I had my first field experience in a second grade classroom this morning and absolutely loved it! I was there from 8:30-9:30 and we were busy the whole time. The morning started with the students doing their morning work. This consisted of correcting sentences such as, "can carlos ride a bike" and circling the verbs in a short list. After this work time, the teacher, Mrs. Fritz, used the overhead to go over the worksheet with the kids, letting them give her the answers and their reasoning, as well as read the questions aloud. When this was done, one student from each group of desks collected the papers while everyone else got ready to review for the spelling test. To review, Mrs. Fritz put all the words on the board and did "spelling cheers" for each one. For example, for the word drink, we pretended to take a drink as we said each letter. We also clapped each letter as we said it. After the review, I got to give the spelling test! As I walked around the room, I said each word twice, used it in a sentence, and then said it once more. Walking around the classroom allowed me to see how the kids were doing and it was interesting to see how some knew all of the words while others struggled to keep up with my slow pace. Once the quiz was complete, I read each word once more and the kids turned in their quizzes. There was five minutes left until PE, so Mrs. Fritz had the kids go to the carpet to read a poem out of the book Runny Babbit, which switches the first letters of some of the words throughout the poem. The kids loved figuring out what each sentence actually meant!

After this first day, I am really looking forward to spending the rest of the semester with Mrs. Fritz’s class. She is a fantastic teacher and I know observing her will benefit me greatly in my teaching skills!

My second day of observing began with a math worksheet as the students’ morning work. It included a variety of problems like identifying the number twenty, telling time, and a short word problem about cookies. Mrs. Fritz went over the worksheet using the overhead, letting the students answer and work through any confusion they had about certain problems. Many of the kids struggled with the telling time problem. The clock showed 10:15 and on a lot of the papers I looked at, the students wrote 10:3 on the blank. Mrs. Fritz gave a great explanation about why it was 10:15 instead, using a giant clock to show the class. What was different about today was that after morning work the kids did a brief language activity. They had a chart with the beginning sounds of -br, -tr, -dr, -sm, and -sk. They also had 16 pictures of words with these beginning sounds, such as a broom, truck, dress, smile, and skate. The activity was to place each picture under the correct category. Once the student finished that, Mrs. Fritz or I had to check for correctness before the student was allowed to glue their pictures. That was a good learning moment for me; checking the work before gluing kept things from getting messy and complicated! On the backside of the same worksheet were 5 large boxes, each with one of the beginning sounds, a large blank space, and a line at the bottom. For this part, each student was asked to think of their own word to write on the line and draw a picture of. For example, for the sound -br, Ella T. chose the word brown and colored the blank space with a brown crayon. The kids really loved this activity and liked getting to work with their hands, be creative, and think on their own.
Day three of field experience was full of new experiences, mostly because I was in the classroom from 8:30-11:00! The morning kicked off with another morning work worksheet, but this time Mrs. Fritz didn't go over the page with the class. From now on, she will collect the students' work and go over it for correctness. After this, we went to the library. It was fun to watch the kids getting excited over the books they decided to check out. Once the new library books were put into lockers, Mrs. Fritz reviewed vowels and consonants. She asked the class who knew what the difference was between the two and then asked a couple students to explain that to the rest of the class. Other students were asked to make a list of the vowels and consonants on the board. I could tell the students loved getting to be somewhat in control during this time, teaching their fellow classmates and writing on the chalkboard. Then, Mrs. Fritz passed out a poem that had words with the beginning consonant sounds that we studied yesterday. The kids were instructed to underline those beginnings and then decorate the page. Once everyone had finished, we read the poem as a class. The first time we really exaggerated the beginning consonant sounds, holding them out for awhile. The second time, we jumped up whenever we read a word with the sounds we'd studied. The kids LOVED this (we had to do the jumping activity twice)! There were about fifteen minutes before recess left, so the kids started a spelling activity to practice for their final test tomorrow. One page was for the kids to write each word three times on the line, which not only helped them practice spelling the words but writing them correctly on the line. The second worksheet had ten sentences on it with a blank where the kids put in one of their spelling words. Then it was time for recess! Mrs. Fritz had duty today, so I got to go outside for fifteen minutes and watch all the second graders play. It was nice to get outside and see the kids playing, plus some of the boys in my class taught me what "confetti kicking" was (when all the kick balls are kicked at once). After recess, the students had Centers time. While each group was in their center, Mrs. Fritz and I worked with reading groups. Each student is placed into a group based on how they did in a beginning of the year assessment. We started with the lowest group by introducing a new book. My group read, MOVE OVER! and started by doing a picture walk, where we looked at all the pictures and made predictions before reading. When it came time to actually read, Garrett and Trey took turns on some pages or the three of us read together or just the two of them read. It was really neat to hear them sounding out words they didn't know, making predictions, and getting excited when their predictions came true. It was incredible to see the varied levels of reading too! There is quite a gap from the lowest reader to the highest! Today was a great day and I loved helping with reading groups because it was my first time to really get into teaching/instructing.

Friday's field experience began with two morning worksheets for the students, consisting of 5 sentences each where they had to fill in the blank with the correct word. To go over the answers, Mrs. Fritz used a can with tiny cardboard people in it, on which each student's name is written. She would pull one out of the can and that child would either read the sentence or write the answer on the board. The kids loved when they got to go to the chalkboard! Friday is also the day where the kids take their second chance spelling test, so we reviewed each word by patting them out on our legs. I got to give the test again, which was fun, and Mrs. Fritz let me grade and record them. I really loved doing this—when I
worked with her in high school and when my mom has subbed maternity leaves for teachers, I've loved grading, so that will be nice for when I have my own class! While I graded, the class worked on a poem about second grade where certain words were covered up and Mrs. Fritz would uncover one letter at a time, allowing the class to take turns guessing what the word would be, using the words surrounding it to help them. My first week of observing was great and I can't wait for Monday!

