

## Field assignments

**Name:**

School: South Windsor High School City/Town South Windsor	Teacher: Jessica Ziff
Date of Field Experience: 11/3/21 and 11/5/21	Hours of Observation: 8:48-1:20
Grade level: 9-12	Type of School: City Suburb Town Rural
Number of Students in the class: 16 Male :5 Female: 11	South Windsor High School, Suburb

List any special features of the school or classroom setting (e.g. charter, co-teaching, bilingual, themed magnet) that affect teaching.

There are a lot of diverse students present at this school. While Mrs. Ziff's classes are not extremely diverse, I see a diverse student body between classes, and displayed within the schools' halls recognizing various achievements. I was surprised to learn that there is a preschool classroom within the school with actual preschool students that attend. They work in conjunction with child development classes so students at the school are supervised with their interactions with the preschoolers. There are smaller classrooms at the front of the school where ELL's spend a portion of their day.

Discuss the variety of learners in the class, including students who need accommodations and modifications for instruction.

In the ceramics room, there is one large table in the front part of the room where the painting class meets. Every student at the large table is female. A second collapsible table gets assembled by Mrs. Ziff at the beginning of each class where the 5 boys in the class sit. There are two students sitting near the back of the room using the counters as their workspace. It was explained to me that these are the intermediate students in the class who work independently from the rest of the class. The rest of the students are beginner.

There are no outwardly obvious learners in the classes that need accommodations or modifications. However, in her binder Mrs. Ziff has information on select students needing accommodations or modifications. All of these students have accommodations and modifications that allow them extra time on assignments. On average, in a class of 18, 5 students have some sort of accommodation or modification. All of the accommodations or modifications are for emotional accommodations. One student in a fashion class is not to be called on in class due to severe anxiety, she can raise her hand to participate in class if she wants, but she is exempt from class participation/critiques. Mrs. Ziff mentions in her last fashion class of the day, there is one high-functioning autistic student who normally has an assigned para that goes to classes with her. Since Mrs. Ziff has had this student for a few years now, and they have built a relationship and the student is comfortable coming to class alone.

The classroom:

Describe features and arrangement of the classroom, materials, and equipment available for use.

Mrs. Ziff's two painting classes happen in the basement/bottom floor of the school. The first painting class takes place in the ceramics room. She does not have her own classroom but shares rooms with 3

other teachers. It was explained to me that there are many elective options for students at the school and the arts often get left behind/low enrollment, and that all art teachers have to share classrooms. In one corner of the ceramics room there is a small station with tempera and watercolor paints, brushes, empty cups for water, paper, etc. Teacher does have a handy tool she wears around her neck that amplifies her voice. The ceramics room has the usual throwing wheels, shelves upon shelves of student work in various stages of completion, a slab roller, etc.

The second painting class takes place in the room next door and feels more like a general art room. The desks are arranged in a circle at the front of the room, near the tv/projector. There is a large still life set up in the middle of the circle. Cabinets frame the perimeter of the classroom and are bursting with books, paper, paint, etc. The room is organized, but feels chaotic based on the sheer volume of supplies in the room. There is a counter space with sinks just behind the students circle of desks where paintbrushes, tempera and acrylic paints, cups for water, etc. sit at all times and are used frequently.

The fashion classes take place on the main floor of the building and is much warmer, and better lit than the classes in the basement. It feels like an old science room, there is a gas valve, and an island with sinks in the middle of the room. There are buffers for polishing furniture, gas hook ups for jewelry making, sewing machines, etc. There are many crafts materials present such as sewing machines, hot glue guns, etc. Mrs. Ziff has organized her colored pencils by color vs. by a pack.

List other resources (e.g. electronic whiteboard, hands-on materials, online resources, art posters, images, and/or materials for art production) used in this lesson.

Google classroom, google forms, fancy Bluetooth microphone. Tv/projector. Art posters, student work.

Identify any textbook or instructional program used primarily for visual art instruction.

None

How much time is devoted each week to visual arts instruction for the selected class?

This week in particular, class periods are 35 minutes long, and they are repeating the same schedule every day because they don't have school Tuesday for election day or Thursday for Diwali. But typically, classes are about 55 minutes long.

The teacher:(professional background, philosophy, manner with students, etc.)

Mrs. Ziff has a relaxed and casual manner during her class. She floats around the room looking at student progress, gives feedback on sketches, paintings, and drawings. Everyone is working on 1 of 3 things. Mrs. Ziff introduces me, tells the class that I am an artist and has different ideas and opinions then she does and may have new ideas and feedback to provide students. A new perspective for them to take advantage of.

