiences as educators, and some was based off of the educators responding to new institutional contexts.

Taylor, Klein, and Abrams (2014) say that teacher development is a lifelong process, and no matter what stage a teacher is at, they all need opportunities to reflect, learn from, and teach one another. In this study two secondary faculty members and a doctoral assistant used co/auto-ethnography to identify the individual and programmatic complexities that arise within a third space in education. These individuals were able to collect their data through conversation and reflections of their observations and experiences. In completing this process, the individuals were able to find a way to create a space for mutual support and meaning in order to implement strategies that support collective change for groups, rather than just individuals.

Roux (2017) discusses the scientific research method of auto-ethnography. Within her study the data that were collected for analysis was gathered through auto-ethnographers’ reporting issues related to the nature of the research, self-reporting on the experience of conducting the research, and established researchers’ responses to open-ended survey questions upon the topic under investigation. The study included journals from 52 individuals and a questionnaire consisting of two sections that were used in the field research portion. Upon completing this study, the author found five criteria for auto-ethnography research. 1. The researcher, or self, must be primarily visible in the research. 2. The researcher must be aware of their role, choices, and actions. 3. The audience must be able to enter into, engage with, experience, or connect with the writer’s story. 4. The individual must be honest, trustworthy, and plausible. 5. Finally, the study must extend knowledge, generate ongoing research, and improve practice.

Body of Review

As a new teacher, entering into a new community can often be an intimidating time. Especially if that transfer were to include a move to a much different sized school district. I moved not only to a larger
district, but also a larger city. I would be further from my family and close friends. Rather than living in a rural city, I would now be located in a more suburban area. Rather than having to drive forty minutes to a mall, or twenty minutes to a grocery store, I would be just minutes away. Whether it would be from a small district to a larger district or a large district to a smaller district, both would require an adjustment from the educator. According to Dinkelmann, Margolis, and Sikkenga (2006), when teachers begin new positions and begin to respond to the new context, they construct new knowledge for their work, and begin to form new identities. I felt that I would grow as an educator as I experienced this change. I felt I would benefit from working in a larger district, with a kindergarten team, a larger group of colleagues, and a higher class size. I felt my confidence would continue to grow as I would seek assistance as I face new challenges and obstacles. I knew that I would miss some of my previous colleagues, friends, and students, but I knew that there was much to look forward to with my new students, colleagues, and school district.

According to Feng (2009), every year 7.7% of teachers move from one school to another. Schools with a higher percentage of minority and poor students generally have fewer qualified teachers. Teachers are also more likely to transfer out of these districts. In my own personal experiences I felt that a lot of this can relate to the supports that are provided by the district, the culture of the district itself, and the relationship between the community, staff, and administration. I found that a school, or any business or program, will run so much smoother if everyone has a common goal. In my past experiences this has not always been the case, which I believe has had an impact on the reason why teachers leave their former districts. According to Lew and Nelson (2016), the rapid growth of populations from a variety of societies contributes to the diverse student population. This diverse population often creates challenges for new teachers. This study focused on qualitative research in order to investigate the issues that new teachers face. Throughout this several months there were 12 new teachers that participated in this study, where they first communicated with the authors via email to answer a number of basic questions, and then completed 30 minute face-to-face interviews (2016). The researchers found that some new teachers struggled with some of the specific tasks that were required by their new school districts.
As teachers transition into a new district, they must work to get acquainted with their new work setting which encompasses a large number of elements. They might have new or different expectations within the district, as well as from the administration or school board. Teachers might experience a change in the number of students or peers that they will be working with. They will also be adjusting to a new classroom where they must work to determine the appropriate seating arrangement, available class materials, different curriculum, and classroom management system. According to Carr, Holmes, and Flynn (2017), the first several years in a classroom are essential for educators as it is a time where the greatest development in a teacher’s skills occurs. As teachers learn and grow, they may begin to think of their school or classroom as their “home.” If or when a teacher is to leave this place, it may be a challenge, as he or she is not only leaving behind a job, but also an environment that created a sense of joy, support, and memorable experiences.

O’Neil shared that an auto-ethnography can transform learning and has an impact on the behavior, languages, and attitudes of individuals (2018). He went on to explain that different perspectives can help to provide insights into problem-solving skills, as well as allowing individuals to change one’s worldview based on behaviors and attitudes. In this study, the author used an auto-ethnographic method in order to study professional development by focusing on the theory of transformative learning. For this study the researcher used explicit analysis and systematic method of data collection, as well as evocative and creative analytic practices in order to show his findings. This included several short stories and journal entries of reflection, music and photographs were also used to illustrate emotions throughout the experiences. Concept mapping was also mentioned in this article. This is something that I related greatly to, as I have used concept maps not only in teaching, but also for personal use as well. With the use of autho-ehnographies we are able to better understand our own practices.

As an educator enters a new school district, he or she will be expected to adapt to the curriculum and instructional and behavioral strategies implemented at that district. As educators adapt to these changes, they might often seek support from their new colleagues in order to ask questions, implement their recommendations, and in the exchange of these form new relationships. In 2005, Gagen and Bowie
published an article that supported the notion that having friends and feeling comfortable in a work setting help in building self-esteem, which is a necessary condition for comfort and success. This is something that I am aware of, and was very important to me as I transitioned into this new school district. I am generally a very shy and reserved person. However, as I get to know people and develop friendships, I become more comfortable and outgoing. As I began this new position I hoped to find colleagues that I could connect with in order to help me feel more comfortable. This would not only help to build my self-esteem, but it would also likely help me to be more successful at my new school district.