Morgan Holmes, 13 September 2010 (created 13 September 2010)
My field experience started completely different today because the school I'm at has started a new program called TEAM MEETINGS. Every Monday morning, all of the teachers at Sangamon meet to talk about how they can work together and share ideas to make them better teachers. While the teachers are meeting, all of the first and second graders meet either in the gym (first grade) or the cafeteria (second grade). I went to the cafeteria to help one of the social workers, Mrs. Larson, handle all 200+ second graders. We sat each class at their own lunch table and passed their lunch count around so they could sign up. Then we talked to them about school bus safety, rules, respect, etc. The kids really liked when we asked questions and they got to respond into the microphone! Around 9:00 Mrs. Larson and I dismissed the class one at a time and then I went back to Mrs. Fritz's room. While it was somewhat hectic since it's been awhile since a team meeting (since last Monday was Labor Day), the class did a pretty good job of getting papers handed in and working on their morning work. So from now on, every Monday morning, I'll head to the cafeteria for the first half hour. I think it's definitely a good thing that the teachers are meeting to discuss how to make Sangamon a better school, I'm just curious about why they don't meet before school starts so that the day doesn't start half an hour later. I'll have to ask Mrs. Fritz the next time I'm in her room!

Morgan Holmes, 14 September 2010 (created 14 September 2010)
Today's field experience was shortened by about fifteen minutes because I had a doctor's appointment, but I still got a lot out of it, which is what I love about working in a classroom. Even though I see a lot of the same subject being taught, Mrs. Fritz exposes me to new methods of teaching every day. Today, the kids were going over a math paper when I got there. Once they had turned it in, we reviewed for their spelling check by patting out the words on their desks. I gave the test again and then Mrs. Fritz let me grade it. As I grade, it's really interesting to see the difference in writing and spelling capabilities from one student to the next. Some have great handwriting-they form their letters correctly and use the lines the right way. Others write their p's backwards or pay no attention whatsoever to the lines provided for writing on. Towards the end of my hour at Sangamon, the class reread a story they read yesterday called Arthur's New Pet. The entire class read it out loud together with Mrs. Fritz stopping every once in awhile to explain a difficult word to the class or ask the students about a time they wanted a pet. Then she did a really neat way of summarizing the story. Each student received a worksheet with five rows, each containing five different faces and a line underneath. On the first line, the class decided to write, "Arthur wanted a pet." To go along with that, each student circled the face that had the emotion they thought went best with the phrase. I've never seen a summary done that way and the kids loved it! Mrs. Fritz let me take home a copy of the worksheet to keep in a folder, which is something
she told me to do all year, so I can start building ideas now. I absolutely love being in Mrs. Fritz’s class and look forward to spending time with her and the kids so much!

Morgan Holmes, 15 September 2010 (created 15 September 2010)
Something I’ve noticed a lot in Mrs. Fritz’s classroom is her level of patience with her students. I’ve seen this demonstrated in multiple ways so far; for example, when a student doesn’t understand a question or is taking awhile to answer something, she gives them time to figure it out and is quiet, letting them think for a little while before she interjects with help. Another instance where I’ve witnessed her patience is when students are doing something they shouldn’t be doing. There is one boy who is always reading after she tells the class to put their books away. She can be doing an overhead or explaining a lesson and Colin will still be reading. Even though he does this multiple times every day, Mrs. Fritz is extremely patient in dealing with him, kindly asking him to put his book away. Eventually she might ask him to turn his card, but she waits longer than I would if I was in her shoes! Patience is something I definitely need to work on as a teacher, more so with students who aren’t following directions than those who don’t understand a lesson.

Morgan Holmes, 18 September 2010 (created 18 September 2010)
On Thursday Mrs. Fritz had a sub, so I was able to experience what it’s like when the students don’t have their teacher. The class did great and listened really well to their sub, Mrs. Carper. Of course she didn’t do everything exactly like Mrs. Fritz, which the kids were quick to point out! Mrs. Fritz left great notes for Mrs. Carper to follow which is something I stored away to remember for when I have subs in my classroom. The class did a really neat art project on Thursday too. It was a flower that described them, so each flower looked somewhat different. First, the boys selected a blue background and the girls pink. Then they glued the stem on. In order to determine how many orange petals to put on their flower, they used their age. The criteria for the head was whether or not they had a pet (yes, then brown; no, then orange). The number of seeds that went on the head of the flower was based on what month the child was born in. Finally, the number of leaves on the stem was determined by how many siblings each child had. I loved this project and the students really enjoyed working on it! On Friday, Mrs. Fritz read a new book to the class, but before she started reading she had the class make predictions based on the title and cover. One of the many practices of Mrs. Fritz’s that I love is how she always lets the kids interact, whether that’s reading a book or doing a lesson. While reading, she let the kids show her their embarrassed faces, had two students act out what it means to stand up for yourself, and took a couple minutes during the middle of the story to let the kids discuss their predictions with a partner. I could tell the kids loved not having to sit on the carpet quietly for the whole story and that they felt important when they were able to contribute.

Morgan Holmes, 20 September 2010 (created 20 September 2010)
Today, Mrs. Fritz started her unit on apples. Throughout the week, the kids will taste test different kinds of apples, graph them, make apple crisp, and more; so while they’re having fun, they’re also learning. This morning Mrs. Fritz showed the class different types of apples and asked them to draw their favorite type. Then she took a big piece of white paper and made a graph out of it with each type of apple listed on the left side. The kids then taped their drawings next to their favorite kind of apple to eat. After all the pictures were
on the graph, Mrs. Fritz talked about how this type of graph is called a pictograph. This was cool for me because in my teachers’ math class we’re discussing types of graphs right now and we learned about a pictograph on Thursday. I can tell the kids are super excited about this unit and I am too!

