

Appendix C

Reflection on coaching from Mr. Langford

Dear Mr. Pitsakis,

I have greatly enjoyed receiving teaching feedback from you during this past school year. You show many of the strengths that evaluators and administrators need, especially when dealing with new teachers on the job. I found that our post-observation meetings and emails pushed me to be a better teacher due to your sincere encouragement and targeted ways to improve.

Your encouragement was especially useful for me, because you highlighted the strengths that I should repeat rather than simply giving me a high-five. You pointed out in written and oral feedback that you appreciated my use of few, yet high-quality and higher-order questions. I had often asked myself if I was devoting too long to a question or if my lessons were too simple at times, but your clear feedback helped me to turn this insecurity into a strength. This result was repeated in several areas such as my inclusion of different formats of information or my previously unpraised enforcement of a "no hats and hoods" policy. These were small areas of success that your feedback helped me to isolate as valuable things to continue practicing.

After offering written feedback using the Danielson framework you continued giving ongoing in-person feedback and check-ins that strengthened your impact on my work. I value that you are a personable and interesting administrator, who took the time to get to know me and tell me about your own experiences as an English teacher. You continually made me feel like I was an important member of the school faculty and someone who was making a difference for my students. When you returned to offer feedback after initial visits, you could clearly point out the areas where I improved, for instance in my use of visual timers. I try new things in my classroom regularly, but your explanations have pointed out how and why these practices have significant results within my lesson.

In terms of highlighting areas for improvement, your evaluations were also very thought-provoking. You once pointed out to me that I cannot implement every change at once. This is a clear example of how you offer guidance within the reality of day-to-day first year teaching rather than checking off a multitude of boxes. You pointed out that I could strengthen my lessons by encouraging active listening from more students using different strategies such as discussion protocols and group discussion roles. After recommending this, you took the time to forward me resources with potential procedures and answered follow-up questions via email. You clearly knew how to add on to what I was doing, rather than trying to start over. Your suggestions felt like extensions to make my lessons better, rather than putting your own methodology on top of mine. This was true for your input regarding active listening, as well as other points that you made about reinforcing article annotations and making sure that objectives were clearly displayed for students during the whole length of the class.

There is not much that I can offer in terms of areas for your own growth as you support educators. I felt ready to have you visit even when I sincerely doubted my lesson, which is hard to achieve due to the insecurities of this profession. You always checked in with me before visiting and set up a 10-minute discussion about the unit. In the future, this may be challenging

because teachers may feel like you are asking too much.

At one point, you gave me some feedback for one of my lessons about having students consider the speaker of the text that we were analyzing. While this comment was useful, I think that its aim fit contextually with my rhetorical analysis unit more than the synthesis unit that I had begun by that lesson. To continue your work of targeting feedback, I think that situating the lesson in the unit alongside the teacher might allow you to have more information that would be mutually beneficial. I never found your feedback off-topic, but this may be one way to continue to fine-tune your evaluations.

I am truly grateful for your assistance this year. I think that you are going to make for an excellent administrator who is willing to make tough calls and has teachers on his side. I always feel supported in an intentional way when you visit my classroom, because your feedback is both detailed and aligned to my own goals and style as a teacher. Your work with me has been incredibly constructive and given me some direction in a hectic year. Please let me know if there is any more information or advice about your evaluations that I can provide.

Best,

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