According to Lew and Nelson (2016), studies have shown that new teachers face challenges in dealing with curriculum planning and implementation, conducting assessments, and coping with workload issues. Often times these stresses result in teachers leaving the profession after only a few years. Lew and Nelson (2016) shared that classroom management issues are often the leading cause of job dissatisfaction for new teachers. Often times, when teachers move to new positions they will draw from their past experiences and practices in order for them to form decisions for their new classrooms (Dinkelman, Margolis, and Sikkenga, 2006). Often times, new teachers struggle with knowing what to teach, what resources they can use to teach such concepts, at what pace to teach these concepts, and how to prepare students for high-stakes tests (Jones, 2012). In his article, Jones reported having emotions of being too overwhelmed to get excited for work. He also reported feeling burdened with planning lessons and reflecting on previous ones. Finally, he stressed about the need to build relationships with colleagues, and learning the various expectations of the district. Jones expressed the importance of teachers having positive mentors. He believes that a lighter workload will provide teachers the opportunity to develop effective lessons and spend more time reflecting on those lessons. This would give educators more time to reflect on areas such as their new environment like getting to know their colleagues, having more time to review the new curriculum, etc.

As new teachers transition into a new school district, it may take longer to get to know culturally and linguistically diverse students because they are faced with several other demands. Such demands might include navigating a new curriculum, district, and possibly standards. According to Carr, Holmes,
and Flynn, the negative impact on student achievement is particularly high with students of color and poverty, which can be related to the repeated pattern of receiving instruction from a new teacher each year. High mobility of students often has an impact on students’ academic and emotional development. This finding makes it extremely important for educators to be aware of the impact that their transitions and decisions can have on their students. Although I developed great relationships with colleagues, families, and students over the four years that I worked at my previous district, I knew that it was my time to move on to the next chapter of my life. When I learned that there were openings at this district, I saw it as my opportunity to lay down my roots, and begin a new family. New teachers must work to ensure that they are providing the best education to their students, and seeking out assistance when they need it.

Lew and Nelson shared that teachers must be responsive to their students’ cultural experiences and needs, by reshaping curriculum and building on students’ knowledge. As I entered this new district I worked to become aware of the cultural experiences and needs of these students. Teachers must also work to establish relationships with students and their homes. As I worked to establish relationships with my new colleagues, I also worked to form relationships with my students and their families. They conclude their article in stating that all teachers must pay close attention to the diverse needs of all of their students, and work vigorously to meet those needs. When I moved to this larger school district, I knew there might be a larger variety of needs that I must meet.

Review

Previous studies have been conducted in order to better understand how to support new teachers as they transition into new districts. Studies have also been conducted in order to emphasize the importance of reflective teachers. Taylor, Klein, and Abrams(2014) stress the importance of reflection in the educational world. This was very important for my study, reflecting on my daily experiences and interactions with the new facility, community, colleagues, and students. Carr, Holmes, and Flynn (2017) discuss the essential first several years of an educator, as this is the time when most development occurs in the teacher’s knowledge and skills. As I transitioned into this new teaching position, I worked to ensure that I was seeking out help (eg., mentoring, feedback, observations, etc.) in order to ensure that I was
providing myself ample opportunities to grow as an educator. As I did this, it provided me with even more opportunities to reflect on my transition process. Jones (2012) reflects on his experiences as a new teacher. Within his article he states that there were often times where he felt too discouraged and worn out to want to continue on with teaching. Jones shared his experience in dealing with all of the many expectations of a new teacher like the struggle of knowing what to teach, when to teach it, and for how long. He also spoke of the high stress that comes with preparing students for high-stakes tests, building relationships with colleagues and students, and familiarizing himself with a school. This qualitative research method was used in order to analyze my transition into a new school district through the use of personal narratives. This form of research allows access to the researcher’s perspective and displays multiple layers of consciousness. It helped to can gain insight on the difference between the culture, community, and individuals within the former school district, as compared to the new school district. This study helped to identify the personal experience and reflexivity of cultural experiences that I had by means of communication. I focused on reflecting on the transition process of four key areas. These areas included how I adapted to the change of community of the district, as well as the facility itself. I also focused on my ability to adjust to my new colleagues and students.

**Definition of Variables**

**Adjustment Experience:**

**Adjustment:** The behavioral process by which humans and other animals maintain and equilibrium among their various needs or between their needs and the obstacles of their environments (Britannica, 2018).

**Experience:** The fact of state of having been affected by or gained knowledge through direct observation or participation (Britannica, 2018).

**Hypothesis**

My ability to adapt to the adjustments in a positive way will increase as the new school year continues.
Conclusions

This literature review focused on the adjustments that teachers go through as they transition into new teaching positions such as the workloads that they face, the expectations from the new district, and implementing new curriculums and assessments. Through the use of auto-ethnography, individuals cannot only gain knowledge of their professional practice, but also aids in changing the practice as well. Our teachers are faced with many challenges today. New teachers are faced with the challenges of adjusting to new administration, a new classroom, and diverse student needs. We must find a way to best support all of these educators. In the next chapter I will discuss the methods I went through in order to conduct my research project.
CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Introduction

This research project focused on the adjustments that teachers make as they are introduced into a new school district and classroom. First, this study focused on the different effects that the community has on the teacher’s experience such as the size and population. Then the study focused on the transition of the teacher into a new physical setting as it related to adjusting to a new school and classroom. The study then focused on the interactions and experiences that the teacher had with her new colleagues. Finally, this study considered the adjustment that the teacher went through in order to meet the diverse needs of all the students with various disabilities within the classroom.