Morgan Holmes, 21 September 2010 (created 21 September 2010)
Today I got to participate in something totally new-Mrs. Fritz testing each of her students in reading. This year Sangamon is doing something new with this; instead of the teachers testing each student while the rest of the class is working on other work, the whole day is dedicated to letting the teacher work one-on-one with each child as the rest of the class is doing specials like PE, art, music, library, or enrichment. When I came into the room today Mrs. Fritz told me she wanted me to sit with her as she worked with each student so I could see how it’s done! I was SO excited to be a part of that and really learned a lot. I was able to sit through the testing of four students. Mrs. Fritz started each with a book suited to the student’s reading level and then followed along as they read in a packet she had based on the book. Each time the child made a mistake she circled the word or wrote that the child repeated words or self corrected them self. She even let me do a packet of my own for the last student! The kids I watched were all very strong readers, so I didn’t get to compare a strong reader to a low reader, but I really enjoyed the testing nonetheless.

Morgan Holmes, 22 September 2010 (created 22 September 2010)
Today’s field experience was AWESOME!! When I got into the room Mrs. Fritz told me that she had lots for me to do, which I assumed meant she’d be teaching a tough lesson so the kids would have lots of questions or she’d have me grade some papers. Instead, she told me to go over graphing the apples the kids would taste test! So while Mrs. Fritz cut apples, I worked with the class on making a bar graph showing how many of each type of apple the class had brought in. It was so much fun and was a lot easier than I’d thought! For each type, I asked a student to count how many were on the back table then colored in my own bar on the overhead sheet while the class worked on their own worksheets. We also discussed patterns we saw, which variety had the most apples versus which had the least, and why bar graphs are god for comparison. It was so much fun! After we finished our graph everyone got to taste the different kinds of apples and decide which their favorite was. Each student received a 2X3 table with each square containing one of the apple names (red delicious, golden delicious, granny smith, jonathon, gala, or honeycrisp). Then the students formed a line and took a piece of each apple and put it on the appropriate box. The kids loved eating the apples and comparing them, as well as making a new pictograph to show which varieties they truly liked.

Morgan Holmes, 23 September 2010 (created 23 September 2010)
Today in Mrs. Fritz’s class we continued the unit on apples by making apple crisp! It was so much fun and the kids really enjoyed getting to play an active part in making it! While the students worked on a couple phonics worksheets, I called two of them back at a time to use the apple peeler. It was my first time using it, as well as many of the kids, so we all had fun watching our apples be peeled and cored at the same time. Once all of the apples were ready, Mrs. Fritz and I each took a pan and half of the class to make the actual dessert; each student got the chance to sprinkle some oatmeal, brown sugar, white sugar, and cinnamon
over the top. They loved watching all of the ingredients come together. I really like how Mrs. Fritz works so hard to get her students involved. It was a lot to make apple crisp with 21 second graders, but their excitement over the project was completely worth it. That took up most of the 2 1/2 hours I spent in the room, but for the last half hour or so I worked with a boy named Trey on reading. He's in the lowest level and needs a lot of help. Growing up I was a HUGE reader and that was one of my strongest subjects, so working with someone on the complete opposite side of the spectrum was definitely a challenge, but I learned a lot from it.

Morgan Holmes, 24 September 2010 (created 24 September 2010)
After a week full of apples, Mrs. Fritz's class spent this morning back in somewhat of a routine. They worked on a poem for their morning work and took a spelling test. At 9:00 the whole school had an assembly about encouraging students to read. Back to the poem...I really like how Mrs. Fritz includes poems into her students' morning work. They have to do with what the kids are learning, the month/season it is, etc. The kids love finding their spelling words or consonant blends throughout the poem, as well as decorating it. Then, Mrs. Fritz reads the poem multiple times and in a variety of ways. First, she reads it by herself to the class. Then, the class as a whole reads it out loud together. This is the point where Mrs. Fritz mixes things up; sometimes the whole class will read the poem together a third time or sometimes she'll have the girls read it and then the boys. As students get older, poetry is often looked at as boring and kids don't enjoy it, but how Mrs. Fritz does poetry really makes it fun and enjoyable for her students. This is a concept I would love to incorporate into my own class someday.

Morgan Holmes, 27 September 2010 (created 27 September 2010)
Another week in Mrs. Fritz's class and I can't wait to see what it holds! After the teachers' team meeting, school started in the classroom with a worksheet on periods and exclamations points. It was a story about picking apples with a box at the end of each sentence, where the students put the correct punctuation. I love the worksheets Mrs. Fritz uses because they're exciting for the kids; she always incorporates whatever they're studying or the month/season into the worksheets and the kids LOVE IT! Once everyone was done, she went over it on the overhead and then we read the story aloud, using the right voice inflection. Right before I left, the class started reading a story in their reading books called "Julius." Before anyone was allowed to turn to the first page, Mrs. Fritz had everyone make predictions about the story based on the front cover. It's so interesting to see the differing opinions and how second graders think!

Morgan Holmes, 28 September 2010 (created 28 September 2010)
Today Mrs. Fritz gave me some copies of her lesson plans so I would have a base to go off of when I have my own class! Last week she talked to me about how she thought it would be go for me to have a guide because many schools don't tell teachers how to fill in their plans and extra time and such. I'm really excited to read over the plans she copied for me and see how she organizes her day. As I was working in the room today, I looked around the room to see how Mrs. Fritz organized her classroom. Everything has its place and the room is divided into clear "sections." The students' desks are centralized and around the outskirts of the room are different areas like the carpet for reading, the book area, the audiotape
table, the computer area, and the calendar area. My mom is a sub, so she's worked in a variety of rooms and has told me countless stories about rooms that have no rhyme or reason. Not only does the order in Mrs. Fritz's room help her stay on track, it helps her students as well and creates a positive atmosphere for them to learn in. A clean and organized room is definitely really important to me!