In every class, as students are working she talks to the students about the teacher conferences she had yesterday pertaining to stress. This experience got her thinking about her and her mental health/stress levels, but also how her students could be experiencing stress. She wants to know how students are feeling and their level of stress. Mentions an upcoming a critique and recognizes it may bring them stress.

The lesson:

How does the teacher connect the lesson to concepts and ideas, as well as skills and techniques?

For this observation, although there are painting and fashion classes taking place, the lesson concept is the same for all. As students are working on their paintings/sketchbooks she speaks to them on stress. Relates the idea to her experiences then shares that she wants students to share their thoughts and feelings on stress in a google forms survey. It might not be completely apparent to students, but after years of dealing with stress myself, I know how stress and anxiety can affect one's artwork or even the motivation to do the work itself.

Discuss the central focus and key concepts of the lesson.

The students will reflect and analyze how stress impacts their lives.

Discuss the standards covered within this lesson and how the chosen lesson/instruction supports the development of students' abilities to achieve these standards.

HS Advanced VA:Re7.2.IIIa Determine the commonalities within a group of artists or visual images attributed to a particular type of art, timeframe, or culture.

For each class, Mrs. Ziff wanted to hear about her students mental health, stress levels. After reviewing the results of her survey, her classes learned that every student deals with stress in varying degrees. Today's culture can impact students negatively in a variety of ways and every student may handle stress differently. Some might find comfort in knowing they aren't "suffering" alone. While today's classes weren't so much about the art making process, the conversation does invite a new way of thinking in the art room. For the most part, students felt that their stress was lowest during art class.

Describe how the teacher provides opportunities for student choice within the lesson, promoting individuality and originality in their personal work.

During her first two classes, the students are working on paintings, but some are working on drawings. Everyone has to fill out the google form, but the questions she's asking will provide feedback for her on how students feel comfortable with critiques and what kinds of options they may have. If some students aren't comfortable with a class critique, she's willing to explore one on one critique or student with student critique.

In painting, it looks like they have all done one or two still lives, but in the first classroom the physical still lives are no longer present, so they may be working from reference pictures that they took.

One student asked a question about painting style, how he should style his painting. She directs the student to The Art Story website and shows him different art movements, explains to students that they can choose any style to mimic with their still life painting.

In fashion, students are finishing up fashion renderings of outfits they have made with unconventional materials. The students can choose whatever material they like. One girl is using paper cups to create a tiered dress, another student has used generic brown paper towels that she twisted into a gown.

Explain how the teacher's instruction builds on prior learning.

It's hard to tell how Mrs. Ziff has used her instruction today to build on prior learning, since today is my first day. But she mentions that in painting, they will be moving on to acrylic paintings after watercolor. They are two different mediums and it can be argued which is easier than the other but as far as blending, cleaning, weight of the two paints. Watercolor is a good building block that can lead nicely into acrylic.

#### Supply Organization

The painting supplies are located in one corner of the ceramics classroom near a sink. A similar set up is present in the second painting classroom. Paints are kept in one area, and brushes are stored bristles up in recycled yogurt cups, etc. water cups are stacked next to the sink.

In the fashion classroom, Mrs. Ziff has a closet dedicated solely to her classes. The closet is full of materials, mostly various types of fabric. I really like how she has organized the colored pencils. At one point the colored pencils were bought in bulk packs of 20ish pencils. She removed all of the pencils from every pack and repackaged them by color. All of the blues in one case, all of the pinks and purples in another pack. Since students sometimes only work with one or two colors at a time it just made life easier for her and her students instead of taking a whole variety pack of colors to work with.

#### Distribution of materials:

Teacher is not involved at all, students know where supplies are and get what they need themselves.

How did the teacher elicit student responses, promote thinking, and/or help students develop their abilities to express or understand meaning through interpreting art, developing works of art, and/or relating to art context?

Students are slow to participate. She asks for thumbs up thumbs down to questions. The google form helps her know how they are feeling because they don't always communicate face to face. When the student asks a question such as "what should I do to this painting now?" she immediately responds with an answer, but states that it is just a suggestion.

#### Classroom management techniques:

Describe management techniques that contributed to effective teaching. Include discipline management and/or expectations for behavior. How were behavior expectations conveyed to students (i.e. rules in room)?

Nothing overly obvious. No classroom rules stated anywhere. Students are quiet and respectful, raise their hands when they need help/advice. They raise their hands and ask to use the restroom and she allows them to leave the room. There is no cell phone policy and students are often on their phones, which personally drives me insane. When I asked Mrs. Ziff about it she said you have to pick your battles. Students are good about turning decent work in on time, when she notices a student watching Netflix on their phone then she steps in and does something about it, but it's not a common occurrence.