Research Question

What type of adjustments will I face when transitioning to a new school?

Research Plan

The data collection method that I chose for my research project is called auto-ethnographical qualitative research design. My data collection process involved me journaling my thoughts, feelings, emotions as I experienced and adapted to the new facility, community, colleagues, and students. I reflected on these experiences and interactions in order to determine the effect that this transition process had on me. I started each journal entry with the journal entry number and the date. Then I gave a brief description of my sense of wellbeing for that day. I spent time reflecting on the four areas that I focused on for this study. I reflected on my experiences within the new community, within the new facility, as well as my interactions and experiences with my new colleagues and students.

Methods of Analysis

The data from this project was collected through the use of research-based strategies intended for analysis with qualitative data. This data was collected through a field journal, then categorized into common patterns and themes. This data was then interpreted within its given patterns and themes in order to determine various relationships. Throughout the process of recording in my field journal, I had three
points that were considered at all times. I considered how I interacted with my new environment and community, as well as with the new facility. I also experienced the interactions and experiences that I had with my new colleagues and students. The field journal was used as a tool in order to collect information on my thoughts, feelings, and emotions throughout this new experience.

**Schedule**

The data collection process required the accumulation of a number of journal entries from me. The data was collected from September 3 through November 8. These reflections were based off of my interactions, experiences, and reflections to adapting to the new facility, community, colleagues, and students at the new district. Throughout this time period, I recorded these entries into my journal at least three days a week. This provided me with at twenty-five journal reflections throughout my data collection process. Within each journal entry I first included the date and my sense of wellbeing for that day. Next, I recorded a self-narrative through the composition of my journal. Upon completing the journal entries, I began to sort through the data and determine which themes related to each other. I then worked to identify common patterns in my data that I collected throughout this process. Once the data collection was completed, I initiated the data analysis, trying to formulate a deeper understanding of my transition process into this new school district.
Ethical Considerations

I was the primary participant and practitioner of this study; therefor I had to work to ensure that my safety, health, and wellbeing was protected throughout this study. My journal was kept with me so that I could ensure security and the protection of my privacy. I also always ensured that my journal remained closed.

Limitations.

A major limitation of this study includes the time allotted in order to conduct the research. This was an issue because I was learning a significantly large amount of information while at the same time
keeping track of data throughout my study. Due to a time constraint, I had to collect, record, and analyze all of the data in a small period of time. In doing so I had to ensure that my data and information was well organized. As I analyzed my data, I worked efficiently in order to categorize my information in order to look for patterns as I drew my conclusions.

Another limitation for this study would be the lack of consistency of the days that I recorded data. If this study were conducted again, I would record data each consecutive day in order to allow patterns and themes appear naturally. One other limitation would be the fact that personal emotions can often be brought into work. If this study were conducted again, I would first record my emotions prior to the school day starting in order to help avoid this skew in data. This would also be an interesting angle to analyze, as I could interpret how my emotions and reflections are on days where I have positive moods from the start, as compared to negative moods from the start.

Conclusions

Throughout this chapter I discussed the methods that I followed in order to conduct this study. I provided a background of the new district I began working at. With the use of my journal, I was able to observe my own experiences, feelings, emotions, and interactions with the facility, community, colleagues, and students as I adapted to this new teaching position. I collected data, or reflected in my journal, for two months. Then, I began to analyze my data in order to conclude how I was able to adapt to my new teaching position. The next chapter will include the results that I found upon the completion of data collection.
Chapter 4

RESULTS

Research Question

What type of adjustments will I face when transitioning to a new school?

Data Collection

Through the use of my field diary, observations, and reflections I was able to collect, analyze, and reflect on the information in order to make sense of the data that I collected. According to Mendez (2013), with the use of an auto-ethnography, researchers are able to go into their naturalistic setting and work to gather a comprehensive understanding of it. This research method assisted me in being able to better interpret my own understanding and accounts of reality in this new school district. Mendez states that the findings are influenced by the socio-cultural background of the participants (2013, p. 285). This allowed me to interpret my own personal experiences from my previous district, to my new school district as I analyzed the data. This was my way of interpreting and understanding my own perspective of how I adjusting into my new teaching position.

As I reflected with my new colleagues and mentors, I was able to receive feedback, and gain a perspective from those who were working with me. This would also help me to better understand and interpret how others were seeing the adjustment process of a new teacher. Throughout my research process, I focused on using content analysis, where I was able to indirectly analyze my own behaviors, choices, feelings, and emotions as I partook in reflection writing in a journal throughout my first several months of teaching. This analysis process allowed me to analyze how I was able to handle the adjustment of starting a new job during the two first months of the transition process. Mendez says that the use of personal narratives allows us access into learners’ private worlds (2016, p. 282). Thus, we are able to better understand personal beliefs, interpretations, feelings, and experiences.
Instrumentation

As I documented throughout my study, I focused on the things that I saw, heard, felt, and did. I recorded and reflected on the individuals, and the environment that I saw around me each day, and later was able to see what patterns occurred. I would record conversations, advice, or statements that I heard in regards to my transition, or anything that related to the adjustment of this new teaching position. This research project required a great deal of self-reflection. Each time that I recorded in my journal, I wrote about my current feelings about stress, anxiety, fear, happiness, and so on. As my study continued, I was being able to track and analyze the data to see if any patterns existed. Finally, as I wrote, I also provided a description of my timeline or schedule that I went through that day, including routines, or anything that might have been out of the ordinary. Doing so helped me to see if there were any indicators or factors that might influence good or bad days at work.

