Rutgers University

From the SelectedWorks of Arthur Lang

Spring 2007

Field Log Educational Administration

Arthur Lang

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The College of New Jersey
Field Experience Log

Intern: Arthur Lang  Week of: 2/12/07
Mentor School: Lakewood High School  Home School: Lakewood High School

Hours for activities this week: 8  Cumulative Hours: 8
including observation, reflection and writing

Standards Met 3 and 5

Observation: Mrs. Andersen will be my mentor during this internship. Mrs. Andersen became a
teacher of Home Economics in 1976. After she became department chair, she earned her Masters
degree in 1981. She became an assistant principal at the high school in 1990 but transferred to
the middle school two years later when her husband, Mr. Andersen became the high school
principal. She transferred back to the high school in 2005 to become assistant principal in charge
of eleventh and twelfth graders when Lakewood High School got a new principal and Mr.
Andersen became assistant superintendent.

Monday, February 12. I met with Mrs. Andersen at the end of the school day for 45 minutes to
discuss my internship. We decided that the most important skills will be gained through
observation. She suggested that I observe her meeting with students and to conduct some
classroom observations. I agreed and began observing her every day during second period when
I was free from classroom instruction.

Tuesday, February 13. A girl was brought into Mrs. Andersen’s office crying. It seems that her
boyfriend bought sneakers for another girl and she was jealous. She was given a five-day
suspension because she ran out of her class into another class to throw something at the other
girl. She requested that her boyfriend should be brought into the office. He denied buying the girl
the sneakers and said that he did not like her. She then requested the other girl to be brought in.
In my judgment, there was nothing to gain by bringing her and his statement that he did not like
the other girl was sufficient. When the girl was brought in she called her ugly and grabbed
something to throw at her. Mrs. Andersen explained to her that she had choices in how to handle
herself, that she allowed herself to fall into a trap. “You let your emotions control you. As a
human being, you want to be control by one thing, your mind."

Reflection: I told the young lady to anticipate what should happen if it was true. It seemed to me
that it was true but the boyfriend was not abandoning her. Mrs. Andersen and I made her promise
that she would not react aggressively, which she did. After the meeting, I had some serious
reservations. The girl indicated that her boyfriend will have someone else to (obscene). I was
shocked by the depth kind of the pre-marital activity that the student admitted to. Should the
school be involved in dealing with such immoral relationships in a way that can lead to mending
them? Mrs. Andersen agreed with me but answered my objection. The only way to get the
students back on track toward learning is by dealing with the relationship.

Wednesday, February 14: No School. Worked on brainstorming Action Research Project.
Thursday, February 15. Split the day between observing Mrs. Andersen and observing Mr. Snyder, the high school attendance officer. When students are referred to him for cutting class, he issues either an after school detention or Saturday school from 8:00-12:00. One girl said that her teacher was “full of it” and walked out of the office. That did not change his detention. When another boy said that his teacher made an error, Mr. Snyder told him to get the teacher to explain that in writing. A detention was set and would be cancelled once the note was returned. One boy had several tardies claiming that his locker was jammed. “I have giving detentions for lates, something avoidable,” Mr. Snyder told him.

“What are you doing fifth period,” Mr. Snyder asked one boy. “What’s the matter, you don’t like your class?” He looked at his record in the computer that indicated 35 days out of school. The boy said that he has note. “Notes won’t cover missing single classes.” He received a Saturday school.

“Mr. --- thinks you are cutting his class-twice,” Mr. Snyder said to another boy. “I was at the nurse.” “If you were at the nurse, it would show up as excused. You have until Monday to clear this up. Until then, you have detention on Tuesday.”

Reflection: Mr. Snyder has a very frank style. He listens to the students but uses objective criterion in giving detentions. He has records on his desktop. If a student contradicts the referral, he asks the student to clarify the issue with the teacher. He is to the point and well prepared for student excuses, while at the same time, conducts himself in a fair and reasonable manner.

Mrs. Andersen sent for a student that a teacher referred to her for not doing his class work. He told the teacher that the class was worthless. The student claimed that he was only talking about the one activity. “All we do is HSPA,” he said. Mrs. Andersen explained, “We are held to higher standards and so are you.” She explained that the complaint that he confronted his teacher with was personal and not appropriate. “But Miss, I was just saying…” “Some things just stay her,” Mrs. Andersen said, pointing to her head. He was assigned a detention. “I will call your Mom to make sure you come.” The student pled for her not to call.

One boy was written up for playing with a computer not doing his classroom activity. “This is crap,” the boy said. “She doesn’t have any reason to write that for nothing,” Mrs. Andersen said back to the boy. She gave him an in-school suspension.

A girl was written up for yelling, “Ah.” She then yelled at her teacher. “She lying,” the girl said to Mrs. Andersen. “Nobody understood what she assigned.” “Did you yell?” “Yes, but…” She was assigned a full-day in-school suspension. “No,” the girl responded. She started yelling at Mrs. Anderson. “I don’t want to be in that class. I’m not kissing her ---. I’m not kissing the --- of no teacher.” Mrs. Anderson remained calm. “We already pulled you out of another class.” The girl kept on talking on top of Mrs. Andersen. “No, no, I don’t care.” Mrs. Andersen said, “You can’t win.” The girl said, “I know it. How are you telling me that I was yelling?” Mrs. Andersen asked her, “Are you yelling at me?” “I’m not going to in-school,” the girl said. “Go back to class; I’m calling your mom.” “Well I asked her (the teacher) to help me.” “We’ll get her in here,” Mrs. Andersen said. “No, I don’t like her.” “We have other kids,” Mrs. Andersen told her and she left.
One student came in for missing detention. He was given another detention and told that he would get Saturday school if he missed that. Mrs. Andersen told me that they do not give in-school suspensions for being late for class because in-school is also missing class. A boy was written up for being too loud, too often. It was the first time that teacher wrote anyone up, so Mrs. Andersen had no problem answering his excuse. “What bothers me is the antagonism when you are reprimanded,” she said to him. “You don’t talk back... Be polite, don’t challenge her and seal the lips.” “That’s hard,” the boy said. He got a Tuesday detention.

Reflection: Mrs. Andersen is soft-spoken and has a very caring style about her. Although she engages the students and allows them to vent their complaints, she sticks to the discipline referral and assigns the appropriate detention. Her mannerism is more nurturing. We discussed some the articles that I read concerning the differences between men and women administrator, to which she agreed. Although the rules were enforced even-handedly, she was very nurturing. I find her approachable and easy to talk to. My impression is that the students feel the same way.

Friday, February 16. Mr. Snyder showed me the Microsoft Access program that he set up with the names of all students enrolled in the high school. He used the program to note detentions, and other data necessary in tracking student attendance issues.

He sent for a girl who was written up for cutting. “I don’t like her anyway.” “You think you can like her enough to straighten this out,” Mr. Snyder asked her. Another girl who was called into his office displayed an IPOD, in defiance of school rules. “You can leave that on my desk.” The girl put it in her pocket and Mr. Snyder did not pursue the issue. She claimed she came late. “But you signed into school at 9:22 and you did not go to your class at 9:50.” Then she said that she did not even come to school that day. “Then somebody else must have signed your name.”