Morgan Holmes, 29 September 2010 (created 29 September 2010)
Today Mrs. Fritz's class spent the morning writing letters to some of the troops who will be their pen pals for the year. The kids have spent the last three days writing their letters. On Monday they wrote introduced themselves, on Tuesday they talked about what they're learning in school, and today they asked questions. It was interesting to see what the kids wanted to know, like: How old are you? How many hours do you work? Are you married? Are there goats in Afghanistan? The kids are really excited to send their letters and hear back from their respective soldiers. I think being pen pals with soldiers is a great classroom activity. While it's fun to do, the kids are also practicing their writing and spelling skills. Plus, they will know more about the war at the end of the year than most second graders probably will.

Morgan Holmes, 30 September 2010 (created 30 September 2010)
Today Mrs. Fritz did a white board activity with the kids to practice their spelling words. The kids LOVED getting to write on the boards, which is something I could relate to because when I was their age the white board activities were my favorite! Mrs. Fritz played a game where she would pick a word on the WORD WALL BOARD and give the kids 5 clues about it to see if they could guess the word she was thinking about. I got to pick the word one round which was really fun! I forget about all of the fun activities I did in school so it's good to have this refresher to remind me of some of the things I want to do with my own class!

Morgan Holmes, 1 October 2010 (created 1 October 2010)
This morning's MORNING WORK consisted of a story that wasn't in chronological order that the kids needed to put in the correct order. First, they cut out each sentence. Then, they placed each word on a piece of white paper in chronological order. Many of the students struggled with putting the sentences in an order that flowed. The story was about picking apples and making them into an apple pie, and I helped a lot of kids who put things like: Anne's family paid for their apples. They climbed up ladders to pick the apples. They baked an apple pie. Anne's family left the orchard." Once Mrs. Fritz or I talked them through the story they understood better. Today the kids were really excited because they were going to the annual Dog Walk, where students kindergarten-fifth grade go to the trails in Mahomet and walk a certain distance. They spent the first part of school raising money so today they all wore their t-shirts and had their faces painted and hair colored orange and blue to go walk. I think it's great that our schools do fun events for their students.

Morgan Holmes, 4 October 2010 (created 4 October 2010)
Today Mrs. Fritz's class did a fall crossword puzzle for their morning work. For many of them, this was a new concept, so they needed some help in understanding the layout of the puzzle and the importance of putting the right word in either UP or DOWN. This crossword
had a word bank, so that helped a lot! Mrs. Fritz let me go over the puzzle on the overhead which was a lot of fun. I like being in front of the class and feel really comfortable! After this, Mrs. Fritz read a poem to the kids called "Fire, Fire! Yelled Mrs. McGuire." I remember reading this book when I was in second grade and it was one of my favorites! The kids really liked the rhyming and getting to decorate their poems with fire trucks and burning buildings. This week they're learning about fire safety, so this poem was a great way to start the week's theme!

Morgan Holmes, 5 October 2010 (created 5 October 2010)

Today's observation was so much fun! The morning started with school pictures, which brought back a lot of memories from the years of school pictures I took! The kids looked so nice all dressed up and were really excited to get their pictures taken! After that, we went on a field trip to the fire station! Since it is just down the street, we walked, which was really nice because the weather was beautiful this morning! When we got there, we were taken into the garage where 3 of the trucks are kept. We had to wait for the third class to get there so Mrs. Fritz started a game of eye spy. I thought this was a great idea-it kept the kids focused and gave them something to do while they waited. Once the third class got to the station, 2 firefighters talked to the kids about fire safety. They started by showing the kids what a firefighter has to wear, which the students loved. The firefighters also talked about stop drop and roll, making a safety plan if there is a fire at home, and the importance of checking your smoke detectors. Then the kids got the chance to sit in an actual truck. The group I went with sat in the ladder truck and the kids loved it! They talked and talked about all the things they know about fire trucks (since they're pros of course). One of the girls in Mrs. Fritz's class actually does know a lot about firefighters, trucks, and the job because her dad is a firefighter in Urbana. While the kids were checking out the truck, a call actually came in! We had to get the kids out of the truck and up against a wall so we would be out of the way of the firefighters. Some of the kids were afraid, but most of them were so excited that their eyes were the size of plates! This aspect of teaching is so cool and I'm really looking forward to taking my students on field trips. The kids love to get out and explore new places, and it's fun for the teachers too! I'm so glad Mrs. Fritz let me tag along!

Morgan Holmes, 6 October 2010 (created 6 October 2010)

Today the kids' morning work was a worksheet containing 10 word clues they had to figure out about fire safety. The clues consisted of putting words together and then taking some of the letters out to form a word. For example, one of the words was SAFETY, so the worksheet said safe + type -pe. The kids really enjoyed this, especially when Mrs. Fritz let them come to the overhead and figure out the words. After this, I read a story to the class about fire safety. It was a great book! Not only did it include information about fire safety, it also talked about how to do a fire drill and had fun facts about the animal characters in the book. The kids loved reading about the animal facts and had a lot of connections to make to the book since they went to the fire station yesterday!

Morgan Holmes, 7 October 2010 (created 7 October 2010)

Today at my observation an author came to talk to the school. It was really interesting to hear what she had to say and how she connected with all of the kids, even though they're in first and second grade! When we got back from the assembly, Mrs. Fritz talked to the class
about how they would get the chance to write and illustrate their own stories this year too, which the kids were really excited about! I also worked with a reading group today that I haven't worked with yet this year. They're the second highest group, so it was new for me to work with kids reading at a harder level. We started the chapter book Tornado and read the first chapter as a group. Before reading, I let each student make predictions about the book based on the title and front cover picture. Making predictions is a big part of Mrs. Fritz's class and something I've really come to love! On Friday and Monday, Mahomet doesn't have school, so I won't get to go in. I'm bummed because I love spending my morning with Mrs. Fritz and her class!