I focused on the patterns of behaviors, attitudes, and ideas that I exhibited as I transitioned into this new teaching position. The data that I collected helped me to see the change or adjustment (if any) that occurred as I transitioned into this new teaching position.

Results

My writing journal was analyzed in order to find common themes in my social interactions with students, colleagues, and my new facility and community. After being analyzed, three themes about my experience of adjusting to my new school district surfaced from the collected data. The themes included: building and strengthening relationships with students, colleagues, and parents, becoming comfortable with the procedures and routines of the school, and feelings of being stressed and overwhelmed.

Building and Strengthening Relationships

The first common theme that surfaced was the focus of building positive relationships with students, colleagues, and parents. This theme was apparent on eight separate occurrences throughout my study. As I analyzed my journal entries, I began to see many times where I would emphasize positive interactions with specific students, colleagues, or my entire class as a whole. These interactions involved
students being praised for making good choices, a variety of forms of communication with parents, and a number of opportunities to get to know new colleagues.

On the first day of school I was greeted with welcome gifts from my colleagues, wishing me a great first day. I was also given a cupcake from one of my students. This made my day start off on such a great note.

I received a message from a parent after the first week of school thanking me for a great week, and telling me that her child couldn’t wait to come back to school on Monday. I loved getting to hear that I had made a good first impression, and I couldn’t wait to get to continue to work with this student.

Getting daily hugs from my kids has become an awesome part of my day. It’s great to know that my students feel comfortable with me where they can go to me for support, reassurance, or a simple hello or goodbye hug.

Working with my team for PLC and grade level planning was very helpful in planning for daily lesson plans, as well as preparing for assessments, conferences, and report cards.

My morning meetings proved to be a great way for me to get to know each of my students better. Each morning we start our day with a song, the pledge, calendar time, and a daily question.

I had parents sending in various materials for our classroom such as plates, napkins, spoons, and baggies.

I participated in the Homecoming Parade for my boyfriend’s clinic. Both my principal and superintendent saw me and said hello. It felt really great to know that in a large district both people knew who I was, and took the time to say hello.

We had a coworker surprise us with a table filled with coffee, hot cocoa, and tea. It was so sweet of her, I love working with such kind people.

I have a few students in my class who come from low income homes. I have reached out to support these families by sending home winter gear and extra snacks. Both sets of parents have reached out to thank me for this. This was really a great feeling for me.
Becoming Comfortable with My New School

The second common theme that arose was becoming comfortable within my new school, and this occurred eleven times throughout my study. As I adjusted to the different procedures, routines, and expectations, and began to become more confident in myself with this transition. There were several instances in my journal entries where I mention loving my job, or feeling relaxed or comfortable, all because I was feeling more comfortable with the new position.

We are on a six-day cycle and I began to realize that on certain days of the week, and on certain cycle days I can accomplish certain jobs. For example, on Mondays I organized materials for the week. Tuesdays I spent time working on centers. Wednesdays I spent time working on lesson plans. Thursdays I would do my newsletter for the week. On Fridays I would check to ensure that all lessons were ready for the following week.

I received a great number of resources from all three members of my grade level team. It is great to know how supportive and helpful that they are. I know that we will all make a great team.

I have had many questions throughout this experience, but not at any point did I feel guilty for asking questions. My team has always been very supportive and helpful in making sure I had everything I needed in order to be successful.

We completed our first tornado drill, and I was so comfortable and impressed with the planned out procedure by the school. I was so happy to find out that there was a very clear procedure for this drill, as this was not the case at my previous district. I found it to be so much easier to model for my students when I was more comfortable with what was going to be happening.

I feel that one reason I have become so comfortable with my teaching is the high support that our paraprofessionals provide in our classroom. I believe it is really helpful that we have school wide expectations, which helps to ensure that all staff members hold each student accountable. I also feel that these individuals have helped me to feel more comfortable as they have been very helpful in completing my students’ assessments while they are in my classroom.
I completed my first formal observation, but felt comfortable and confident after doing so. I feel this has a lot to do with the positive relationships that are built within this district.

In my previous district, I would have to go out and buy art supplies that I would need. At my new district, however, we have two storage rooms just for kindergarten that are filled with resources, manipulatives, and art supplies. It is so great to know that I have all of these resources right at my fingertips.

I was not a fan of our lunch system when I first came, but now that my students have become more comfortable with the routine, it all runs really smoothly. I think this just goes to show that many things take time.

I discovered that working at this district allows me quick and easy access to stores, groceries, email, classroom resources, and many other great things.

**Feelings of Being Stressed and Overwhelmed**

The third theme involved days where I felt overwhelmed or stressed with the new teaching position; which occurred six times throughout my study. These feelings often arose from being overwhelmed due to lesson planning, student behaviors, or negative interactions with individuals.