Reflection: Mr. Snyder was well prepared to catch lies. When he asked the student to give him the electronic device and the student defied him, yet put the IPOD away, in my opinion, he wisely did not pursue the matter. That student had much greater difficulties then the pursuit of enforcing a policy to the letter of the rule.
The College of New Jersey
Field Experience Log

Intern: Arthur Lang  Week of: 2/19/07
Mentor School: Lakewood High School  Home School: Lakewood High School
Hours for this activity: 2 and 1/2  Project: Compilation and Interpretation of Data
Cumulative Hours: 20 and 1/2
Standard Met  3

Observation: I began my typical morning internship observing Mr. Snyder handling attendance issues and Mrs. Andersen handling discipline issues. During the course of the session, Mrs. Andersen suggested that I compile data on the school attendance policy. Six unexcused absences constitute a failure for any course. Four tardies are equivalent to an absence. Students have the opportunity at the end of each marking period to petition for an appeal. If they bring notes from parents with the dates of their absences, they are then excused. Notes cannot excuse a student for being tardy to a class once the student is in school. Additionally, if a student is in school but does not come to a class, the teacher has the responsibility to enter a “cut” into the attendance record. Any student with two cuts fails that course and will not be granted an appeal.

Teachers receive computer printouts at the beginning of each week that lists all students marked late or tardy for each class during the previous week. If a teacher notices that a student attended other class but skipped their class, assuming no error was made (teachers are encouraged to question their students for accuracy), they change the absence to a “cut, and send a discipline referral to the attendance officer. Additionally, if a teacher sees a student in school who did not come to their class, and the student is unexcused, a referral is sent to the attendance officer and a cut is entered into the student’s record.

Mrs. Anderson is in charge of granting appeals to eleventh and twelfth graders. She was asked by a guidance counselors concerning the efficacy of the appeals process. How often are appeals granted? What percentage of students is granted appeals? Being a teacher of mathematics and wishing to undertake data collection, she asked me to answer those questions. She gave me a print-out of all students failures due to attendance with indications of whether an appeal was granted on a period by period basis.

The following is the result for 144 eleventh graders:

| Granted appeal for all periods | 69 | 48% |
| Denied appeal for all periods | 42 | 42% |
| Granted appeal for some periods and denied appeal for some periods | 33 | 23% |

The following is the result for 147 twelfth graders:

| Granted appeal for all periods | 105 | 71% |
| Denied appeal for all periods | 13 | 9% |
| Granted appeal for some periods and denied appeal for some periods | 29 | 20% |
**Reflections:** The data indicated a consistent application of the school policy regarding cuts. Several eleventh grade students did not have notes but were granted appeals for some periods and denied appeals for other periods. A class for which a student was chronically tardy or absent was denied an appeal, whereas for a class in which a student did not substantially exceed six absences, an appeal was usually granted. The data indicates a significantly greater leniency in granting appeals for twelfth graders.
Observation: Tuesday, February 20. Mr. Snyder showed me the School Report card. I analyzed that data and found a disturbing fact. Forty-one percent of the students in Lakewood High School in 2005 were transient. That meant that we had to deal with students coming in and out of our district without continuity in their education. Anecdotally, I have so many students that leave the district, only to return a year or two later. It is difficult to establish relationships and accountability for students that you cannot even hold onto for a year.

Every first-year alternate-route teacher in New Jersey has to be assigned a mentor. My department just hired a new teacher and I thought that I would be a good mentor for him. He consented and from 2:00-3:30, I researched the mentoring process. I obtained the signature of district supervisor and Mrs. Andersen. The school principal held back until he could determine if we had to wait until the next school year or if we could begin now. I began brainstorming questions that my mentoring action-research project should encompass.

Wednesday, February 21. The school principal became involved with one of my students who missed class for two weeks. I called her absence to the attention of her guidance councilor and followed-up on her status. I spoke with her mother and something serious is happening that I am not privy to. I told her that she is always welcome in my class and expressed my desire to work with her. She might not be ready to engage in learning and might be leaving the school.

Mrs. Andersen called down a student who was written up for going into the hall chasing a student to get his MP3 player. “I know that it is important to you,” she told the student, “but the most important thing to your teacher is teaching. It’s not about you. There are 15 students in that class. Now apologize to your teacher.”

Another student was called down for being disrespectful to a fellow teacher in my department. He said that he does not like that teacher, that he yells too much. The teacher shut his book when he asked what page a certain table was on and took away his test. I told the student that he probably was expected to know where the table was and that was part of the test. He said that he liked me because I kept on drilling them and gave them many chances. Mrs. Andersen and I both told him that he has the ability to deal with the teacher in a respectful manner. After the student left, Mrs. Andersen confided to me that she here that a lot from students. I defended the teacher. I doubted my own teaching by saying that it might not be in the interest of the students to give in so much, but she felt that she had to research the teacher’s methods. She said that she could hear him from a great distance.
Reflection: I was impressed by one of Dr. Leake’s lectures when he said we all have the ability to help every single kid. “Have some arrogance and say that there isn’t a kid that you can’t make succeed.” In another lecture he used the analogy of a coach. I determined that I would help every one of my students in my fifth period class. I had given up on the girl who was in trouble and another girl who sits next to her. I changed my attitude determine that I could teach them. It was with great disappointment that her activities outside of my class might prevent that. I assured her that she is always welcome and told her that her parents have her best interests in mind.

The discussion about the fellow teacher bothered me. I always felt that I was too lax in my methods, not being strict about any lines that students cannot cross, giving students too many chances. Indeed colleagues have accused me of lowering expectations, that they could not hold students accountable, because I might drop some tests, give second chances (I give about ten tests a marking period). Mrs. Andersen shook some of my doubts about what I considered a good teacher.

Thursday, February 22.

Observation and Reflection: Observed Mrs. Andersen and Mr. Snyder. After school, from 2:15 through 3:30, I discuss teaching methods with fellow teachers. They were of the opinion that you must draw a line in the sand. If you let a student cross it, they you have lost control. I called to their attention an article that Dr. Leake assigned, *The Pedagogy of Poverty versus Good Teaching*, written by Martin Haberman that appeared in Phi Delta Kappa in December 1991. In urban high schools, Haberman maintains that we are encouraged to teach math with step-by-step methods and keep to rigid discipline. I asked both of them to read it and tell me what they thought. I seemed to be alone in my opinion to give many chances, not to be so rigid, and to give in to students.

Friday, February 23. Mr. Snyder explained the sign-in process for students coming late. They would receive detention for signing in late, but under the old process they learned that if they sign in during second period, they would not be given detention. Mr. Snyder caught on to that and made corrections.

Reflection: I spoke with Mr. Snyder and Mrs. Andersen about discipline. Should we be so strict that we have to follow thought with every punishment and order that we make? Mrs. Andersen said that it really depended on the teacher’s style. Some can do that. Others have to bend, it is their style. I think that settled some of my doubts and confusion. I see teachers who are strict and complaint about students. They are the teachers who claim not to bend. I usually do not complain about students and they seem to like me. Did that mean that I was letting them off too easy, not serving their interests? When I told Mrs. Andersen that teachers often tell me that in the real world they will not get so many chances, that we are setting them up for failure, she disagreed. “They will do fine. This is school. It is a nurturing environment.” I agree with her.
The College of New Jersey  
Field Experience Log  

Intern: Arthur Lang  
Week of: 02/26/07  

Mentor School: Lakewood High School  
Home School: Lakewood High School  

Hours for activities this week: 7  
Cumulative Hours: 27 and 1/2  

Standards Met 2,3, and 4  

Observation: On Monday, February 26, a guidance counselor spoke with Mrs. Anderson about the boy who did not get along with my colleague in the math department. He was moved into another class but did not have high test scores for college. His SAT score was in the two hundreds and he thought he would get into school on a scholarship for minorities. I pointed out that there would be others eligible who might have better scores and a better academic record. Not a lot happened on Monday. One kid who missed his Saturday detention was reassigned another Saturday detention. If a student would miss three in a row, then he or she is suspended.  

