**Observation Reflection**

**Top Three Things I Have Learned**

1. **Pressures teachers face-** I have known that Virginia SOL standards are very important. However, I did not realize that the failing Federal standards like GAP group one can result in a headache for teachers. I hope it does not get to a point at any school I teach that I have to turn in lesson plans each morning. I gained a lot of valuable insight by going to staff and department meetings this semester. I found the Red light, Yellow light, Green light activity chart interesting, but at the same time a standard that can sometimes be hard to meet. I do not know if it is a fair evaluation of teachers. I have also learned teachers have to deal with a lot of technology and student issues in their classrooms. Dealing with giving students makeup work to catch up is also maybe more challenging a task than I thought before coming into a classroom. Also, teachers with families have even more pressure than a teacher without a wife, husband, or kids.
2. **The challenges of working with IEP Students-** I had heard of an IEP before this fall, but it was great for me to be able to work with IEP students this semester. I knew teachers had a legal obligation to follow a student’s IEP; however, I got to see those accommodations put into practice this semester. I learned about the challenges these students, their aides, and teachers face in trying to help them succeed in the classroom. At the same time many of them are smart and capable of performing well in the classroom. I have learned it is important for a teacher, aide, and student to all work together in order for the student to succeed. Related to this, it was also neat to see ESL learners in a classroom and the challenges they face in trying to adjust to and English speaking classroom.
3. **The importance of proper video showing-** We have watched a lot of videos in this class this semester which I like. I did not realize before this semester that showing a video requires a high level of teacher attentiveness, as a teacher cannot just grade papers or focus on other things during a video. You have to be on the lookout for students sleeping, having cell phones out, or misbehaving in general. It is also important to explain important parts of a video to students. I had never seen or had a teacher pause a video so much to explain things; however, I now understand the importance of it.

**Critical Observations**

 I cannot honestly think of one thing that I can absolutely say is going wrong in this class because my CT has been teaching World History for several years, and I am a rookie with more knowledge of American History. I personally have no problem with assigning group bookwork after a test, in order to grade papers. I just do not know how that would go with an administrator walking in if I was doing that, and bookwork is something I do not want to do too often as I think it could bore students. Also, I have seen some other teachers at this school do Bellwork or an introductory activity at the beginning of class, and I know it is something pushed hard in our Master’s Program at Virginia Tech. I think it is something that can help focus students at the beginning of class; however, I understand it may not be practical at the beginning of every class either.