Trying to make copies became stressful when I had to cross a large school to get to the copy machine, rather than simply walking down a small hallway like in my previous district.

I had my first experience with tantrums, and this added a great deal of stress to my workload as this had never been something that I have dealt with in my classroom before. I had to find ways to support this student as he learned how to self-regulate. I also had to figure out how to support the rest of my class while this was all taking place in my classroom. This was often a very stressful time for me.

I had a day throughout this study where I wanted to quit teaching. There was an afterschool transportation miscommunication with a parent, and I felt absolutely humiliated and beaten down. Thankfully, it was a Friday so I had the weekend to recuperate.
Sharing a part of my classroom with an interventionist proved to be a stressor as I have less storage space for my teaching materials and resources. This has also been distracting for my students and me at times, as some of the students receiving services have tantrums during their lesson.

I had a big moment where I finally realized that I had actually started at a new school, and a huge sense of pride came over my entire body.

Many students struggled to follow directions and daily routines, and that often lead to feelings of stress for me.

I felt very overwhelmed with the amount of planning that I was doing for our reading, writing, phonics, and math curriculums.

It was the culmination of these identified themes that occurred each day throughout my experience of transitioning into a new teaching position. These themes impacted my ability to adjust to this new position in a positive way. Each day in my journal as I recorded my thoughts, I also recorded my daily mood in order to determine if there were common themes with my mood. There were a few things that I was able to conclude. As stated before we have 6 cycle days. Cycle day three is my long prep day, where I have my most time to lesson plan, and schedule meetings with colleagues. I found that often times my mood was positive on these days. I believe that my mood on cycle day 3 was positive on these days because I had more time to spend preparing and organizing within my classroom.

Table 4.1

| Common themes found in my moods and number of situational occurrences recorded per cycle day |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
|                                                | Cycle Day 1   | Cycle Day 2   | Cycle Day 3   | Cycle Day 4   | Cycle Day 5   | Cycle Day 6   |
| Positive Mood                                  | 5             | 2             | 4             | 3             | 4             | 1             |
| Negative Mood                                  | 3             | 1             | 2             | 2             | 4             | 0             |
Table 4.2
Common themes in my moods and number of situational occurrences recorded

<table>
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<th>Positive Mood</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Tired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>Flustered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>Frustrated</td>
</tr>
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<td>Relieved</td>
<td>Overwhelmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Humiliated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxed</td>
<td>Sad</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thankful</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

There was a slight higher number of recorded positive moods as compared to the negative moods; however, I wanted decided to look for patterns as to when these moods might occur. I found that on Fridays, I had the most feelings of humiliation, frustration, and feeling stressed, tired, and overwhelmed. I also found that on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays my moods showed more frequent positive moods such as feeling happy, supported, loved, and excited. By Thursday I saw a decline in my moods and noticed that there was a less frequent positive mood, and more frequent occurrence of negative moods. I realized that as the week went on, I more than likely got more tired, overwhelmed, and stressed out. I then had a weekend where I was able to relax and recuperate. After coming back from weekends, I tended to show better moods by the end of my school days.
How successful was I in being able to adjust to the new facility?

In my journal there were two separate days that I reported being frustrated due to technology issues within the school. It took me a while to get used to the distance between me and the printer and copy machine but I feel like I have found a good routine as to what times are best for me to get my printing and copying done in order to be most productive.

On the first day I reported discovering where the music room, library, computer lab, and science room was. I discovered that you can do all the preparing you want, but there will always be something that you still need to do or learn and this small piece was just that.

We have weekly and monthly meetings. This was a small, yet wonderful change for me. I have also felt so much more supported and comfortable in knowing that we have at least one staff meeting a month. I have felt that the communication and relationship between administration and teachers is much more positive because of this.
Our principal also sends out weekly email with an agenda, reminders, and various information. I feel so comfortable in this school because there is great communication and support present throughout the district.

How successful was I in meeting and interacting with my new colleagues?

Getting the chance to meet my colleagues for dinner allowed me to build a stronger relationship with them. It also gave me the chance to get to know my other colleagues.

My grade level team has been so supportive and wonderful to work with. We meet at least every other week in order to go over our weekly themes and lesson plans in order to ensure that we are all relatively on track with one another.

There were times throughout this study that I felt extremely overwhelmed and stressed out. However, my coworkers were so supportive throughout this entire transition for me. They were constantly stopping into my classroom to see if I needed anything, and they continue to do so. I believe this will continue to happen, as they are people that truly want the best for students and their colleagues.

I have felt very supported by my coworkers throughout our PLC groups as this has helped me to better prepare my lessons and assessments for my students.

I felt very supported and prepared after completing several two hour trainings for our new teacher program. This also allowed me the opportunity to meet with other colleagues within the district to reflect with them on how their year was going.

How successful was I in becoming acquainted with the new community?

I discovered that working in this community allowed me with many easy opportunities to access teaching resources. I make frequent trips to local retail stores, thrift stores, grocery stores, and discount stores in search of various materials and resources for my classroom.

I participated in the Homecoming parade where I got to see several of my students and colleagues along the route. It was great to see how many members of the community come out for this, and how many businesses support this event.
Our district recently worked to pass an operating levy in the recent election. I found it very heartwarming to see how much the district and staff worked together promote our school district. It was also very heartwarming when the levy passed, because it meant that I now work in a very supportive community.

