Candidates are asked to finish their senior portfolio with a reflective statement under the heading of Development and Reflection. Candidates receive to write an overall reflection on their growth as a teacher from their first Education course through their student teaching experience.

The sample below is unedited for content. The unit’s assessment coordinator added the yellow highlights for the sake of communicating to reviewers why VCSU would chose this candidate’s reflective thoughts as a work sample exhibit.

Development and Reflection

When I look back at when I first started college, becoming an elementary school teacher is such a bright path for me. I had a hard time choosing my major at first, but after my first education class, I knew I had made the right choice. My time at Valley City has served to reinforce that this is the career path for me. While I knew teaching was the right choice for me, it was a little intimidating to think of managing and maintaining a successful classroom. My experiences at Valley City have prepared me for a successful future in an Elementary School classroom.

Because of my exposure to the culturally diverse needs of students, through courses at Valley City State University, I was interested in pursuing an endorsement in teaching English Language Learners. Throughout the courses I took at Valley City, I was encouraged to further my knowledge, and because of this I am now able to accommodate my teaching, and meet the needs of the diverse students that I will be teaching. I now know how to differentiate my teaching to ensure all of my students can be successful.

Planning is something else that I learned as a result of my experiences at Valley City, as well as from my student teaching experience. Because of the courses at Valley City, I knew the importance of being prepared for the lessons that I would be teaching. I also learned how important it is to pay attention to the details. I also learned the importance of having a backup plan for anything that may not work. Technology is a huge part of everyday life, and because of this, they are used a lot in teaching. Things do go wrong with technology, so it is important to always think through what issues could arise, and have a backup plan, just in case. Always be prepared!

Classroom management was one area of teaching that I was most apprehensive about. Through my experiences at Valley City, and my student teaching experiences, I am confident that I will be able to successful manage my classroom, to ensure that most conducive environment for learning for my students. A well-managed classroom is the key to a successful learning environment for students. It is also the key to teachers keeping their sanity! In my student teaching experiences, I was introduced to Jim Faye, Love and Logic as a very helpful tool for effective classroom management. Jim Faye is an advocate for always giving choices, as well as holding students accountable. My cooperating teacher was also a huge help to me because she was always readily available to give me feedback and advice.

Overall, I feel as though Valley City has prepared me for a successful career in teaching Elementary school students. The support, guidance, instruction, and practical application that I received from Valley City has enabled me to become the educator that I am today. Because of my experiences at Valley City, I know that I am prepared to make a positive difference in the lives of the students I will teach!