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Throughout my teacher aiding hours this semester, I have had several things that repeatedly caught my attention. The teacher's classroom management and the teacher's relationship to the diversity in the classroom were the main elements of my teacher's teaching that I found interesting.

Overall, classroom management was handled well by my teacher. The first several times that I was there, I noticed that my teacher had a good relationship to the students. They respected her, but they were not afraid of her. They never treated her with disrespect, but they also were not afraid to ask her a question if they did not understand, or to ask her for help if they were struggling with a particular skill or idea. Over the next several times that I aided, I noticed more and more how the teacher's relation to the students helped to create a better learning environment. I wrote this about her classroom management after aiding for several days.

*One of the positive things that I have noticed about my teacher's strategies is that she is good at creating a class environment that is comfortable for the students; they are not afraid to be adventurous and creative because she has created the belief that there is no bad art if they work hard on it. She has a relationship with the students that is both authoritative and friendly; she has found a good balance between being the students' friend, but also their teacher. The students are not afraid to talk to her, or to ask her questions, or even to come in after school or during their homeroom to work on their projects and talk. One way that I think she encourages classroom unity*

*and creativity is that she has the students present their work when they are finished with them.*

The creativity that she encourages by creating a safe learning environment for her students is extremely important in a classroom, especially so in an art classroom because of the importance of creativity and skill development. On my last day of aiding, it was the beginning of the new quarter in the middle school, so my teacher had a whole new group of students. It was interesting to see how her classroom management was different at the beginning of a quarter than it was at the end. I wrote this about how she related to the new students.

*It was interesting to observe how my teacher set up the rules and procedures on the first day of class. We talked about setting up the procedures on the first day of class in order to make them work more smoothly later on, and since I got to see the end result of the third quarter and the beginning of the fourth quarter, I have been able to see how well this method really works. We spent the entire day reading over the syllabus (which was basically the rules and consequences) and doing a very short exercise on drawing from an ant's point of view. My teacher has the students clean the classroom after each class; each student in the class has a job which they have to make sure gets done each day. I have seen how smoothly this worked at the end of last quarter, so it was interesting to see how she introduced the students to the idea, and how she gave them the instructions of how to carry out their individual jobs.*

The only time that I thought my teacher could have handled her class better was one day when the students were presenting their work to the class. The class was very energetic that day, and she did not have the transitions planned effectively. This is what I wrote after that experience.

*The students did their presentations of their finished cartoon houses. She wrote four questions on the board—which they were expected to answer (each student was to answer two questions since they worked with partners on their projects). She was grading them on what they said, their conduct, and their voice quality. I think that these are good things to grade the students on because it covers all of the bases, however, most of the students did not do very well with the content or the voice quality. I was sitting in the back of the room with several of the other students, and most of the time I could not hear what*

*they were saying, and most of the time they just gave a few word answers to the questions; they did not go into any detail at all, and she did not push them to say more. She sat in the front center with her grade book, but she did not grade the students while they were presenting, she waited until after they were finished to write, so there was about five minutes of time for the students to do nothing while she finished grading. So, being middle school students they began to talk to each other, and occasionally should across the room. She asked them to be quiet when the next group was ready to present, but she did not wait until the students were quiet to tell the presenters to start. This added disruption to the already quiet and short presentations. I think this illustrated again the lack of transitional planning. If she was going to have those breaks in between the presentations she should have had something for the students to work on (such as peer evaluations, or at least comments on their classmates' projects).*

Generally, my teacher handled all aspects of classroom control very effectively, it was rare that a student would act out in class, and I think the students enjoyed the safety of the classroom.

The teacher's relation to the diversity in the classroom was another thing that caught my attention quite often. The school was very diverse, and my teacher handled it well for the most part. She incorporated much of the diversity into the curriculum by doing a unit on Cultural Architecture. This is what I wrote about her use of the diversity in the curriculum.

*This diversity has been interesting to me because my school experiences were always very homogeneous. My teacher uses this diversity to her advantage, and is doing a unit on Cultural Architecture right now, so she is having the students do projects that involve all the different cultures that are represented in the classes.*

The first several days there, I noticed that two students were sitting on the side of the classroom, not doing any projects, and my teacher would rarely pay them attention. I did not understand why my teacher seemed to be ignoring them, but I was not able to ask her about it until later. This is what I wrote after first noticing these two students.

*She puts the two students who do not speak English at a table by themselves on the side of the room, and she lets them do whatever they want. Generally, they just sit and watch the other students for about half of the class, and then she goes over and asks them what they want to do. Usually they agree to color for a while, and then they just sit again. She hands out a packet of instructions to the students, and then they just follow the packet's instructions for their project. Since the packet is only in English, I do not understand how she expects the students to feel included in the class, or why she does not get them a packet in Arabic.*

I later came to find out that they were transfer ELL students, and that they chose the seats separated from the rest of the class. These are the details that I found out after talking to my teacher about their situation.

*She said that it is their first year in the public school system, so this is basically considered an observation year for them. They are evaluated on participation, and interaction with the teachers and students. That explained for me why she felt that it was all right to leave them in the corner and not worry about whether or not they are working. For the project we started yesterday, the students are creating Islamic tiles, and are working on rotating a pattern ninety degrees. She told the ELL students that they could just paint a tile, but they decided that they wanted to do the rotating pattern just like the rest of the students. My teacher was excited that they wanted to participate like the rest of the class.*

The teacher and I also discussed how she incorporates the IEP students in the classroom. In an art room, IEP students are often included in the normal class, so the teacher has to give them special help while also helping the other students. This is what I wrote after that conversation.

*We also discussed how to incorporate the IEP students. One particular student in the class has an IEP, and has some behavior issues. I learned his name the first week because my teacher has to constantly remind him that he needs to keep working, or that he needs to be quiet. We talked about how she just tries to use indirect methods of behavior management by just standing on that side of the room, but she also has to give him individual instruction anyways.*

I think that my teacher handled this particular student very well. She gave him specialized help, while also making sure to give him time to work on his own (with her making sure from afar that he was working).

My teacher did a very good job of managing her classroom, while still relating well to the many cultures represented by her diverse class. I learned a lot from her, and am anxious to incorporate some of her successful strategies into my classroom in the future.