Throughout this study, not only did I discover that this is a very supportive community, but our district feels like a community itself. Everyone comes together in times of stress, success, and heartbreak.

*How successful was I in meeting and building relationships with my new students?*

On day one I reported that I was able to identify some of the students that might be challenging students for me. As I look back I can see great improvements with these students, as well as my relationships with each of them. I believe that my positive relationships with each of them have helped to motivate them to do their best each day.

I spend each day greeting my students at the door. I have found that this really gets our day off to a great start. This is something I didn’t do at my previous district, and I can honestly say I enjoy it so much.

I discovered that there are a variety of skills, behaviors, and abilities within my classroom. So, just like any other teacher, I have had to work to meet the various needs of all of my students.

After the first week of school I began to feel that I was establishing relationships with each of my students. I also felt that my students were adjusting well to the routines.

Throughout all of journal entries I found that there were many times mentioned of emails, notes, and various communications with parents. I have worked very hard to establish positive relationships with both the parents and students in my classroom.
Data Analysis

I used research-based strategies intended for qualitative data in order to analyze my data that was collected. Data was collected in my journal, and then sorted and categorized into common themes. Next, it was interpreted in order to identify patterns and relationships that occurred. As I sorted through the data I considered the following: connecting the past to the present, and analyzing my personal emotions, feelings, and stress level as it relates to the beginning of the study to the end. The journal was used in order to analyze the positive and negative emotions, reflections, experiences, and interactions that I had as I adapted to the new facility, community, colleagues, and students.

I was surprised in the variety of information that my data provided me with. After taking time to analyze and compare the various patterns and themes within my data I was able to conclude a number of things, like how to improve my mood to better my teaching experience, which cycle days might have an impact on my mood, and what areas I could focus on should I ever get a new teaching position.

Luttenberg, Meijer, and Oolbekkink-Marchand (2017) shared the importance of an educator having an
awareness of themselves in order to be successful in self-reflection and observation. I found this to be very true in my study. As I reflected on how my days went, I couldn’t help but think about what I might do to improve for the next day. According to Jaeger (2013), as teachers become accustomed to being reflective, they are able to actively make choices, and even changes that might be needed in order to meet the needs of their students.

The recommendation of Totaro and Wise (2018) and the orientation programs for new district employees in order to both attract prospective teachers and to retain teachers who have had great experiences from this district was very relatable to me. My new school district has a very strong new teacher orientation program, and I feel that this program has had a great impact on my success as a new teacher at this district. Gagen and Bowie published an article in 2005 that supported the notion that having friends and feeling comfortable in a work setting help in building self-esteem, which is a necessary condition for comfort and success. I believe that my new colleagues have all had a great impact on my success at my new district. I am so thankful for all of their support, help, and guidance throughout my time working with them so far.

Lew and Nelson (2016) stated that that new teachers face challenges in dealing with curriculum planning and implementation, conducting assessments, and coping with workload issues. In my study I found this to be my biggest challenge. Trying to balance school, work, and my personal life was very stressful for me. I had a hard time figuring out how to plan and implement the curriculum. It was also a frustrating process trying to figure out all of the assessments that needed to get completed within certain time constraints. There have been many stressors throughout this study, but I can honestly say that throughout these challenges the support from my colleagues has been a blessing.

Conclusion

This research study has allowed me to use an autoethnographical research design in order to analyze my adjustment to a new district. I was able to conclude that as a teacher transitions into a new school he or she will face challenges of stress. These feelings might include feelings overwhelmed by factors such as gathering and keeping track of new information, lesson planning, interactions with
parents, students, or colleagues. There were many positive adjustments that were drawn from this study and all of those related to one thing: relationships. Throughout my study I was able to conclude that in order to be successful with adjusting to a new school district, one common theme seemed to continue to show up and that is relationships. As an educator, I have always worked to create positive relationships with my students, parents, and colleagues. However, this study truly helped me to discover that when you have a positive relationship present, you can be more successful within your school. You can also build more meaningful relationships with your students, colleagues, and parents. As you can see in figure 5, there are a great number of positive interactions. These interactions can be linked to positive social and emotional interactions with others. This supports my emphasis in building positive relationships with all those around me.
Chapter 5

IMPLICATION FOR PRACTICE

Action Plan

The results of my research are very motivating to me. My analysis of my data has helped me to better understand the adjustment an educator might go through as he or she makes a change to a new school district. I also made a few discoveries that I did not expect to prior to beginning this research project. I now have a better understanding of which days I tend to have negative moods. Now that I am aware of this theme, I can work to ensure that I am providing myself with plenty of sleep, brain breaks, and stress relief opportunities to ensure that I am able to get through then entire week on a positive note. Within my study I found that positive interactions can help to better the transition into a new teaching position by helping to establish relationships with colleagues, students, and parents. Finally, I found that supportive administration can have a great impact on an individual’s ability to adapt to a new teaching position.

Taking these results into account, I plan to continue to build and strengthen relationships with colleagues, students, and parents. I also plan to continue to be reflective throughout my year of teaching in order to ensure that I can be aware of patterns that might be occurring throughout my teaching and instruction. In order to further research this study I will continue to track patterns and themes. I believe it will be interesting to see how these patterns and themes will look next year, after having already working one year in the district. I hope that after spending more time in this district, with my students, and with my colleagues I become even more comfortable as an educator.

