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Classroom Observation

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Words cannot describe how much I enjoyed my service learning experience at Ralph Waldo Emerson School #58. When I first started my service learning I was very excited and nervous to meet my students. I had no idea what they were going to be like. I remember my first day I was a nervous wreck before I left my house. I was expecting my students to be different than what I was in grade school, just because I was going to be going to a public school. I was expecting most of the kids to be underprivileged and very challenging. When I drove through the neighborhood I became very nervous. It was in an environment that I was not used to seeing. The houses were older and the school looked like it could use some renovation. The very first day was everything that I had expected. Many of the children are underprivileged and need a lot of help academically. As the semester progressed, I became very close with my different students. I was learning their different strengths and weaknesses. They became more and more comfortable as time went on. I had chances to do many different activities with the students.

The first grade classroom and School #58 was a very busy one. The students were always up running around and doing something. I felt like my supervising teacher could have had more control on the students than she did. I feel like she really did not have much of a “routine” in the classroom, and I think that it had a major effect on the student’s behavior. I believe that students need some sort of routine in their day to be effective. The only “routine” room 109 had been going to lunch and the bathroom at the same time. During instruction, students were constantly not paying attention and working on other things they were not supposed to be doing. I believe that if the teacher has some sort of routine for the children,

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they know what to expect and when to expect it. It also helps the students respect the teacher. The students need to know that the teacher is in charge and they need to respect her and still have fun at the same time. In order for a classroom to become a community the teacher must provide opportunities that will encourage the students to support and help their fellow classmates. Effective teachers use rules, procedures and routines to manage their classrooms. “To build a classroom community a teacher needs to involve the students in establishing the rules and procedures” (Koch 184). Many people believe that a classroom that is well managed is also silent. That is not true. The teacher should engage the students in different projects and problems related to the topic the teacher is instructing. The classroom needs to be a safe place for students to come. The students need to be treated with respect by both the teacher and fellow students.

I really did not think the classroom was a great environment. The students were very disrespectful to the teacher and other students. Like I mentioned before, they were constantly talking, running around, and not paying attention. A lot of this had to do with the way the teacher taught I think. I think the classroom could have been arranged differently. I would not have let my students sit in groups once they had proved to me that they can’t behave in small groups. There were not very many “age appropriate” things in the classroom. The walls just seemed to be filled with busy work. I feel like that was a major distraction to the kids. There was always something different on the walls for them to look at, and I felt it was a huge distraction. They constantly wanted to show me what was new on the board or wall. I feel like behaviorism was shown in the classroom.

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As much as the students disrespected Ms. Gordon, she always wanted to be in control. She was constantly pulling their cards if they were misbehaving, but never once rewarded them for being good. I felt like if the kids ever got some sort of reward they would behave a little better.

I feel like Ms. Gordon could have gone about teaching a totally different way. She expected the first graders to sit and listen to her talk for more than twenty minutes at a time. She never really gave them any time to practice what they were learning. She always read directly out of the book, and never put her “insight” into anything. The students were constantly never paying attention to her, because she got boring. Even being twenty three years old and a college student I became very bored during instruction time. I feel like the students would be a little more successful in their schoolwork if they were taught the correct way. They need someone to help them with their different subjects and not just read to them straight from the book.

When I become a teacher I am going to have a very different classroom than Ms. Gordon did. From day one, my students and I will work together to build a strong classroom community. I want my kids to want to learn and have fun while they are doing it. My classroom is going to be very organized with many different activities planned for my students. One routine that I want to have in my classroom is “Morning meetings”. I want my students to feel comfortable talking about their problems with their fellow classmates and I. I really enjoyed my time a school #58. It has definitely shown me what I want to do in my classroom and what I do not want to do. I cannot wait until I can put all my ideas to use in the classroom!

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Works Cited

Koch, Janice. *TEACH*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2011. Print.