

Dean's Outstanding Internship Award
院长优秀实习生奖 (2024/25)

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A unique teaching experience: my internship at Grey Lynn School

1. Introduction

This summer holiday, I am so thrilled to embark on my education internship at a local primary school in New Zealand. During my internship, I actively participated in various tasks, events, and activities that aimed to completely immerse myself in a native English-speaking country. This report will provide a detailed account of my internship experience, including the specific job tasks I undertook, the valuable skills and insights I acquired, and how this internship has broadened my perspective on career opportunities.

2. Brief Description of Grey Lynn School

Grey Lynn School is a multicultural state primary school with around 100 years of history located in Auckland. The school's mission is to provide an exciting, innovative, and rewarding learning environment that values and respects individual differences. With over 300 local students from Years 1 to 6, the school has seen an increasing diversity in its student body, with children from various ethnic backgrounds.

3. Job Tasks

As an intern teacher, my primary responsibility is to provide effective instruction to my students. I am grateful for the opportunity to teach English, with a particular emphasis on phonics, as it is a fundamental aspect of language learning. My aim is to enrich students' phonemic awareness and decoding skills. Through interactive and engaging lessons, I observe that many students struggle with word spelling, while their English grammar is perfect. To address this, I develop and implement lessons that incorporate various phonics activities, including segmenting, phoneme identification, and dictation exercises. It is truly fulfilling to witness the progress that most students have made correctly in their English word spelling, such as remembering to add the silent "e" in words with that pattern.

In addition to English, I also have the privilege of teaching students Mathematics, with a specific focus on subtraction, multiplication and fractions. Honestly speaking, I felt a little afraid and nervous when I initially approached this task since my major is not Mathematics, but fortunately, my supervisor gave me many useful tips and suggestions that helped me overcome those challenges, such as how to help students quickly finish 1-digit multiplication. Adopting constructive tips shared by my supervisor, I divided the teaching run down into three procedures: 5 minutes to review yesterday's teaching

content, 20 minutes to impart new knowledge and 5 minutes to conclude what kids learned today. This experience allows me to develop my time-management and logical-thinking skills and foster a positive learning environment for students.

One of my job tasks that I think is meaningful is to introduce students to Wushu, a traditional Chinese martial art. When my supervisor asks me which physical exercise I can lead the students, I decide to teach Wushu rather than common and well-known exercises like playing basketball or badminton. This decision proves incredibly rewarding as all the students display great excitement and diligence in learning Wushu. Witnessing their enthusiasm and progress brings me immense joy and a sense of fulfilment. By introducing Wushu, I can facilitate cultural exchange and expose New Zealand students to different aspects of Chinese culture. Therefore, this task is highly meaningful as it broadens students' horizons, encourages their open-mindedness, and fosters their sense of appreciation and respect for diversity.

4. Skills and insights acquired from the internship

4.1 Skills in Working: Work Attitude and Interpersonal Skills

In regard to a positive work attitude, the internship experience has reinforced the importance of taking my teaching responsibilities seriously. Seeing the eagerness in the children's eyes to acquire knowledge reminds me of the need to approach each class with a focused and dedicated mindset. This commitment to teaching is recognized by my supervisor, who comments on my heartfelt approach to instruction. The students themselves also acknowledge my work attitude, as evidenced by their expressions of gratitude and the special gifts they prepared for me at the end of the internship. Their appreciation deeply touches me and moves me to tears, highlighting the impact of my positive work attitude. Regarding interpersonal skills, the process of integrating into the school's larger community has provided valuable opportunities to refine my interpersonal skills. Despite being an intern with a temporary role, I have been able to build close relationships with my colleagues. Engaging in activities like morning tea and lunch conversations centred around educational topics has allowed me to connect with my colleagues on both personal and professional levels. These interactions have strengthened my ability to communicate effectively, engage in meaningful discussions, and establish a sense of camaraderie within the professional setting.