Morgan Holmes, 12 October 2010 (created 12 October 2010)

As soon as I walked into Mrs. Fritz's class she told me she was going to put me on the spot again. She had a lot of students she still needed to perform reading tests with, so she let me do all of the work with the class! They were already working on making a birthday book for a classmate, so I let them finish that. Then, I read them a book about Chameleons because they started studying reptiles and amphibians last week. The book was great because it showed so many vibrant colors and the kids loved how chameleons blend in with their surroundings. After reading the book, I explained to the class about a worksheet they were going to do. First, they had to color the chameleon. They LOVED this! Their chameleons had so much color and they really enjoyed getting to put unique designs onto them. Then, they cut the worksheet in half, because the top half was a big long tongue and the bottom half was the chameleon. They glued the two pieces together and then folded the big long paper accordion style to make a book. This proved to be pretty hard for most of them. I explained how to fold this way to the entire class, but almost every student needed more help. After the books were done, I ended my observation by reviewing the spelling words by clapping and snapping them. I'm so glad Mrs. Fritz is letting me do so much with her class because it's really building my confidence as a teacher!

Morgan Holmes, 13 October 2010 (created 13 October 2010)

Today in my field observation I was able to watch Mrs. Fritz handle a parent conflict. One of her students came up to her at the very beginning of the day and told her he wasn't feeling well and that he'd been throwing up last night and this morning. His mom sent him to school anyway because there was a special field trip for all of the kids who raised a certain amount of money for the Dawg Walk, and Garrett was one of those kids. She felt he deserved to go on the field trip, sick or not. Mrs. Fritz didn't agree at all and felt that he should go home. He was obviously sick; his face was white and he looked ready to throw up again at any minute. Plus, Mrs. Fritz felt it wasn't a good idea to subject all of her students, as well as those going on the field trip, to the flu. Since her call with this student's mom didn't go well, she took the matter to Mr. Cabutti. He said that as long as Garrett didn't have a fever, he was welcome at school. Despite her opposition, Mrs. Fritz respected his opinion and didn't talk bad about him or Garrett's mom. Eventually, Garrett did end up going home because he got sick in the office. I'm glad I got to witness that because it showed me the professional way to handle a conflict with a parent and school administration.
Morgan Holmes, 14 October 2010 (created 14 October 2010)
Today was a busy day in Mrs. Fritz's class! When I walked in, the students were finishing their pumpkins and black cats to decorate the hallway with. Then, Mrs. Fritz talked to them about personification because each kid was going to take the pumpkin they'd made, create a face for it, and make a speech bubble to match the face. So if the kid chose a happy face their bubble might say "I'm so excited for Halloween!" She showed them pictures of different jack-o-lanterns and read them a book in which items that regularly don't talk do (like a pumpkin, boots, and a black hat). The kids loved the book and were excited when they got to create a sentence and make their speech bubbles. Something else they were excited about was the visit from Remarkable Reptiles. A woman from a forest preserve came in and talked to the class about reptiles and showed them 2 turtles and a snake. The kids loved it! I think it's great to bring in things like that to correspond with a unit being studied, plus the kids think it's awesome!

Morgan Holmes, 15 October 2010 (created 15 October 2010)
Today when I walked into Mrs. Fritz's class she pulled me aside to tell me one of her girls has lice. That's a part of school I'll never forget! Fortunately I never had lice, but it was really big when I was at Sangamon and I remember getting frequent lice checks, which Mrs. Fritz did to everyone this morning. After that lovely news, I read to the class again, which is something I've really grown to love! Reading has always been something I love doing and it's fun to read books to Mrs. Fritz's class that my teachers read to me in second grade. Then the class worked on their speech bubbles/pumpkins from yesterday. Today they got to make the faces for their pumpkins. It was neat to see how each student interpreted how his/her pumpkin should look. The kids loved getting to work with crafts again!

Morgan Holmes, 18 October 2010 (created 18 October 2010)
Today was team day for the teachers, so I spent the first 15 minutes in the cafeteria manning the second graders with Mrs. Larson. When I did get into Mrs. Fritz's class, I helped them with their morning work and the class went over it. Today, Mrs. Fritz put the work on the board for the students to correct, which they really liked. I remember loving anytime I got to write on the board! Letting my students teach themselves in that way is something I really want to implement in my own classroom. Not only does it let the kids teach themselves, it's fun for them to write on the board/overhead.

Morgan Holmes, 19 October 2010 (created 19 October 2010)
Today Mrs. Fritz had her students do a really neat activity. First, she had me read a story with them from their reading book. They started a new unit in that book about nature, so our story was all about different aspects of nature. When I finished reading with them, Mrs. Fritz pointed out the different types of pictures in the story. Some were far away pictures and others were close up, so the students could see all the details of the leaves, animals, etc. To reinforce this idea of far away versus close up, Mrs. Fritz passed out a worksheet with two columns, one labeled FAR AWAY and the other CLOSE UP. Last week, the students brought in different parts of nature, so today they each picked something to draw. There was so much stuff, like pinecones, berries, leaves, sticks, bugs, etc. The kids loved it! It was really neat to walk around the room and see how each child saw their piece of nature. Some of the kids were really detailed and put a lot of time into capturing every little detail. It was
a great activity because a) it got the kids reading, b) the kids were learning about nature, and c) the kids got to be interactive and hands on.

Morgan Holmes, 20 October 2010 (created 20 October 2010)
This morning Mrs. Fritz’s class was more rowdy and talkative than usual, so she had them get the jitters out with some exercises. She had them do “Tiger bounces”, arm circles, spin their hands in a tight circle, and take deep breaths. While it helped most of the class, some still remained talkative, but what I like about these exercises is that it gets the kids active. Yes, it’s only 20 “Tiger bounces” and doesn’t even take 5 minutes, but it gets the students up and active instead of just sitting in their desk all day. Plus the kids really like it. Towards the end of my time in her room, Mrs. Fritz let me grade her math evaluations for report cards. I graded 2 math pages: addition and subtraction, both consisting of 30 problems with a time limit of 2 minutes. There were many kids who did really well, but there were also a lot who only finished around half of the problems in the allotted time. It’s interesting to see how varied the skill levels are in a classroom.