Tuesday, February 27. There was a bus incident on Monday in which a boy, who had to sit behind the bus driver because of his previous conduct, was reported by the driver to have sprayed shaving cream on the bus. He denied it. Mrs. Andersen called the boy’s mother and assigned him detention until 3:30 every day of the week so that he would not ride the bus for the rest of the week. This way he would take the 3:30 bus home that has a different driver. She requested that his parents come into her office and she asked the bus driver to attend. The problem with that was that the bus company is outsourced. The driver is not a district employee and she had no authority to ask him to sit with parents. Ultimately she said to me that she has to go by the report of the adult. If the boy contradicts the driver, she is the adult. She expected the father to come into school at the end of the day. I saw her at 2:15 when the students were dismissed. The father did not come. She walked outside to make sure that the parent was not confronting the driver. Apparently, the boy accepted his punishment and his parents did not have to come in.  

Reflection: I have encountered administrators that did not “go by what the adult said.” When a teacher reports a student and sticks by his or her report, and the administrator treats the report as the word of one against the other, then morale is lowered. I think that Mrs. Andersen’s policy is wise. There is no reason to assume that an adult would lie. She asked the driver a second time to make sure and she stuck by her word. I have read in law books that students are not entitled to due process unless there is a substantial suspension. Nonetheless, I would think that if the boy insisted on his position, there would have been some provision to allow him to prove his innocence. But I guess the key is that he was not assumed innocent. So this is what it means that students are not entitled to due process in every case. Also, I found that she was alert to possible problems when she checked to see if the father might be outside confronting the driver. One must think through such a scenario.  

Wednesday, February 28. I spend time in the office of the attendance officer. We spoke about a particular student that has not come to my class for two months. I reported her to the school truant officer. Apparently she had been assigned several Saturday schools. I inquired into the
proceedings. Our security liaison serves a letter to the parents before the case is turned over to the court. A judge will call in the parents. It is possible that they could even lose custody.

The attendance officer showed me a write-up from a substitute teacher that reported that a student did not promptly return from the guidance office. She told the teacher the time that she left the office and the teacher wrote her up. As it turned out, the students did leave the office at the time she pled. The attendance officer thought the teacher was careless for doing so. He should have checked. If a student has an excuse that makes sense, why not check into it?

Toward the end of the session on Wednesday, Mrs. Andersen came into the attendance office to tell me that the other assistant principal, Mr. Bailey, was having a conference between two grandmothers. She called him up and he said that I could come in to observe. There was an incident that several girls who were friends became nasty to each other. One girl was standing in line for breakfast (our school serves breakfast) and asked her friend to stand with her. They refused and the situation became ugly over the day. Girls would say things that they claimed that the other said about the one, and the situation escalated. They would go back and forth. Somehow, one of the grandmothers, who is often seen in the halls of the school, was involved in calling one of the girls a liar. That girl’s grandmother was in the assistant principal’s office complaining that she should not have said that. Also, the first grandmother initiated the conference. The second grandmother complained that they had always been friends and wondered why the first grandmother didn’t speak to her personally. The girls are in love-hate relationships so often that she has no time for all that. Mr. Bailey explained that he talks to the girls before he calls in the parents. There were rumors. The girls never said those things about each other. A cousin was instigating the problems. Mr. Bailey said that situations change so quickly in the school and he tries to be alert and intervene quickly.

Reflection: Mr. Bailey is extremely professional about how he handles difficult situations. I could only figure that his skills come about through experience. He is alert to a volatile situation and immediately intervenes. He explained the policy clearly.

Thursday, March 1. A girl came into Mrs. Andersen’s office describing a serious situation. She was witness to another incident on the school bus between a high school student and a middle school student. They boys were wrestling and the bus driver told them to stop. A window on the bus was cracked. The high school boy then pulled out a switch-blade and poked the middle school boy. She said that he was bleeding professedly. Mrs. Andersen contacted the middle school so that the boy could be examined. He did not even tell his parents because he was scared. The girl making the report wrote a detailed statement. Mrs. Andersen asked her to sign it. She asked if she had to. Mrs. Andresen said that it might be necessary if they go to court. The girls said that if it went to court, she would sign it, but asked if it was necessary yet. Mrs. Andersen said no. The perpetrator was a special education student. She had to email the secretary to the board attorney. The school police officer would determine if charges should be filed. I asked her if we could expel thee student. It seemed to me that if his conduct was not related to his disability, he should be treated as any other student who did such an action.

In another incident, a boy became violent on Wednesday and Mrs. Andersen told me about it on Thursday. He was big and began swinging his fists against the wall of his classroom. She came in the class and helped the teacher escort all the students out of the class. The principal talked to the boy but he was irrational. Apparently he is on medicine and did not take it. She told me that later on in the day that he sat in the principal conference room and was finally rational. She
explained to me that children like going off their medication, thinking that they don’t need it. They feel that it is part of their childhood and they want to grow up. She gave him a five day suspension.

Reflection: It was a busy day. I found the way that Mrs. Andersen handled the apprehension of the young lady very productive. However, I am not sure why the police officer should make the determination of how far to pursue the issue. Perhaps he would determine whether charges should be files, but the school will determine the future placement of the perpetrator.

Friday, March 2. We had a problem with the State testing that would take place the next week. On Monday, only juniors would take the test. All other days, freshmen and sophomore also took test. What would the school do with 346 freshmen and 279 sophomores with nothing to do for three hours? At first, the idea was the freshmen would be sent to the auditorium, which holds about 900. I counted the seats while sitting in her office the previous week. The sophomores would be in the two eating areas. Mrs. Andersen sat with Mr. Bailey. The audio-visual teacher was trying to figure out how to set up for a movie. We come up with idea of putting everyone into the auditorium for a movie. There would be too much light in the eating areas for students to see a movie of television screens. The auditorium is dark and a projector came be used.

Reflection: I asked Mrs. Andersen how she felt about showing students Hollywood movies. She said that as long as it is only PG, it’s not a problem. We also got into some small talk about seeing students in public. It seems that neither assistant principal wanted to see them. It never bothered me. I guess because the assistant principal has a different relationship than a teacher has to students.
The College of New Jersey
Field Experience Log

Intern: Arthur Lang             Week of: 03/05/07
Mentor School: Lakewood High School  Home School: Lakewood High School

Hours for activities this week: 1 and 1/2     Cumulative Hours: 29

Standards Met 2, 3, and 4

Wednesday, March 8. I spoke with Mrs. Andersen after school about a student who mentioned to me that he was the “general” in a group of boys. Another boy mentioned that one of the boys in his group could beat up the first boy. My question was whether we should be concerned and if the talk was gang related. Mrs. Andersen told me that the kids talk a lot. I asked her, at what point do we become involved? She said that when activity takes place at school and interferes with learning. I commented to her about an incident during testing. A girl refused to sit in her proper seat. She used profane language and Mrs. Andersen was called into the classroom for assistance. The girl “cussed” at Mrs. Andersen and changed her seat. Mrs. Andersen just smiled and left the classroom. I asked her how she could take the disrespect. She said that you cannot take anything personal. But what about her office as assistant principal, does not that require a student to show respect? She said that the girl did show her respect. She changed her seat.

