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Observation Reflection

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When I was first hired as a substitute site director for the YMCA, I was excited by the opportunities I had been given to support youth in my community. But on my first day, when I looked out into the crowd of 30 elementary students, none of them knowing or caring who I was, I did wonder if I had what it takes. Initial insecurities subsided within minutes as I was swept up in the excitement of the students who wanted to share everything that they were passionate about. Now, forging new connections with the students at all my schools is the most exciting part. Spending time with the kids and engaging with them in activities or lessons allows me to find points of common interests, as well as decipher personal learning styles, which I can use to inform future lessons and activities. Learning to be adaptive to students' needs, while being encouraging and welcoming to the whole group was a challenge. Some students need expansive assistance in a small group setting, or need gentle encouragement when overwhelmed, and providing the needed close support can be difficult when you have classes of over 40 students. But it has taught me patience as well as adaptability to my situation. One thing this experience has solidified for me about being a teacher, is that I'm excited to work in a consistent group of students. As a substitute, it can be difficult to plan for my students' interests or needs if I'm unsure as to which school I'll be working at. Having my own classroom and my own students will give me more control to create a welcoming and conducive learning environment as well as engaging lesson plans. I'm very thankful for the opportunities I've had so far to provide education and support to the people in my community. I'm also very excited to expand that experience as well as my resources and skills to be as prepared as possible in the work of building up our students. In my office, we often say that we all work in construction. Because we are building better futures and better lives alongside our students as we create caring, nurturing environments for them to learn new skills and expand their understanding.