Morgan Holmes, 21 October 2010 (created 21 October 2010)
Today Mrs. Fritz had her class divide into groups to make a poster about a reptile. She let the kids pick who was in their group and after they had picked her pulled me aside and told me that when she lets kids pick their own groups, she always lets the lower students pick their group members; otherwise those students will be left out and clumped together. Then each group picked a book about the reptile they wanted to do their poster on. After each group picked, the students worked to find 5 facts to put on their poster. This was a great exercise in cooperation! Mrs. Fritz said that to me over and over, and it was interesting to watch students working together and taking turns writing facts and looking through the book. The kids really loved this reading the books, picking facts, and starting on their posters. This is also a great alternative to Mrs. Fritz standing in front of the class telling them about reptiles. Instead, the students are able to be hands on and learning for themselves. I’m excited to see how the posters turn out!

Morgan Holmes, 22 October 2010 (created 22 October 2010)
Today was an easy day in Mrs. Fritz’s class. First, everyone did their morning work, which consisted of a crossword puzzle about bats. Then they had their spelling test. I gave the original test to the students who didn’t get all of their words right the first time and Mrs. Fritz gave the bonus test to those students who did get a 10/10 earlier this week. After this, I graded the tests while Mrs. Fritz read from a giant book about animal tracks. The kids really enjoyed the page where they had to match the paw to the animal. After such a busy week, it was nice to have a somewhat laid back morning!

Morgan Holmes, 25 October 2010 (created 25 October 2010)
I didn’t do very much in my field observation today. Since it’s teacher meeting day, I started in the gym helping the social work with the first graders. She talked to them about the right way to get a drink and use the bathroom. When I got to Mrs. Fritz’s room things were hectic! She talked to me briefly about how late starting days are hard for her class to get into. The class finished their morning work which was a skeleton that they cut out and fastened together with brads. While Mrs. Fritz read a story about a skeleton, I hung the
students' skeletons by the windows and then listened to the end of the story. What I really like is how Mrs. Fritz is so animated while reading. It really gets her students interested!

Morgan Holmes, 26 October 2010 (created 26 October 2010)
Today I spent most of my time helping Mrs. Fritz get work done. She seemed so stressed when I came into the room and I was more than happy to help lighten her work load! She had me put papers into mailboxes, sort Weekly Readers, finalize parent/teacher conference times, give/grade the spelling test, and make copies of the alternate word list for those students who got all of their spelling words right. Helping with this work reminded me of just how much work teachers do. It was a good reminder of how important it will be for me to be organized and use my free time (during recesses, lunch) wisely. Even though there is a lot of extra work to be done, I'm looking forward to it! I've always enjoyed "busy" work, for lack of a better word. I love grading papers and accomplishing my To Do list.

Morgan Holmes, 27 October 2010 (created 27 October 2010)
Today Mrs. Fritz did a really neat activity with her class. She taught them about acrostic poems and had them write their own. To start the lesson, she read them a book that was all acrostic poems. It was really neat! Then she let each student do their own with the word fall, autumn, or leaves. The kids loved it! Some did really well by themselves and were thinking of words and/or phrases that were so in depth and creative. Other students struggled to think of what they could put with each letter. Once the students had finished their poem, Mrs. Fritz or I checked it and gave them the okay to go over the poem in black marker. Then they took their poem to the back table where there was a pile of various leaves. The kids picked a few to do a leaf shading with. The final product looked awesome! There was the poem with different colored and varieties of leaves. The kids loved getting to shade the leaves too!

Morgan Holmes, 28 October 2010 (created 28 October 2010)
One thing that really stuck out to me today was recess duty. It was the first really cold day of the week and many students didn't have jackets. It was cold when we went out at 10:00! Mrs. Fritz wore her winter jacket and gloves and the kids were coming up to me telling me how cold they were, even in their coats! I wish the school would have a place for the students without coats to spend their recess. I know in the cafeteria there is snack time for students who brought one, so maybe that's a place kids who don't have a coat could go. I hate to see kids cold and miserable at recess. Plus they had to spend 2 more recesses outside today! I would have dreaded those recesses for the rest of the day if I had been one of the students without a coat!

Morgan Holmes, 29 October 2010 (created 29 October 2010)
At my field experience I saw implementing decisions in action. The power went out in Mahomet this morning and Sangamon was a mess! Some of the rooms had power while others didn't, and Mrs. Fritz only had power in her lights but not her computer, overhead, or pencil sharpeners. Because she was planning to do an overhead activity this morning, she had to come up with a different plan on the spot. So instead of the overhead, she let some of the students share the stories they'd written earlier this week. Mrs. Fritz did a
great job of staying in control and thinking on her feet when her overhead didn't work and
the class still flowed really well, despite the sudden change.

**Morgan Holmes,** 1 November 2010 (created 1 November 2010)
Today I got to lead the class again! I did the overhead that Mrs. Fritz was planning to do
when the power was out last Friday. It was about nature and there were 15 sentences with
one or two words covered up. I would read the sentence and then the students would guess
what the word was. They really enjoyed it. I've seen that kids love to be active and vocal,
and Mrs. Fritz does a lot of active participation in her classroom. It's also more fun for the
teacher too because he/she gets to be active with her students.