Friday, March 10. A special education student was called into Mrs. Andersen’s office for misbehaving and taking back rubber bands that his teacher confiscated. He said that she was supposed to give them back at the end of class and that he took them at that time. Mrs. Andersen said that him taking them, even though they were his, violated her possession. He had not right to grad them from her desk. He was assigned a detention.

Two boys were called in to be reminded that they had to come to Saturday school. One boy said that he was being given too short notice and that he had plans. Mrs. Andersen said that this was his third Saturday in a row. Students know the policy. If you miss one, you have to come to the next. If you miss that one, there is only one more chance. After that, there is a five day suspension. He did not need any more notice since he missed the last two Saturday schools.

A girl was called down for disrupting her class. Mrs. Andersen asked her, “Why are we here.” “To learn.” She looked at her grades and told her that she was barely getting by. She encouraged her to behave and get her grades up.

Reflection: This was the week of the New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessment. We would have preferred sending students home after the test but they had to remain in school until the end of the day. There was little school work. After Mrs. Andersen dealt with the last case, she sighed. She always told me that she could not get so involved emotionally but that sigh indicated that she was deeply concerned with her students. She admitted it. Her mannerism is different than just a routine administrator. She takes a parent-like interest in her students while at the same time is firm with them.
The College of New Jersey  
Field Experience Log

Intern:  Arthur Lang  
Week of: 03/12/07

Mentor School: Lakewood High School  
Home School: Lakewood High School

Hours for activities this week: 7  
Cumulative Hours: 36

Standards Met 1, 2, 3, and 4

Observation:  Monday, March 12. Today Mrs. Andersen and I went around to several classrooms for observations. We first went to Mrs. Landesman’s art class. Several students were involved in different projects. One student made a color wheel that included went from one color to another. Another student made a kind of paint brush type of drawing. Mrs. Landesman was proud of the work that her students were accomplishing. We then sent on Mr. Shauers’s ceramics class. One boy was making a mask. A girl was making a flower vase by stacking rolled pieces of clay on top of each other. Another girl was making a fake fruit bowl with grapes. Mrs. Andersen commented to each student how wonderful their work was. Several students were wearing headphones. I asked about that. She said that we make an exception for art classes. Students work better with music. They are more creative. We then went to Mrs. Shearman’s special education class. Student assigned to Mrs. Shearman are the most educationally challenged. She was teaching long division. No calculators for her students. She was teaching basic skill. I told her that the math department insists on giving the students calculators. We have different goals. I observed that the students struggled, but were involved in their work. We then went into another wing of the school to observe Mr. Dill’s woodshop. There was only one girl in the class. She made a picnic table for a computer. One boy made a bookshelf. A couple of boy made a long park bench together that they were going to bring home. They lived close to each other and would share it. I commented that they definitely had to know how to read a ruler. We then went into Mrs. Ryder’s home economics class. Mrs. Andersen started out as a home economics teacher. Mrs. Ryder was baking something. She felt that it was in the oven for too long and scolded a student for that. Students were just eating and the period was almost over.

Reflection: I commented to Mrs. Andersen how nice it would be to see results the way art and shop teachers see them. I teach mathematic and always wonder if I am accomplishing much. Students often do not do well on formative assessments and I have to re-teach on a lower level. I often wonder if I am adding anything at all, students already being in possession of the basics that I have to teach. On the other hand, that feeling of accomplishment can be achieved in the core curriculum with Project Based Learning. I have done a lot of research on PLB. But one can also make the case that the feeling of accomplishment is not the goal of education. Mastering the core curriculum is a slow process. Achievement can came as subtly as the movement of the hour hand on a clock. Indeed, my students do achieve in mathematic; they just don’t get high marks. Nevertheless, perhaps the feeling of accomplishment that accompanies projects can change students’ attitude to accelerate achievement.

I found that Mrs. Andersen’s positive attitude uplifting. She had no negative comment and encouraged all the students. She was especially encouraging to the special education students. They were proud to show her what they were doing. Mrs. Andersen respects the students and
they respect her. They were happy to show her their work. I am not sure about the exception to the headphone rule. Some students tell me that they do their math problems better with headphones on. I assume that since art is an elective, a “fun” class, headphones can be allowed. But we don’t even allow headphones in the cafeteria!

The fact that Mr. Dill’s students had to cut wood necessitated them to read the tape measure. I have taught lessons in mathematics on how to read the ruler. I have asked student how many inches are in half a foot. On most occasion only one student in my ninth grade class, if any, knows how to read the ruler. Almost none know how many feet are in 60 inches. Simply by forcing students to read the ruler to make the things they want to make, they must have learned to read the ruler. This is another cased to Project Based Learning.

Tuesday, March 13. A student was sent to Mrs. Andersen for not complying for his teacher’s instructions. He was wearing a do-rag, even as he entered Mrs. Andersen’s office, in violation of school rules. She asked him to take it off, to which he complied. I noticed that students usually do not argue with her and comply with her requests. A girl was called into Mrs. Andersen’s office. After that, a boy came in and Mrs. Andersen walked out with me. She closed the door, not all the way, to give them privacy. I asked what that was about. The boy and girl are dating and having a fight. She said that it is better to let the talk it out rather then to be angry the whole day. Students get so emotionally involved that they cannot learn.

Toward the end of the session Mrs. Andersen commented that we only had two security guards in the building during that time. Security guards usually bring students from their classes to her offices when she requested them after she has received a discipline referral. At the end of session, we went to the classroom to call the student out into the hall. While we walked in the hall, I asked her about the bus incident. She said that it was not really a stubbing. The middle school nurse checked to boy and he was only scratched. Nonetheless, assault with a knife is serious. She said the manifestation hearing must be held to determine if the behavior is a result of the assailant’s disability. She would like to see him sent out of the school and a manifestation hearing is necessary whenever there is a change in placement. The board attorney is also involved. The child study team must make the first decision. We did not get a chanced to see more than one student. We noticed three Strive students walking out of the building. Strive is a program for students with severe discipline problems. They do not mix with the regular population. Mrs. Andersen did not call out to tem and said that she would bring up the matter with the Strive program director.

Reflection: I questioned that. If she and the administration want him out of the school, why should the child study team only make the request? I asked her if the child study team works for the district and she answered in the affirmative. That makes more sense to me. If the child study team did not work for the district, then how could the district rely of them to bring the matter to a hearing? If they are district employees, then as part of the same organization, then it can be understood as their delegated responsibility to bring up the matter. The fact that a hearing is held is simply due process, the foundation of our nation.

