

Emma Vestal

Mr. Speice

ISM - 4B

8 December 2017

Coffee and Confusion

Mentor Assessment #1

Mentor: Brad Baker

Profession: Professor of Theatre at Collin College

Location: Starbucks (Coit and Legacy)

Date: November 21, 2017

Time: 2:30-5:00

My first mentor visit with Professor Baker was absolutely amazing. It was much like our initial interview where we spent way more time talking than I had anticipated. Going into this visit, my main focus was getting advice on my original work. I knew that I wanted to write a script and I had quite a few ideas, but I didn't know which route I wanted to go or how to even go about it.

The first thing we discussed was the North Texas auditions that had taken place the week before. While this wasn't entirely having to do with ISM, this was extraordinarily important looking forward in my theatre career. He discussed with me all the schools that called me back.

This was useful so that I could be able to see what options were in my best interest. While talking to him, I pretty much decided that I was going to go to Collin for my Associate's Degree. This was a huge decision considering I had been so worried about what I was going to do. This plan isn't set in stone, but Brad helped me to at least become comfortable with the idea. It makes the most sense for me at this point in time.

After we discussed college, we finally got into ISM things. The first thing we discussed was the fact that he needed to fill out the background check things. That wasn't entirely exciting, but it's necessary for us to continue on our ISM journey.

The most important thing that we talked about was my original work. I had already decided that I wanted to write a play for my original work. I also decided that I wanted to make it pertain to the subject of suicide, and bring awareness to a topic that needs to be talked about more. I had two separate ideas for plot that both ended with the leading boy committing suicide. Brad helped me to decide which one would be better as a whole, and he gave me many suggestions as to how to go about beginning the writing process. Brad even told me that he would give me connections to a friend of his who is a playwright and could help revise my scripts.

After our visit, I went straight home and began my first draft of my script. At this point, I completely changed my plot line and wrote a completely different script from the initial draft. However, this was so significant because my visit with Brad inspired me to be able to start writing. I didn't think that I could actually write an entire script in my entire life, but I was able to after I got inspired.

The last thing that we talked about was the possibility of turning my play into an actual performance. He told me that it would be very difficult and he wouldn't be able to help me direct. While this was very disappointing, I was so glad that he was honest with me. I think I could still be able to put it on, especially with the help of Brad's guidance. I am looking forward to meeting with him more to continue with all of my ideas.

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26 January 2018

Mentor Visit #1

Liz Shurr

Theatre Teacher

Frisco High School

22 January 2018

12:30-2:00

Going into this mentor visit, I knew that the main goal was to observe her theatre one class in order to get a solid understanding of the content and behavioral tendencies that I would end up dealing with as I am coming up with lesson plans and possibly teaching her class at the end of this year.

Upon going there, I found that at the beginning of class Mrs. Shurr and her students were discussing what was going to happen in the upcoming day, as well as making connections with one another and bonding. Both of these events proved to be very important in my observation. I discussed with Mrs. Shurr later in the day that they would normally do a vocal warmup as well, and I think I would now know how to productively start a theatre class on their daily work.

Making sure that students understand what they're doing before they go and take on their task is important so that there is no miscommunication between student and teacher that can lead to frustration and lower grades than anticipated for students. The warm up is obviously a good idea to get students into the acting mood and make sure that they're physically and vocally ready to do whatever task they have for the day.

The main thing that I noticed throughout the day is the amount of connections that Mrs. Shurr has with her students. She said that she knows basic background on each of her students, and really tries to make her students feel comfortable with her. This is definitely something that I want to try to bring to my classrooms in the future due to the fact that not many students are able to make super strong connections with their teachers because of workload. It's important, to me at least, looking forward to the future, to make sure that my students feel comfortable and safe when they're with me.

As the visit went on, the students were given time to rehearse before they were given a line test. Something that I notice Mrs. Shurr do is that she rewarded the students by giving extra time for rehearsal when they were working diligently. This is something that I need to pay attention to as a future teacher because there need to be reward systems in place so that students don't feel as though their teacher is hard on them every minute of everyday.

Finally, the day finished with the actual line test. While many students did not do very well, Mrs. Shurr helped them as much as she could and continued to assure them that there would be a retest. This was important observation for two reasons. I first saw that it's necessary to grade accurately. If students don't have their work done, as a teacher, you have to give them the grade that they deserve, even if it's difficult. However, it's important to also remind students

that grades are not the end all be all, and they need to learn from specific lessons so that they can be more prepared for next time. Not only is it important that I teach my students theatre in the future, but basic life skills such as responsibility to get their work done before the due date.

