In my field experience classroom, I participated in three parent-teacher conferences. I sat in on two conferences on October 30, 2013 and one conference on October 31, 2013. I observed the conferences and did not contribute orally. I sent permission forms home with ten students and all parents agreed to my participation in their conferences.

Parents care for their children and are interested in knowing how they are progressing in school. By communicating students’ progress to parents, the parents will know how to better assist their children at home. The teacher can explain to the parents how their child is growing or regressing academically, socially, and emotionally in school. It is important for the parents to know their child’s life in school because their child’s personality and temperament might be totally different at home.

Student A’s parent seemed genuinely concerned about his child’s progress in school. My mentor teacher explained to the parent that the child started off the year as an excellent and well-behaved student. The child had recently become very disorganized, misplacing homework and worksheets used in class. In order to support the student, my MT politely asked if anything was going on at home that would be affecting the student’s progress at school. The parent went on to describe the situation in the child’s home and stated that he would do whatever he could to try to help his child stay on track. Both the parent and my MT remained calm and composed during this discussion and came to a compromise on how to help the student.
Student B’s parent-teacher conference seemed to have a casual tone. Student B’s parent is an educator at another elementary school. The parent was aware of the hardships and everyday workload of my mentor teacher, so she was very understanding during the conference. My MT used academic acronyms and terms freely because this parent was familiar with them. The interactions between my MT and the parent gave me the impression that they had a friendly social relationship outside of the classroom.

I did not contribute orally to the parent-teacher conferences. If I had a chance to speak to the parents, I would discuss their students’ behavior and temperament in the classroom, whether it was positive or negative. There are many instances in the classroom where my MT doesn’t have the time to pay attention to the behaviors or thought processes of individual students. I would express to the parent what I noticed are their child’s interests or strengths in the classroom.

Being able to sit in and observe these conferences will prepare me for the different types of interactions I will have with the parents or guardians of my future students. I learned the structure of a conference and what is discussed in regards to the students’ progress in school. I now also understand the importance of documentation. Keeping students’ work in portfolios to present at the conferences is vital. When you explain a child’s progress to their parent or guardian, they want to see evidence. I think that being aware of your tone and starting the conference by saying something positive about the student is crucial. I am glad that I had the opportunity to observe several parent-teacher conferences. I feel that I am better prepared for the experiences I will have with parents and guardians and to some extent know what to expect when I become a teacher.