Wednesday, March 14. Today we walked through the building to call students out to the hall since there were not enough security guards to bring them into Mrs. Andersen’s office. One girl did not show up for Saturday school, but she said she would make it for the next session. She had a headphone on when she came out into the hall, blatantly violating the school rule.
We saw several; students in the hall. Two boys seemed to be roaming the halls. They took off when they saw us. The French teacher who was on hall duty traced one of the boy to a science class. Mrs. Andersen called him out. There was a substitute. She gave him a central detention. She asked the boy for his name and he replied. “What is your friend’s name?” He said that he did not know. “You were roaming the hall with him for a while, how can you not know his name?” He would not give his name. When he went back into class, I smiled at her. “Did you think he would give his friend’s name?” She did not think so.

We called out another girl. She was given Saturday school. Mrs. Andersen asked her if this Saturday was okay. She said that she had to work and asked if she could come the next Saturday. Mrs. Andersen wrote her down for the next Saturday.

Friday, march 16. We did not meet on Thursday. I spend our Friday session observing the Honor role breakfast. Mrs. Andersen was in charge of putting it together. First a crew of bagpipers played for students who made the honor role in B101, a huge classroom with descending auditorium-like seats. To make the honor role, students had to make all A’s and B’s. No C’s. Students then when into the Commons, one of our lunchrooms, for the breakfast. They were served buffet style. The assistant superintendent was there, the principal, and all three assistant principals. Each student received a certificate and t-shirt. The t-shirt had the results of our social-norms survey. It said that over the last 30 days of the survey, 90% of students had not used marijuana. 86% had not used tobacco. 66% had not used alcohol.

While the students ate their breakfast, Mrs. Corenblith’s class put on a performance. They were finished practicing for a play that would be open to the public the next week and they acted and sung a scene in the Commons. A band played the music and the students jumped and danced choreographically.

Mrs. Andersen went up to the microphone as the organizer and explained to the students that for every A they received they would get one dollar in an escrow account. The money could be used to pay for their yearbook. I was standing next to one of the assistant principals and the principals, both of whom I had a discussion with. A girl approached the principal asking for her money. I couldn’t decide if she was serious. He explained to her that it was for the yearbook and she should check into her escrow account.

Reflection: Although the social norms survey was not scientific-only students who wanted to participate answered the survey—it had a positive influence in dispelling notions that the student body engaged in illegal behavior. The idea was that when students realize how abnormal such behavior was, they would feel less peer pressure to exhibit such behavior.

I discussed with the assistant principal about our small schools initiative. The small schools would be an excellent environment to employ the tasks that we saw on Monday into the core curriculum. It seems that the board rejected the summer-bridge program that was to start the initiative and the superintendent was not for it either. I asked if we could do it within our present budget. He felt that we could do something. I objected that true small school were exclusive programs with the least amount of intermingling as possible. At most, only gym class can cross academies. It does not seem like we will have the true small schools, if any.

The Honor Role breakfast reinforced positive behavior and achievement. Students were recognized for doing what they were supposed to do, learning.
The College of New Jersey
Field Experience Log

Intern:  Arthur Lang
Week of: 03/19/07
Mentor School: Lakewood High School  Home School: Lakewood High School

Hours for activities this week: 10 (including Reflection, collection of notes, and writing)  Cumulative Hours: 46

Standards Met  1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6

Monday, March 19. I began the week in Mrs. Andersen’s office discussing what kind of new activities we can cover. A girl came in for discipline. She had cursed in Mr. Shauer’s ceramics class. She said that she also cursed. Mrs. Andersen did not respond. She looked up her grades in the computer. She was maintaining a B average. “Don’t kick a good horse in the mouth,” Mrs. Andersen said to her. She was making a descent grade and should learn to get along with her teacher. The girl was wearing a low cut shirt on.

Kyle, the special education student that got in trouble two weeks ago for using rubber bands, was called into her office. This time he had been given Saturday school for another offense. It was difficult for him to come to that. She told him that she talked to his father and they arranged that he would get three central detentions instead.

A girl came in written up for using her cell phone. ‘He told me to put it away and I did,” she said. “You should not have it out at all,” Mrs. Andersen said. “We know that you carry them. WE tolerate them. We don’t want to see them.” She gave her an in-school suspension. “But we weren’t using them.” “They were out. Once they are reported to me, you will get an in-school suspension. It will be Wednesday.” “Can you give me tomorrow?” “We need two days notice for teachers.” After the girl complained more, Mrs. Andersen said, “It was referred to me by your teacher. You can talk to her.”

A boy came in for discipline and sat on Mrs. Andersen’s desk. “You’re not at home,” she said and laughed. “Several teachers asked you to remove your hat.” He took off his hat. A girl was brought in after being sent to the office. She was sent out of class for disrupting class. She was supposed to report to the office but instead roamed the halls. She was brought to Mrs. Andersen by a security guard. The girl was walking in the hall with several other girls. One girl kicked the door of a classroom and the other girls ran. She did not run, because she did not do it. Mrs. Andersen told her, that if she would not have been with the kids who were making trouble, she would not have been involved. Also, she was supposed to come to the office.

Reflection: The students accused her teacher of committing the same offense that she was written up for. Instead of Mrs. Andersen responding to that particular accusation, she shifted the discussion towards her grade. What should she say, “The teacher did not curse,” or “It’s different for him?” She was not there to know the facts. Also, I asked Mrs. Andersen about the girl’s low-cut shirt. She said that she would have said something if I was not there. “It’s a woman-to-woman thing.” Does that mean that an all-male administration could not handle female
inappropriate dress? Mrs. Andersen said that she would track down the girl later and ask her to put on something else.

Kyle was from a needy family that cannot provide transportation. In-school suspension would be bad for him and cause him to miss his classes. When he misbehaves, Mrs. Andersen told me, it is more for attention. “He is not a thug.” Mrs. Andersen applied the discipline policy in the interest of the student.

Concerning the girl who roamed the hall, Mrs. Andersen told me that really her teacher should not have sent her out of class without a security guard. Our normal procedure is to call a security guard to escort student to the office. We spend a few minutes discussing our ideas of teaching. We both agreed that students need to memorize. Memorization is important in order to later learn concepts. Unfortunately, students are no longer required to memorize. They can’t add or multiply because they did not memorize the multiplication table.

After school I spent 45 minutes gathering data for my action research project. Since human resources appointed a different mentor for the teacher that I wanted to mentor, I am switching to a data research project. I will try to correlate HSPA scores with other indicators, such as grades and attendance. I spent one hour looking at that data at night.

Tuesday, March 20. Today was an interesting day. Mrs. Andersen and I went to Mr. Bailey’s office to sit in mediation. Two girls were having some strife. One of the girls was in the conference room next to his office with her mother. Her friend’s mother was also there. Across the table was the girl that she was having problems with. Her mother, who happened to be on the school board, was not there. Instead, a relative accompanied her. Her mother had indicated that she wanted to listen in on a conference call.

Mr. Bailey began by saying, “We don’t try to manufacture friendship. We try to make an environment where kids live in a civil manner. We’re in the business of helping students make good decisions. We want to make the building safe. When we see these conflicts going on, we have to find solution. Now, is there going to be a solution that we all agree to? No. We have to find a civil solution. Worse, if that doesn’t work, we have to find a place to put them into.” Mr. Bailey was referring to LEI, Lakewood Educational Institute. Students with the most severe discipline problems are sent out of the high school to attend LEI.