**Morgan Holmes,** 2 November 2010 (created 2 November 2010)
Today I spent most of my time grading the Tuesday spell checks and the
addition/subtraction timed tests the students did. Thursday is parent teacher conference
day, so Mrs. Fritz wanted the students to take timed tests to show to their parents
Thursday night. While I was grading, I thought about having conferences when I'm a
teacher. I'm excited to meet with parents and talk to them about their children, but I'm not
looking forward to showing some parents that their child isn't where he/she should be. I'm
a very kind person and have a hard time telling someone that they're not doing well
enough, but I know as a teacher it will be important for me to let parents know if their child
is struggling or falling behind.

**Morgan Holmes,** 3 November 2010 (created 3 November 2010)
Today Mrs. Fritz read a book called *How the Chick Tricked the Fox* because the class is
learning about words that end with -ck, -ke, and -k. Every time Mrs. Fritz read a work with
one of those endings the class counted it. At the end of each page she reviewed the words
that she'd read. The kids love doing activities like this because they get to be vocal.

**Morgan Holmes,** 4 November 2010 (created 4 November 2010)
Today Mrs. Fritz put me to work getting things ready for conferences tonight. I graded the
spelling tests from this morning and put them into each child's folder, as well as their
morning work paper from yesterday. I also sorted the folders so they would be in order for
the conferences tonight. Then the kids did an activity that showed the life cycle of a frog.
They got to color each part and then cut it out and put it all together as the cycle. It turned
out really neat and was a great depiction of how frogs start as eggs/tadpoles in water and
end up as frogs on land. It was a somewhat relaxing morning in Mrs. Fritz's class which was
nice because this week has been busy! Since there are conferences tonight there is no
school tomorrow, so I won't be going in to observe. I'll definitely miss not seeing the kids
until Monday!

**Morgan Holmes,** 8 November 2010 (created 8 November 2010)
Today Mrs. Fritz introduced a new book about a pilgrim named Molly. I read the book to
the class and then Mrs. Fritz announced the project each student would be working on,
which is the same project Molly did in the book. Each student got a clothespin which they
will decorate to look like a pilgrim or an Indian. The class will then recreate the first
Thanksgiving on a big shelf in the classroom. The students were SO excited when Mrs. Fritz
announced what they would be doing! I'm really excited to see how each student decorates their clothespin and what the final project will look like with all of the characters, houses, etc. This is another part of teaching that really appeals to me-doing fun activities that my students really enjoy!

**Morgan Holmes**, 9 November 2010 (created 9 November 2010)

Today was a creative day in Mrs. Fritz's class! The students were busy coloring American flags and banners to decorate the halls for the Veteran's Day assembly on Thursday. The flags were really neat because on the white stripes Mrs. Fritz had each student write about Veteran's Day. Then she had made two big banners that said "WE LOVE OUR VETERANS." The kids each got to decorate a letter and sign them. They loved it and are so excited for the assembly on Thursday! I'm really excited too because I will get to see the assembly when I observe Thursday!

**Morgan Holmes**, 10 November 2010 (created 10 November 2010)

Today the class did more work for the veterans tomorrow. They made thank you cards to give each veteran that comes to the assembly tomorrow. They also did a Weekly Reader about veterans which they really enjoyed. I love how the school is making such a big deal about Veteran's Day. It's important for the kids to understand how important our veterans are and to respect all that they have done for us.

**Morgan Holmes**, 11 November 2010 (created 11 November 2010)

Today I spent most of my field experience at the Veteran's Day assembly. It was great! The kids and teachers all wore red, white and blue, and the music teacher helped the kids learn 4 songs over the past few weeks to perform for the veterans. Some of the kids in reading enrichment read aloud, and 4 of the 6 students that did were from Mrs. Fritz's class! It was awesome to see the kids celebrating a holiday that doesn't always get much respect. After the assembly, the kids and their invited veterans came back to Mrs. Fritz's room. She let the students ask questions, which they really enjoyed. I'm so glad I was able to be a part of the Veteran's Day celebration at Sangamon!

**Morgan Holmes**, 12 November 2010 (created 12 November 2010)

Today was weird because we've spent all this week working on Veteran's Day projects, so to not be doing that today was really different! It was back to normal for Mrs. Fritz's class. We took the spelling test and I was pleasantly surprised when I graded them. The students did a lot better on it than I thought they would, because the words were tough! I love to see how the kids progress from their first test on Tuesday to the second test on Friday!

**Morgan Holmes**, 15 November 2010 (created 15 November 2010)

Today was a really down day for the hour I was in Mrs. Fritz's class. It was a later starting morning because of the teacher team meeting, so the kids spent most of the time reading and decorating a poem about Thanksgiving. While doing this, Mrs. Fritz read to them from a Magic Treehouse book about pilgrims. The kids really like it, and listening to Mrs. Fritz read to them reminded me of how much I loved being read to as a student. When I have my own classroom I definitely plan to read a lot to my students and encourage reading as well. It can be so much fun and allow kids to delve into some awesome adventures!
Morgan Holmes, 16 November 2010 (created 16 November 2010)
Today the kids worked on a really neat turkey project. They were given a turkey with its feathers to the side, each with a different word on them. They had to put the feathers in alphabetical order and then glue them onto the turkey. The kids really liked putting their turkeys together and decorating them! Today I got to see how work for teachers can really pile up! Mrs. Fritz had spelling tests, worksheets, and math papers to grade. It was quite a pile of work! I was able to get the spelling graded and put into each student’s mailbox, but she still had quite a pile to get through!

Morgan Holmes, 17 November 2010 (created 17 November 2010)
Today the class did a fun math worksheet over adding 2 digit numbers. It was quite a challenge for some students, while others breezed through it! The answers to the problems were listed at the bottom of the page in no certain order, so after each problem the students found the answer below and crossed it off. After completing the worksheet, there was one answer they didn’t cross off. With this number, they had to think of their own 2 digit problem that would equal that number. At the end of my observation, I read a book about turkeys having a Thanksgiving party. It was a fun book and the class really enjoyed it!