4.2 Skills in Education: Pedagogical Skills I Gain and How to Apply Them in the Future

I gained a very useful teaching model for conducting reading lessons, which was introduced by my supervisor: "I do → we do → you do", which means that the teaching procedure follows the order of the teacher reading the paragraph aloud (I do), asking students about unknown words, reading together (we do), and engaging in reading comprehension and writing activities (you do). In the future, apart from reading lessons, in other lessons like writing and speaking, I plan to apply this teaching model in my teaching practices. The "I do → we do → you do" approach provides a structured framework for guiding students through the learning process, ensuring they have a solid foundation before progressing to independent work. Moreover, I have recognized the enthusiasm of students for class worksheets. This insight inspires me to design more interesting and interactive worksheets that cater to their interests and learning styles. In the future, by creating worksheets, it can incorporate various elements such as visuals, hands-on activities, and interactive exercises to make students' learning experience more enjoyable and impactful.

4.3 Insights Acquired from the Internship that I Hadn't Anticipated

The internship provided me with insights that I hadn't anticipated, particularly regarding the mistakes students make in English writing. Prior to the internship, I might have assumed that students from different language backgrounds would make similar errors, including those commonly made by Hong Kong students. However, through observing my students' writing errors, I began to notice distinct differences between first-language learners of English (EFL) and second-language learners of English (ESL). For example, I encountered an instance where a student misspelt "asked" as "asket". This mistake indicated that she acquired spoken English skills before developing proficiency in spelling. Interestingly, such errors are not typically found in ESL writing, as English teaching in Hong Kong places a strong emphasis on grammar. In ESL contexts, the challenges often revolve around forgetting to use the past tense correctly and confusing the pronunciation of past participles, specifically the sounds /t/ and /d/. These insights shed light on the unique linguistic challenges EFL and ESL learners face, highlighting the importance of tailored instructional approaches to address their specific needs.

5. How Did the Internship Broaden My View on Career Opportunities?

Initially, I held a fixed belief that I was better suited to teaching secondary students than primary students due to the perceived generation gap and the assumption that managing primary students would be challenging due to their mischievous nature. However, my internship proved these assumptions wrong because I can form a close bond with these primary students. Despite a significant age gap of over 10 years, the students still regarded me as an older brother figure. This realisation has boosted my confidence and shattered my preconceived notions about the challenges of teaching primary students. It has opened up new avenues for me to pursue a career as a primary school teacher, allowing me to envision myself making a meaningful impact on primary learners' education. Moreover, the internship has given me the courage to teach EFL learners. As an ESL learner, I always believe that my English proficiency is inferior to that of native speakers, causing me to doubt my ability to teach English in foreign countries. However, through the internship, I noticed that EFL learners sometimes do not strictly follow standard English, particularly in oral speaking. I realised that I could provide valuable support and guidance to these learners, even with my own ESL background. This realisation has ignited a passion within me to explore teaching opportunities for EFL learners, not only in Hong Kong but also in other countries and areas, broadening my perspective on potential career paths in English education.

6. Write at the End

Through my internship experience, I genuinely feel that I have grown as a better prospective teacher than before. One significant aspect of this growth is the successful completion of all the goals I set for myself during the internship. Firstly, my English skills, particularly in oral speaking, have improved significantly. I have been able to refine my pronunciation to sound more like native English speakers, reducing the likelihood of others misunderstanding my spoken English due to my accent. Secondly, I have pointed out educational differences between New Zealand, Hong Kong, and Mainland China, developing a deeper understanding of diverse teaching approaches and systems. Besides, I have put my teaching aspirations into practice during the internship, which has not only provided valuable practical experience but has also empowered me to acquire new pedagogical skills and develop fresh aspirations for my future career. While I acknowledge that there are still areas for improvement, I view

these as personal shortcomings that I am determined to strengthen as I continue my journey in the field of education.

Overall, I deeply cherish this teaching experience. It has left a lasting impact on me, and I truly value the insights and growth it has brought. This internship has undoubtedly provided me with a fresh and invaluable perspective on teaching. I am confident that the knowledge and perspective gained from this internship will continue to shape and guide me as I embark on my education journey.



My supervisor and I



The landscape of Grey Lynn School