“So that is why we called the parents. The bottom line is that this is all about a boy. If not for him, these girls would not even know each other. It is so important to take care of this that I was doing an observation and I told Mrs. Stuart (his secretary) that when you come, that she should get me. So I don’t want to waste any time. We are not going to leave here holding hands singing Kumbaya, as Dr. Clauser says (principal). So you tell me what happened.”

The first girl explained what the other girl did. Mr. Bailey said that he had all the names of who was involved so they did not need to hide anything. It seems one girl was the old girlfriend. Over the summer she wrote the new girlfriend some message over the computer. The girl’s friend was accused of getting involved. She was not there, but her mother stepped in to say that she was not involved. Mr. Bailey also said that he had six statements saying that she was not involved. The problem was resolved at the meeting and the girls agreed not to fight anymore. It seems that the prospect of being moved to LEI convinced them to act in a civil manner. Mrs. Andersen told me later that it often happens that as soon as Mr. Bailey mentions LEI, parents force their kids into line.
We did not meet on Wednesday.

Thursday, March 22. Today was a big day. WE observed Mrs. Simpson in Junior Language Arts, Track Three.

The following was written on the blackboard before the lesson began:

Lesson: Frankenstein
Obj. Read, discuss, analyze, and review. 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4
Open ended question: If you were Victor and had created the monster, how would you have reacted when you saw him?
Define: Exposition

Mrs. Simpson stood by the door of her classroom greeting her students before the late bell rang. After the bell rang she told her students to be sure to define the word “exposition” as she passed out their portfolio folders. One student came late and quickly found a seat.

“If you don’t remember the definition of exposition, to expose is one of them,” Mrs. Simpson instructed. As the students wrote in their portfolios, Mrs. Simpson made sure that they all had a pen or pencil. “Anyone without paper?” A special education co-teacher passed folders and asked the students to write down the definition. He then stood at the board waiting to write the definition.

“At the beginning of the story, what did we find out?” Mrs. Simpson asked the class. “Character, setting, what else?” A student then added, “Plot.” “And frame story, a story within a story,” the special education co-teacher said.

The special education co-teacher wrote the following outline on the board while, and at times before, students and Mrs. Simpson began to list the qualities of exposition:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exposition-characters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The students had their portfolios in front of them. “At the beginning of a story, what do you write?” Mrs. Simpson asked. “Title,” as student answered. “If you add all this together, what does it tell you? About the story?” “Background information,” a student answered. “Excellent. That’s what we were doing. Now we will build on that. You read,” Mrs. Simpson said to a student, “Chapters one and two.”

“Jose, when we find out about a person’s life, should he be put in our folder?” “Yes, it is a frame story,” he answered. “Good. We found out about Robert Watson.”

“What happened to Victor?” A student answered something. “How come?” Mrs. Simpson asked. “A tree was struck by lightning,” the student answered. Another student said that he wanted to study science. “Why was that against his father’s belief? What was it that bothered his father?” Mrs. Simpson asked. A student gave an answer that was wrong. “What was he (his father) afraid of?” Mrs. Simpson asked. There was no answer. “What kind of subject is science?” She probed. Some students offered some answers. “You explore different things,” Mrs. Simpson said. “New observations. Science progresses. Victor’s father did not want him to go into new territory.”
“What college did Victor go to?” Mrs. Simpson asked. “Englestop.” “Did he like his teachers?” “No,” a student answered. “Who did he like?” “Waldman. He liked his philosophy. What would he like to do?” A student answered, “A project.” Mrs. Simpson then said, “He ignores all. Who is important that he ignores?” A student answered, “Elizabeth.” “Who is she?” “Her adopted sister, a.k.a. his lover.” The student giggles. “For the moment she is a friend (there was never any hint in the book of promiscuous relation between Victor and Elizabeth. Mrs. Simpson shrugged off the off-color remark). If you were Victor and created the monster, how would you react when you saw him?” That question was on the board. “Think about that when you read the chapter. Think about science today, about cloning. How did they react?”

The special education co-teacher wrote on the board: Chapter Three. The Creature Comes to Life. Mrs. Simpson passes out books and tells everyone to turn to page 19. A student is called upon to read. As the student read, Mrs. Simpson follows along in the book and the special education co-teacher wrote on the board the following: Dreary night in November. Yellow skin and eye. Black lips. Victor’s feelings—disgusted, shocked, disappointed.

“Okay. Thank you. What time of year did he finish?” A student asked about the page. “November,” a student answered. “Yes. He worked for two years.” All students were taking notes as the discussion went on. “How did he feel?” “Disgusted,” a student answered. “If you work on a project, how do you feel?” “Proud,” a student answered. “Unfortunately, we do not see the same reaction when Victor finished. Jose, how did it look?” “Yellow-skinned,” he answered. “If you use one word—” “Hideous,” a student answered. “What kind of state was he in?” “Shocked,” a student answered. “What does he do?” “Flees,” a student answered. “Think about when a child is born and the mother does not know what to do, does she run?” “Sometimes,” a student answered. “It’s not normal. Unfortunately, it happens. It might be scary, but you don’t flee. You calm down. But Victor does not. Who does he think about?” “Elizabeth,” a student answered. “His mom,” another student answered. “When we are upset, what do we do?” “Eat sugar,” a student said joking. “His father said no and he was right,” Mrs. Simpson said. “He was in shock.” Mrs. Simpson then had another student read.

While the student read, one student tapped another on the shoulder and then stopped. That was the only instance of a student not paying attention. One girl got up out of her seat to sit somewhere else.

“Remember when we said that you can tell definitions from context? What is hideous?” “Ugly,” a student answered. “You can get definitions on the HSPA from context. Mrs. Simpson then told another student to read.


The boy who read mispronounced the word “persuaded,” to which Mrs. Simpson corrected. Mrs. Simpson walked up and down the ailes while the student read. “Why would he not trust a friend?” Two students called out, “Snitch.” “Ashamed.” “Good,” Mrs. Simpson said.

The special education co-teacher put the following on the board: Victor finds Clerval. Clerval expressed how worried his family and friends were about him. Victor is worried that his secret creation will be opened. Victor becomes ill. What is he ill from? Nervous breakdown.
“Are you afraid of telling something to a friend?” Mrs. Simpson asked the class. The special education co-teacher answered, “Absolutely. Can I answer? You know your friend. Victor knows that there is nothing good in telling Clerval.

Mrs. Simpson then began to read. She read with good expression for the dialogue. She then asked, “What happened?” “He dies,” a student answered. “I don’t think so.” The special education co-teacher said, “You can throw that out the window.” “Up here,” the special education co-teacher said, as he points to his head. “Hyper,” a student answered. “What’s another word for hyper?” He asked. ‘Nervous breakdown.”

“What kind of upbringing did Victor have?” Mrs. Simpson asked. ‘Money,” a student said. “Indulged,” Mrs. Simpson said. ‘What does that mean?’ “Spoiled,” a student answered. “Good,” Mrs. Simpson said. “Isn’t it like when a parent would say I told you so?”

“I have a question,” the special education co-teacher said. “Have you ever heard the expression, the straw that broke the camel’s back?” “Push you to the edge,” a student said. “Like when you get a progress report,” the special education teacher said. “You get uneasiness in stomach. After about a week or two, it goes away. This is two years. 104 weeks for Victor’s doing it. And now I’m caught. That’s the straw that broke the camel’s back.”