Using all of this information, I can continue making my lesson plans and curriculum to make sure that I am creating things that are good for the students that I will be teaching. As I continue in this process I need to remember that I'm not just there to teach them, I want to make legitimate connections.

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1 February 2018

Mentor Visit Assessment #3

Liz Shurr

Theatre Teacher

30 January 2018

2:30-4:20

On this date I was scheduled to go to visit Mrs. Shurr in order to observe her theatre productions class. I had hoped to see some top notch acting and some tougher teaching from both Mrs. Shurr and her tech theatre counterpart, Mr. Elms, but I was pleasantly surprised. Even amidst the chaos of UIL season, this class still was having fun. The project that was being worked on was actually technical UIL. They allow all of their students the opportunity to participate by making it a project to do in class, and if the students show enough effort and present a stellar idea, they can submit the project to go to competition. I loved this for many different reasons. First and foremost, this allows actors who spend most of their time on the stage to experience technical design. Coming from a firsthand perspective, I started to become a better actress when I exposed myself to the technical sides of theatre and became a more well

rounded individual in the theatre world. It was exciting to see the students have very different ideas that came out of the same plays.

Going along with that, I admired thoroughly how Mrs. Shurr and Mr. Elms communicated with the students as they were presenting their projects. After they finished their presentations they would ask the students questions in order to make them think harder as to why specific things were important or what specific things meant. This also got the rest of the class in on discussion. This is definitely something that I want to take with me with the lessons that I begin to create for therapeutic theatre classes because it's important to make each other think. Again, from personal experience, I've always loved discussion driven classes. It makes the brain truly work and makes the individuals involved formulate their own opinions. I most definitely will be using this technique moving forward.

Another surprising part of my visit was that I actually had time to begin brainstorming for my therapeutic theatre classes. This was something that I am endlessly glad that I had time to do. I began discussing with Mrs. Shurr about what I need to do to move forward with these ideas. She thinks that I should try lessons at a couple of different middle schools and a couple of different elementary schools and maybe even compare things such as demographics and need for these kinds of lessons to the turn out. My plan is to email a few teachers from different elementary schools and middle schools to see what they think and move forward from there. After I get this information, I will move forward with my final project planning and deciding. I am still also working on an assessment for her theatre one class so that I can experience what it's truly like to teach a class.

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29 March 2018

Mentor Visit #10

Liz Shurr

Theatre Teacher

Frisco High School

29 March 2018

10:35-11:30

Today's visit was such a blessing. Going into today I will be completely honest, I was not excited about ISM anymore. I felt as though I was doing my projects and assignments because I had to, and there wasn't very much purpose in anything that I was doing. I finished my posters, playbill, and t-shirt designs that I had decided that I was going to do for my final product of marketing. The goal today was to go see Mrs. Shurr and get feedback on these products. My goodness, did I get so much more.

We began by discussing the products that I created. She really liked the content that I created, but she wanted more from it. She helped me to decide what I wanted to be my ultimate goal from these products. They all look very nice, but there's nothing in them that show what

the true meaning of my show is. Mrs. Shurr gave me many examples of things that she had done in the past that are helping to get the gears going for what I would like to do for mine. The appearance and aesthetic of my products is there, but now I have to go back and add meaning.

The other thing that we came up with is an extension of the final product. While I won't be putting on my play, I can use the play, as well as my marketing skills in order to conduct a presentation on suicide awareness and prevention. This is something that I have always felt very strongly about, and Mrs. Shurr thinks it is entirely possible that I can and should conduct something like this. What we have in place now is that I will use my posters from marketing for my show as a way to get people talking. Then, I can use the playbill as an almost invitation to come to a reading of my play in the library to get people talking more. The final step would be to put on the presentation itself. Of course everything has to be discussed with Mrs. Lecoque, and I have to plan everything that would happen to the T in order to make sure everything runs smoothly, but this resurged my passion again. I can combine all of the things that I'm interested in; theatre, marketing, and helping others, into one huge final product that could have a really big impact.

I have already begun cutting the language out of my show and am going to be asking Mrs. Lecoque for her approval on all of these events. I need to revise my marketing products, as well as start contacting people and planning the events if I get approved. This is going to be a lot of work, but I truly do think that it can be accomplished, and I really want to make this happen. I want to make a difference, and I fully believe that ISM could be my platform for that.