Assignment #11 Lesson Development

Dawn Coffman Grade Level 2/3 Subject: Social Studies

Service Learning Through Animals

I described my original lesson in Assignment #2 about meeting mutual needs. Here it is: I am always looking for service projects for the classroom because I think it is important to teach students to give back to their communities. I partnered up with one of the Educational Aids at my school who volunteers with a local animal shelter. We created a pet supplies drive and encouraged the students to bring in needed items for the homeless pets at the shelter. We sent home information on the shelter and the things that would be helpful to the organization. We collected a lot of necessary items! So much so, that we decided to bring the newspaper in to photograph the students with all their donations and print an article commending what the students did, while giving publicity to the shelter. Needless to say, the students absolutely loved this project! They worked together and were so proud of themselves for their contributions. The parents enjoyed not only the newspaper article, but the lesson on teamwork and giving back. We culminated the project with a visit from some of the animals from the shelter. Again, needless to say, the visit was a big hit!

After reading this book, and especially the part about service learning, I decided to make it even more student centered. I am only working with a small group of students over the summer, so the project wasn’t as “big”, but having a smaller group made it easier to involve them more in the process. I still asked the students to bring in things for the animals, but this time *they* created flyers with sample items we could collect. They took them to their parents and I encouraged them to also give some to family and friends. We actually collected a lot more than I thought we would with a small group! Since it was a small group, instead of bringing the newspaper in, I had *them* write an article together about what we had done, even having some play the role of reporter and others as students. They also took photos and we made a big poster of the article and photos. We were able to go to the shelter and hand-deliver the items. The students loved it!

I don’t really think I would change anything because I already had to adapt it for a smaller group. It was more fun actually going to the shelter, but I know that might not be feasible with a whole class. I guess I might have certain parents go along with us next time because one of my sensitive little girls was in tears because of the lonely animals who don’t have a home. It did open up a good conversation about volunteering, though.