Morgan Holmes, 18 November 2010 (created 18 November 2010)
Today the class did a really fun pumpkin activity! First, I read them the book "Pumpkin Soup" as an introduction. Then we spent the morning estimating the number of ribs, the weight, and how many seeds were in a small pumpkin vs. a large pumpkin. The kids’ favorite part was getting to cut open the pumpkins and count the seeds. It was neat to see how each group proceeded to count their seeds. A couple started out by each taking their own pile and counting them, then trying to add all those numbers together. One group started off strong from the beginning, working together to make groups of ten for easier counting. During the activity one of Mrs. Fritz’s students said, "Mrs. Fritz! We’re having fun and doing math!" It was awesome to see everyone really enjoying themselves while learning too!

Morgan Holmes, 19 November 2010 (created 19 November 2010)
Today Mrs. Fritz’s class did another really fun activity! One of the moms came in today to help the class make recycled cards for either the troops or to take to a nursing home. Everything the kids used to make the cards was recycled, like paper bags from grocery stores and pop cans to make snowflakes. The kids loved cranking the pop cans through the cutting machine to make the snowflakes and had a lot of fun being creative. I love how Mrs. Fritz did a project that emphasized the importance of our environment too!

Morgan Holmes, 22 November 2010 (created 22 November 2010)
Today I got to see the completed pilgrim/Indian village the kids made with their clothespins. It was AWESOME! The class was so creative in making their person and used all kinds of materials: felt, beads, construction paper, feathers. Some of the women pilgrims even had braids! I love that the kids were able to be creative in their learning and get involved in a unique way, rather than simply reading some stories about Thanksgiving.
While it will be nice to have some days off of school for Thanksgiving, I will miss seeing the class Wednesday-Friday!

Morgan Holmes, 23 November 2010 (created 23 November 2010)
Today was the last day of class for Mrs. Fritz's class this week, so the kids were really excited! When I got there everyone was working on their morning work which consisted of a birthday page for Owen and a worksheet about the -aw sound. That ended up being harder for some of the students, so Mrs. Fritz went over it on the board. After that, she gave the science test about reptiles, amphibians, and fish. Since I was there she pulled some of the slower test takers to the reading table so I could give them the test at a slower pace. The test consisted of circling the right answer, true/false, one short answer, and describing the 4 stages of the life cycle of frogs. It was interesting to see how much slower my group was compared to the rest of the class, so I'm glad Mrs. Fritz split them up. That's something else I forgot about with teaching: students work at different paces and when the test is read aloud it can be hard to keep the fast test takers engaged while allowing enough time for the slow test takers to think.

Morgan Holmes, 29 November 2010 (created 29 November 2010)
Today was the students' first day back from Thanksgiving break, but you couldn’t tell they’d been off of school for three days because they worked really hard! Mrs. Fritz let me do almost everything during the hour I was in her room: I went over the morning work with the class and reviewed their new spelling words with them too. While I was grading papers, Mrs. Fritz read a book to the class about a librarian in Iraq. She explained to the students how the school's librarian recommended this book to her since her class has been writing letters to veterans. That was a great demonstration for me as to how the staff at schools works together. I think it's great that the librarian remembered how Mrs. Fritz's class is writing to troops in Afghanistan and took the time to find them a book that is related to that. I hope the school I work in will place importance on everyone working together as a team!

Morgan Holmes, 30 November 2010 (created 30 November 2010)
Today the social worker came in for the last half hour of my field observation to do Character Counts with Mrs. Fritz's class. It was interesting to see how that is in the classroom because I've never seen it before. The social worker, Mrs. Larson, has a lot of energy and is really passionate about her job, so her up-beat personality really appeals to the students. Before she came, Mrs. Fritz went over the morning work with the class, which was a math paper. One of the problems dealt with telling time, which the class hasn't gone over yet. Mrs. Fritz explained how to always start with the short hand in a neat way: she said that when you grow up, you start small before you grow big. So when you tell time, you always start with the short hand first.

Morgan Holmes, 1 December 2010 (created 1 December 2010)
Today I spent the morning typing the students' stories to make into books. It's so much fun to read what the kids write! It's also interesting to see how different one student writes from the next. Some of them can write stories 12 pages long with so many details while others struggle to write a paragraph. I know writing is something a lot of kids don't enjoy
doing, but Mrs. Fritz has made it a lot of fun for her class and they really love doing it! It helps that they get to illustrate and share their stories too, because they love to tell everyone about their work.

Morgan Holmes, 2 December 2010 (created 2 December 2010)
This morning Mrs. Fritz put me to work! I started by working with students on revising their stories so I could publish them. After I’d met with those students, I finished typing the stories and made them into books. Then I graded math papers, which took a long time because there were many different ways the problems could be solved, so I couldn't just look at a key and grade quickly. After recess, I read with a reading group. The kids LOVED the story, which was a lot of fun to see because I love reading too, so seeing young kids find joy in that is awesome! As I was getting ready to leave, Mrs. Fritz asked me how I’d feel about teaching more the last couple weeks of observing. I said of course I'd love to! I’m so excited to have this chance to build my confidence even more and be up in front of a class!

Morgan Holmes, 3 December 2010 (created 3 December 2010)
Today is my last blog for my field observation. This semester in Mrs. Fritz’s room has been AMAZING!! I’ve gotten so close to her and her students and will miss them a lot next semester! I feel so blessed to have worked with Mrs. Fritz because she thought it was so important for me to get the most out of my experience. She let me interact with the class every day, go on a field trip, teach some lessons, read to the class, grade papers, observe a one-on-one reading check, and lots more! I know when I have a classroom of my own I will think back to all I learned from Mrs. Fritz and the experiences I faced in her room. Working in her class definitely reinforced my love for kids and teaching, and makes me so excited to become a teacher one day!!