In what ways did the teacher promote a positive learning environment?

Gives students flexibility with assignments, students can use a painting style they feel comfortable with, or can create an outfit out of the students choice of material. She never puts any students down or speaks

to them like children, she remains positive always.

**Monitoring Student Learning:**

Discuss how the teacher assessed student learning throughout the lesson. What kinds of questions did you hear being used during one on one instruction?

This was something I did not see much of. She started each class by checking sketchbook assignments individually, but for that she just marks a participation score. She would make positive feedback comments on some of the drawings and share some insight. "Oh I see you've drawn X, I love that too." Etc. During class she floats the room to monitor student progress (and make sure no one is watching Netflix), I did not hear any formative assessment questions. The students asked her questions (mostly to use the bathroom) and she answered. Students would say things like "Am I done?" or "what should I do now?" To which Mrs. Ziff would say things like, "do you think you're done? Does this feel finished to you?"

**Clean-up procedures employed:**

A few minutes before class, she asks them to clean up as she delivers closure.

**Closure:**

What closure techniques were used to effectively review instruction? If no Closure was observed, what may have contributed to the teacher's inability to use Closure?

No formal edTPA closure occurred. As students are cleaning up, she reminds them of deadlines and upcoming assignments. Students are quick to clean up, and once they have, they just stand by the door waiting to leave. This would be a great time for Mrs. Ziff to ask students about the progress they've made and how they're feeling about their works. Since no real instruction happened, it wouldn't be a good time to do any summative assessment because there was no "lesson." Therefore, relating the in-class working time to them on a personal level would be beneficial. It might even create conversation between students or inspire some to work harder, etc.

**Critical Incident Description (Can be negative or positive. Describe the main factor affecting the students' learning during this lesson.)**

Class periods were way too short. They are normally 55 minutes but for some strange reason this week they are only 35 minutes. By the time they got to class and settled in, plus time at the end for clean up, they didn't have a lot of time in the middle for actual art making. I also got the feeling that the students were bored/tired/blasé/shy or just didn't care. Whenever Mrs. Ziff asked a question, it went unanswered, participation did not exist today. This fashion class is the most vocal out of the 3 I've observed so far, but amongst themselves. They also seem to be the most engaged compared to the two painting classes, working diligently. Students are quiet, it feels like there is low enthusiasm. No one participates, answers, or asks questions in any type of class discussion. It's not that Mrs. Ziff isn't trying either, when I asked her about this after class she stated that the last year and a half has been incredibly difficult for students. So she doesn't strictly enforce cell phones, she is lenient on grades in terms of participation. She's just happy students are there and healthy.

Reflection. Analysis (Why did the Critical Incident happen? What factors contributed? Lesson structure, teacher's attitude, special circumstances, etc.?)

To me it feels like Mrs. Ziff is very comfortable with her job, she's been teaching the same lessons for many years. She hasn't felt the need to "spice things up" and in addition, with how her students might be feeling, everyone is just going through the motions.

With all of the edTPA preparation, I'm noticing different teaching styles and methods between Mrs. Ziff and myself. Although I've only witnessed in class working days so far, she does not start class with an initiation other than reminding them what they need to be doing, and there definitely isn't a "hook" to get students interested. Similarly, there is no closure other than to clean up. During class time she isn't asking any formative assessment questions. She doesn't really ask any questions at all, she just answers students questions. I think this goes back to the fact that students don't really participate in class, so she hasn't bothered to check for any understanding.

I like that Mrs. Ziff took her students feelings into consideration this week. She learned about mindfulness during her day of conferences about how much anxiety kids are still facing and gave the survey. In doing so, she learned that about 50% of students in each class that they aren't comfortable speaking to the class during class critiques. I asked, and typically in the past they would have had to suck it up and participate in critiques because it's part of the class. During pandemic times, she is getting creative and coming up with other ways that students can participate in critiques such as one on one critiquing conferences, written responses, recording a response through a program called Screencastify.

If you were teaching this class, what would you have done differently? Evaluation

Based off of the edTPA model, I would be starting each class with a proper initiation and finishing with a closure question. I don't think this would be super straightforward because these students are slow to participate, so questions would probably go unanswered. I think for these students, it would be effective to ask questions at initiation that they can think about throughout the class period. And at the end of the period ask a summative assessment question that doesn't need to be answered, but just something that they can think about as they go about their day. At this point, I have no idea how to connect with students as a group, they are so shut off. Although these things need to happen for edTPA, it's impossible to imagine them happening based off of what I've seen today.