It was 9:15 with about ten minutes left in class. “I thought we’d finish but we had a good discussion. So now-- your opinion. The question on the board goes in your notebook. We will have a discussion tomorrow,” Mrs. Simpson said. “Do we have to write,” a student asked. “Yes. Does anyone need paper?” A student said, “Oh, man.” “Just your opinion,” the special education co-teacher said. “Maybe if we have time, we will review,’ Mrs. Simpson said. The students began writing. “Are you collecting?” A student asked. Mrs. Simpson walked up and down the aisles. She told two students to put their names on their papers. Everyone wrote. “If there is time, we can read your responses.”

When there were four minutes left, one student handed in the paper. “Good reaction,” Mrs. Simpson said. “Different points of view. We’ll discuss this tomorrow. It’s amazing that which Mary Shelly wrote as a classic becomes a reality, with all the fertility procedures. What is a classic?” “A timeless piece,” a student answered. “A theme we can relate to.”

I told Mrs. Andersen at the end of the lesson that she did great and that I never did as well. She said that it is a different subject and can’t be compared.

Reflection: Mrs. Simpson manages class time very efficiently and award of how much time has elapsed. “I thought we’d finish but we had a good discussion.” When students complained about writing, she held them to task.

Mrs. Simpson made sure that all students are capable of completing task. Mrs. Simpson made sure that they all had a pen or pencil. “Anyone without paper?” “Does anyone need paper?”

Mrs. Simpson teaches to the level of her students abilities. The use of lists on the blackboard, even putting answers up before students respond, differentiates instruction so that those with difficulty using higher thinking skills will participate through interpretation of cues on the board.
Mrs. Simpson checked on student work and made sure they were on task by walking up and down the aisles. All students were taking notes as the discussion went on. Students learn by incrementally recording in their notebooks critical information such as frame stories and other key elements of exposition as they read.

Mrs. Simpson connects with her students. When they cannot answer a question, she throws another question at them that they can answer. “What was he (his father) afraid of?” Mrs. Simpson asked. There was no answer. “What kind of subject is science?” She probed. Some students offered some answers. “You explore different things,” Mrs. Simpson said. “New observations. Science progresses. Victor’s father did not want him to go into new territory.”

Mrs. Simpson shows herself a role model of citizenship and moral conduct. When a student suggested an inappropriate lewdness in a character, she showed subtle disapproval. “Elizabeth.” “Who is she?” “Her adopted sister, a.k.a his lover.” The student giggles. “For the moment she is a friend,” she said, suggesting that they will marry. When a student spoke as if it were appropriate to abandon a baby, Mrs. Simpson corrected her. “Think about when a child is born and the mother does not know what to do, does she run?” “Sometimes,” a student answered. “It’s not normal. Unfortunately, it happens. It might be scary, but you don’t flee.”
The College of New Jersey  
Field Experience Log

Intern:  Arthur Lang  
Week of: 03/26/07

Mentor School: Lakewood High School  
Home School: Lakewood High School

Hours for activities this week: 7 (including  
Reflection, collection of notes, and writing)  
Cumulative Hours: 53

Standards Met  1, 2, 3, 4, and 5

Monday, March 26. I gave Mrs. Andersen a copy of my observation Mrs. Simpson’s class. She  
commented that I seemed to get every word. She told me that it really needed to be condensed.  
She gave me the three page form that included a checklist that the district uses. I took it home  
with me to redo. It is attached. We discussed several points that I noticed. She agreed with most  
of my observations, although she did not catch the last comment about the boy alluding to an  
improper relationship between two characters in the story.

Tuesday, March 27. I handed Mrs. Andersen my finished copy of the observation. Today was a  
special day. She took me to a meeting in room B109, a room that is the size of about three  
classrooms with descending theater seats. Students throughout the high school were nominated  
by teachers to become peer mediators. These students had to have a good academic standing and  
they were narrowed down from the initial list because of academic eligibility. They were to meet  
in B109 for the whole day to become oriented with the new peer mediation program.

Two teachers and the school social worker addressed the group. Mrs. Mitchell, one of the  
teachers, asked them why they thought they would be good at peer mediation. Most of the  
students addressed their answers as why peer mediation might work. “We can get them as friends  
more than the authorities because they are at rebellious age.” “Fights start from nothing.” “We  
are in different social groups and affect different people.” Mrs. Mitchell said that they are not  
answering the question. Why they in particular would be good at peer mediation?

One boy answered, “I’m cocky and confident. People look up to me. I can persuade people.”  
Mrs. Mitchell then asked the group, “What if your best friend or cousin is called into mediation?  
I’m not talking about you, yourself being a mediator. If we know about who is involved, we  
would make you ineligible from the beginning. That is a conflict. But as part of the group of  
mediators in general, you might have information. What if they ask you questions?” Students  
seem to understand their responsibilities of confidentiality. Mrs. Mitchell then asked them about  
homework. “You have to make up all work that you might miss in class. If there is something  
that you can’t miss in class, you have to excuse yourself from mediation.”

The other teacher put something on the overhead projector. It defined mediation with a goal of a  
mutually acceptable agreement. Mediators should not even suggest a solution. Not even to say  
way what they would do. A girl pointed out that both sides cannot dislike you. Another asked,  
“What if your name came up during the mediation?” The teacher answered that more than likely,  
you will know before if your name would be involved and you would not have started the  
process.
“Everything has to be confidential except if a bad thing is going on like child abuse. You would then have to report it to the teacher. There will always be a teacher standing outside. Then the teacher will take the necessary steps.

When we left the meeting, I asked Mrs. Andersen about how it would be possible for students to mediate when so often people involved in conflicts are very emotional. We have seen violent meetings in Mr. Bailey’s office. Mrs. Andersen agreed and even said that she wants Mr. Bailey around when those kinds of incidents are happening. “WE won’t refer a matter to peer mediation unless it has been some time for people to cool off.”

Reflection: It seems that a lot of the peer mediation would result as follow up after MR. Bailey has been involved. If that is the case, then would it not be bringing back to surface old matters? It was my impression last week that after Mr. Bailey mentions LEI, students are put in place. Perhaps in that kind of situation, when parents are called in, and LEI is threatened, it would not be wise to keep on dealing with the issues. But there are other times that MR. Bailey had not gone so far. Perhaps students who are having a conflict are called into his office and parent meeting had not yet taken place. Perhaps there are less serious conflicts. Then student mediation can be a positive alternative.

Wednesday, March 28. Mrs. Andersen gave me comments to look for during an observation. She said that although I had no access to Mrs. Simpson’s grade-book and parental contact, those items always must be filled out. She told me that the standards are very important. Mrs. Simpson put standards 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 on the board. She said that out assistant superintendent does not like that. He wants the standard to be narrowed down. We also talked about my project of correlating HSPA scores with grades.