Plan for Sharing

The themes that I found within my study are ones that many teachers could consider as they begin a new teaching position at a different district. I would be more than willing to share these findings with first year teachers, or teachers who are just simply making a change from one district to another. I believe that this study could support these individuals as they consider the obstacles they might encounter as they begin a new teaching position. This would also help them to see what important factors have an
impact on a positive transition to a new school, such as establishing positive relationships, becoming part
of a mentorship program, and not being afraid to seek out support when needed.

I will start by sharing these results with my professional learning community that consists of my
grade level team and principal. I am excited to share with them how much of a positive influence they
have all had in making my transition a success. Looking ahead, I will also use the information if I ever
become a mentor to a new teacher. I will also use it as a resource to share with those who are interested as
I do know of many aspiring educators.
References


Appendix A

Journal Entry 

Date:

Daily Mood:

Reflection of facility:

Reflection of community:

Reflection of new colleagues:

Reflection of new students:

Daily Narrative:
## Appendix B

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<th>Research Question</th>
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## Appendix C

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<td>District Policies</td>
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<td>Positive atmosphere</td>
<td>Community Involvement</td>
<td>A Team</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Thankful</td>
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<td>More Resources</td>
<td>Community in the School</td>
<td>New Teachers</td>
<td>Losing another student</td>
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Journal Entry #1

Date: September 3, 2019

Daily Mood: Tired, yet excited

Reflection of Facility: Today I did even more learning. In this newer and bigger building I found out where the music room, library, computer lab, and science rooms are.

Reflection of Community: This morning when parents dropped off students, they said their hellos and gave their well wishes. They then said their goodbyes.

Reflection of New Colleagues: This morning I was greeted with some welcome gifts from my colleagues wishing me a good first day of school. My 3 team members also checked up on me several times to see how my day was going.

Reflection of New Students: Day one and I already feel like I have an idea of who my challenging students might be. At one point the principal was checking in on me, and saw one of my students meltdown stepped in to help out.

Daily Narrative: Today was really great! I got to greet all the students at the door. We spent about a good deal of time explaining our school (our school is K-5), going through rules and routines. It was so great to have my principal help me know that I have that support available.
Appendix E

Journal Entry #7
Date: September 17, 2019

Daily Mood: Happy

Reflection of Facility: Today, I was walking down the hallway of my school after dropping off my students at the bus. Yes, I said my school. Today is officially "clicked" in my head that I have actually joined. I had already settled into my new school.

Reflection of Community: I really noticed today how much I have enjoyed working in this facility so far. I'm within this community and they have all been so supportive and helpful through this transition.

Reflection of New Colleagues: I love coming to school to find a pile of art projects waiting for me. Students to complete. I'm really loving getting to work with new teachers and having people to talk through ideas off of.

Reflection of New Students: I really feel like I have started to make great connections with my kids. I love getting to start each day with morning meetings and instantly make those connections.

Daily Narrative: If I could, I would pump myself not like a complete clock. I could feel so happy. That I finally took the leap to apply for a new job, move to a new community, and start fresh. I realized today that this new school now feels like my school, my colleagues, and my students.
Journal Entry #11
Date: October 2, 2019

Daily Mood: Excited

Reflection of Facility: Each Wednesday we meet for our PLC meeting. It’s nice to have one large area to meet & work with others. It’s also such a comfortable & bright area in the Media center. I love that we have this available to us your students.

Reflection of Community: Today I was so blessed to have many families help us out as we had a very special pumpkin day. Families volunteered to bring pumpkin products in for our activity. It was so nice to have that support!

Reflection of New Colleagues: I’m really enjoying getting to work in the PLC groups. I feel like I am benefiting so much more from these constant weekly PLCs as compared to the minimal meetings we would have at my previous district.

Reflection of New Student: Today was so fun doing our pumpkin day. We had 9 pumpkin products that students got to taste. They then got to vote for their 3 favorite products. It was so fun to see the kids’ excitement through this.

Daily Narrative: We invited our principal to come to our classroom & talk to us. It was really great to see them interact together. I loved getting to see this as it was able to really see some positive interactions. I was also so proud of my students because they were such good sports in trying new things.
Journal Entry #10

Date: October 16, 2019

Daily mood: Happy

Reflection of Facility: It is so nice that this school has cut supplies and various resources have for us so I’m not constantly buying or spending my own money like I was before. If I need paper, pencils or anything I don’t have to go to school rather than buying it.

Reflection of Community: Our district has a social media page after the students finished their projects from this week. I mailed pictures to the person who is in charge of these pages. It’s so cool that the community parents are able to engage with what’s going on everyday.

Reflection of Colleagues: I’m so glad I still had pumpkins left from my colleague. It was so nice not having to go out and purchase a bunch for this project. It’s always a struggle because I want to do fun things but it’s not possible to buy everything thing for every single project.

Reflection of News: Students were reading different stories, I turned our pumpkins into book characters this week. I LOVED getting to see how well the students worked together and how proud they were of not only their projects but also their classmates.

Daily Narrative: I had my post observation and got to visit with my reflection on my lesson with my principal. Although I’m in a much larger school I can honestly say I feel even more supported here. I think that has a great deal with the leadership and colleagues at this district.
Appendix H

Journal Entry #19
Date: October 23, 2019
Daily Mood: Stressed out

Reflection of Facility: When I first came, I felt like the lunch system was so orderly, by the color-coded days for lunch choices. But now that my students and I are used to it, I feel that it works really efficiently and smoothly.

