

4515 Course Reflection
Ashley Farnsworth

How did the time fly by so fast? I feel like I stumbled into a wormhole and somehow ended up at the end of the course with little bearing on how I got here. That said, I actually do feel like I'm taking away a lot from the course, particularly in the 'learning is fun and get messy' department. My secondary science courses were very informative and we learned to create a lot of valuable tools and products for our future classrooms. I had so much to learn about science pedagogy, and still do, but after taking 3 courses I didn't realize anything was missing until I took your class. Amidst all the research, jargon, lesson plans, etc., I forgot the most basic principle of all: science is fun! So, thank you for giving that back to me and subsequently, my future students.

I signed up for this course because I wanted an idea of where my students were coming from with regard to their background knowledge in science. Most guides to UDL, PBL and/or Inquiry advise starting young and I wanted to know if these principles were also being talked about in the elementary years. What I found was that elementary science is already all about hands on learning, collaboration, and task centered stations. I've really enjoyed being part of your class so I could experience these things firsthand as well as begin the process of bringing these concepts up into secondary science classes.

My favorite aspects of the course were the station activities (all of them!), making the 5 E lesson plan, mud day, Science Olympics, and making the portfolio. I really like the basis behind of the 5 E lesson plan and although I won't be using that same template for my future classes, I will certainly try keep the Es whenever I can. I found the Science Olympics and excellent teamwork experience! The time constraints were frustrating but it also served to ensure that everyone in the group was working at maximum effort. I will certainly borrow from that idea. I enjoyed this experience primarily because I was able to do this online. If I had had to print things out and write neatly I would have had nowhere close to the same experience. As it stands, putting together the portfolio, despite frustration with uploading videos, really allowed me to think about what my teaching as well as personal values are. I really think it has made me a better educator because I'm thinking about how to incorporate all things I value into my science classroom. I want so badly to make a Rube Goldberg machine that works at least once!

The only real suggestion I have to improve the course is that it would be nice if you could amend your 5E rubric to state clearly that you would like supporting materials such as PowerPoints, worksheets, etc. I had meant to email you about it but never got around to it. It doesn't say anywhere on there or the syllabus that you consider these part of the lesson plan and most of us had no way of knowing considering the lesson plans for TLT and (my) other classes did not require these components. What the rubric does state is that you want a 'detailed description' of equipment, references, sources, packaging, etc. which is what I'm assuming most provided when you mentioned there were a number of us who didn't included slides, etc.

I just want to conclude by thanking you for putting in the vast amount of effort you did just to provide us with a memorable and informative class experience. To me it truly was more than that, it was always one of the highlights of my week (yours and Philip's class)! Always fun and engaging mixed with lots of learning. If I can manage to pull off a small fraction of what you do in my first few years, I'll be a happy camper.

Thank You,
Ashley Farnsworth