After school I spoke with Mrs. Simpson for 45 minutes. It was kind of a post-observation, but even more important, I told her that I was impressed with her ability to get all her students on task. I asked her about her method of handing out folders for use during class. I told her that my students do not always bring their folder to class. She told me that they keep a separate portfolio just for Frankenstein. She gives it out at them beginning of class. After they finished the unit, it will go into their bigger portfolio that has all their work for the year. I asked her about homework. If she keeps their notebook in class, what do they do their homework in? She said that she allows them to take home their portfolios in that case. I told her that I give math homework every day. If I allow them to take home their notebooks every day, which defeats the purpose. I then realized that I could require two notebooks. One for homework and one for class notes. But then they would not have their notes at home. That seemed to be a problem, buy upon further reflection, they could bring their books home. The advantage of having a portfolio in class with math notes would be that I can check them for accuracy and completion. Students would always have them and they could use them for tests. They could do class work in their homework notebooks to use at home. Homework is the same kind of problems as class work.

Thursday, March 29. One of the teachers in the math department just returned from a three-day observation of another school. She told me that they are doing block scheduling. They have to use math manipulatives. No teacher in that school has been there for more than 7 years, so morale is low. They have a lot of administrators pushing the latest strategies on the staff, and they mean business. She seemed impressed, but there data was not available yet that could show improvement in test scores. Teachers were to meet once a day to collaborate. The principal was supposed to comment on lesson plans.
During my observation of Mrs. Andersen, a boy came into her office for being insubordinate during photography class. He complained that he was going to fail and could not do the work. The teacher wanted him to do a project with a digital camera and he did not want to get one. The project was due tomorrow. The boy was a senior and had a great schedule. The only academic class he was taking was History. He had woodshop and photography. I told him that photography was a life-long hobby. I he would get himself the camera he would appreciate it long after he takes this class. If he would go to his teacher and convinced her that he would do a good project, I’m sure she would give him more time. Instead of the negative attitude, he should tell her that he would do a great project. He seemed to become more encouraged.

Reflection: The math teacher who observed the other school seemed to be convinced, a little, about the reform efforts. She was serious about implementing these changes, even though she was usually skeptical about new reforms. The boy who was depressed about photography class needed a talk with Mrs. Andersen, a kind of time-out. Sometimes discipline issues can be prevented by allowing students to talk to someone else besides the teacher they are having a problem with.

Friday, March 30. I went around with Mrs. Andersen to call out students from their classes for discipline problems instead of having the security guard bring them to her office. Nothing eventful.
The College of New Jersey
Field Experience Log

Intern: Arthur Lang  
Week of: 04/11/07
Mentor School: Lakewood High School  
Home School: Lakewood High School

Hours for activities this week: 3 (including Reflection, collection of notes, and writing)  
Cumulative Hours: 56

Standards Met 1, 2 and 5

Wednesday, March 11. Today was the first day back in school since March 30. I spent the morning session inquiring after data for my action research project. I thought I might correlate student attendance with HSPA scores. The head of guidance, who I thought might have the data, was very busy. The data that I collected from the central office turned out to be useless. It had this year’s juniors. I needed juniors of the 2006 school years since we did not yet receive HSPA results for juniors of 2007. I spent a few minutes observing Mrs. Andersen.

Thursday, March 12. I spoke with the district testing officer, Mrs. DeBenedetto, after school. It seemed that I was running into a “brick wall” trying to get last year’s data. I was told by the head of guidance that all data is deleted each year. However, the district testing officer was also the director of summer school. She printed the grades for every student at the end of the school years to see who was eligible for summer school. She thought that she might possibly still have the hard file from last year, but was not sure. The roof in the school was redone over the summer and we held summer school in our middle school building. She might have thrown away the file rather than carry it back to the high school.

After school, Mrs. DeBenedetto came upstairs and we looked through the storage closet for last year’s data. She found it hidden away in an old box. The data was fabulous. It had every class, with a final examination grade and final grade, for every student. We discussed what data might be useful for our school. She indicated that the assistant superintendent was looking to see which classes were effective in preparing students for the HSPA. Mrs. DeBenedetto suggested making histograms of students that were profession and those who were not. I was more set on scatter plots. I wanted to break down each class and correlate student achievement to their HSPA score.

Friday, March 13. I observed Mr. Snyder handling attendance issues. A student missed Saturday school. She said she had a dentist appointment and told to bring a note. He reschedule her Saturday school. A girl was referred to his office for missing a detention. She disputed the original “cut” that she was referred for and said that she was in class. He told her that ten minutes late counts as a “cut.” If the teacher wants to change her referral, he will cancel the detention, but for now, she still had a detention scheduled for the day. He gave her until the sixth period to get the teacher to change her mind.

Reflection: Students often have excuses to justify their behavior. Mr. Snyder maintains fairness by not judging their claim, but asking them to refer back to the original source of the discipline referral. He schedules the consequence and offers to cancel if the teacher asks him to change it. This allows him to be firm and consistent on policy.
Monday, April 16. I observed Mr. Snyder in the attendance office. We received a new memo from our principal that indicated a policy “rule of ten.” If a student had ten tardies, he or she would not get an appeal for attendance. Mrs. Snyder was not sure how that rule would be implemented and I thought I would ask Mrs. Andersen. A boy was called into his office for not attending his third period class. He said he was in class. A girl who was waiting her turn to see Mr. Snyder said she was in his class and that he was present. Mr. Snyder smiled and said that she probably was cutting that class. He smiled. He told him that he usually does not see him in his office and if his teacher would agree that it was a mistake, and then he will cancel a detention that he assigned. She said that her referral was a mistake. Mr. Snyder said that teacher get a list of all student attendance at the end of the week. If they see that they were not in their class but present in another class, they refer a “cut” to his office. He said to her, “Let me see, what class were you cutting?” As it turned out, it was the same class on the same day as the boy was cutting. He told her that, although he has seen her in his office before, meaning that she cuts sometimes, that he was going to tell her the same thing he told the boy, to check with the teacher.

I did not spend much time observing Mrs. Andersen this week. I spent an hour or two going over the grade data and reflecting upon how I wanted to enter it into the spreadsheet that already had the HSPA scores. I spent some time beginning to enter the data and experimenting with some of the graphing tools on the Excel software. I could not graph letter grades, so I turned them into numbers, such as 4 for A. Still, I could not generate a satisfactory document. After I managed to enter all the mathematics and language arts grades into the spreadsheet, I still could not generate any graphs. I figured out that the spreadsheet had certain asterisks next the HSPA scores that prevented them from being registered. After several hours tweaking the system, by Thursday, I was able to generate a large scatter plot of all mathematics grades with mathematics HSPA scores and another scatter plot with all language arts grades with all language arts HSPA scores. The data seemed to be horizontal without any correlation. I then figured out that the plot did not indicate how many times each student gained a particular numeric score. So, I searched for programs that might draw scatter plots that might aggregate dots around the same data point to indicate more than one entry. I discussed my dilemma with other math teachers, but I don’t think that is possible. I downloaded three different programs that can work with Excel to generate data. Only one of those programs would end up being useful, but not for generating scatter plots, but for finding means and medians. As it turns out, I found a linear function that used the least mean square method to draw a trend line. That would correct for the problem of having more than one entry for the same data. So, even though certain points might have more than one entry, the duplicates would help change the slope of the trend line. When I put in the trend line for the whole school data, the trend line sloped upwards indicating a correlation between higher grades.
with higher HSPA scores. I continued breaking down the data Saturday night until about 1:00 AM Sunday morning and woke up at 5:00 am continuing my work shortly afterwards. I worked until Sunday evening putting into about twenty hours over the week and weekend.