Reflection of Community: One thing I have really enjoyed is our weekly emails that we get from our principal with important dates, requests, etc. as well as daily email bulletins from our secretary. I feel so much more connected to the district staff and students this way.

Reflection of Colleagues: We had an awesome coworker surprise everyone with a tea/coffee/hot cocoa bar in the staff lounge today! Because she knew that everyone was having a stressful week. It’s so nice to work with such thoughtful, kind, and caring people.

Reflection of Students: I think some days I have been blessed with the sweetest students ever. I have small dust pans and dusters in the kits and they are constantly jumping at the opportunity to help out in and around the classroom.

Daily Narrative: Today I felt stressed, because I finally had the chance to take time to start lesson planning for the upcoming weeks. However, this is never a quick task. I’ll say it’s stressful trying to read through all of these manuals, figure out lessons, activities, centers to go with them.
Appendix I

Journal Entry #28
Date: November 8, 2019

Daily Mood: Thankful & Sad

Reflection of Facility: Today I'm very thankful for our great deal of literacy resources in our library & book room. This allows me to select books for guided reading, read aloud, as well as various other teaching opportunities.

Reflection of Community: One of our K teachers was gone today & it was amazing to see how the staff banded together in order to provide a normal day for her students. It's so reassuring to know that this school is a community/family.

Reflection of Colleagues: Today our literacy coach came & did a reading lesson with my students. I love that this is available for me to learn, grow & reflect. I feel this can really help me to better implement this curriculum as I work to familiarize myself with it.

Reflection of New Students: Today I found out that a student I was very concerned about would no longer be attending our school. Two months in, our class has already gone down two students. This is for sure something that is different.

Daily Narrative: For me, leaving my previous school as we did not often get students moving in or out (especially) during the school year. This has been interesting for me as I have had to determine the best way to explain to my students that their classmates would now be going to another school.
August 22, 2019

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is to grant Lauren Conroy permission to conduct a reflective research study at Woodland Elementary School during the 2019-2020 school year. I understand this study poses no risk to those persons involved or to the Alexandria Public School District. I also understand that all information received will be kept confidential and will only be used for purposes of this study.

Sincerely,

Darla Harstad
Woodland Elementary Principal
Educating the Whole Child
Title of Study: The Journey of a Teacher: Adjusting to a New and Larger School District

Purpose of the study: The purpose of this research is to determine how a new teacher adjusts to a new teaching position in a larger school district.

What you will do in this study: My data collection process will involve me journaling my thoughts, feelings, emotions as I experience and adapt to the new facility, community, colleagues, and students. I will reflect on these experiences and interactions in order to determine the effect that this transition process has on me. I will give a brief description of my sense of wellbeing for that day. I will then spend time reflecting on the four areas that I am focusing on for this study. I will reflect on my experiences within the new community, within the new facility, as well as my interactions and experiences with my new colleagues and students.

Time required: The data collection process will require the accumulation of a number of journal entries from me. The data will be collected from September 3 through November 1. Throughout this time period, I will record these entries into my journal at least three days a week. Once the data collection is completed, I will initiate the data analysis, trying to formulate a deeper understanding of my transition process into this new school district.

Risks: I am the primary participant and practitioner of this study; therefore, I must work to ensure that my safety, health, and wellbeing are protected throughout this study. My journal will be kept with me so that I can ensure security and the protection of my privacy. I will also always ensure that my journal remains closed. Participants will be aware that this study is conducted as part of the researcher’s Master Degree Program and that it will benefit her teaching practice. Protection of human subjects participating in research will be assured. Participant minors will be informed of the purpose of the study via the Method of Assent that the researcher will read to participants before the beginning of the study.

Benefits: The current study is an auto-ethnography; I myself am not only the researcher, but also the participant. Therefore, this study is of extreme value, as it will provide myself, future educators, and districts the opportunity to better understand the adjustments that an individual must go through as they transition into a new teaching position. I will be observing myself as I encounter and adapt to a different facility and community at my new district. I will also focus on my ability to adjust to new colleagues, as well as students and the curricular materials that we use each day (e.g., manipulatives, curriculums, desks, chairs, etc.). This study will be extremely helpful in the field of education because it can help to better prepare schools, mentors, and new teachers as individuals adjust to the changes of a new teaching position. Schools and mentors will be better prepared as to how they might assist these individuals, while teachers will have more knowledge of various issues or obstacles they might expect as they transition into their new position.

Confidentiality: Confidentiality will be protected through the use of pseudonyms (e.g., Student 1) without the utilization of any identifying information. The choice to participate or withdraw at any time will be outlined both, verbally and in writing.

Participation and withdrawal: Not Applicable

Contact: Dr. David Tack, david.tack@mnstate.edu

Whom to contact about your rights in this experiment: Dr. David Tack, Leadership and Learning, david.tack@mnstate.edu
Dr. Lisa I. Karch, Chair of MSUM Institutional Research Board, at irb@mnstate.edu, 218-477-2699.

Agreement: The purpose and nature of this research have been sufficiently explained and I agree to participate in this study. I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time and my withdrawal will not affect any future relationship with Lauren Conroy.

In signing this agreement, I also affirm that I am at least 18 years of age or older.

Signature: __________________________ Date: ________________
Name (print): _____________________________________________________________________________