

Field assignments

Name:

School: South Windsor High School, South Windsor CT City/Town	Teacher: Jessica Ziff
Date of Field Experience: 11/8 and 11/12/21	Hours of Observation: 9:23-2 on 11/8 and 9:23-1 on 11/12
Grade level: 9-12 mixed level	Type of School: City Suburb Town Rural
Number of Students in the class: Male : Female:	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. The school play is this weekend and all of the lead characters in this production of “Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory” are students of color. 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.

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. 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.

The classroom:

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

Mrs. Ziff does not have her own classroom, she floats between three rooms. Her first painting class is taught in the ceramics room, her second painting class is taught next door in another teachers room which is used for general art ed such as drawing and painting classes. Her fashion classes happen upstairs in a “shop” or crafts room. There are buffers for polishing furniture, gas hook ups for jewelry making, sewing machines, etc.

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?

The schedule at this school is very confusing, all classes were 35 minutes long because they had two days

off and needed to get time in all of their classes. This week is more of a stereotypical class structure but still confusing. Classes are 55 minutes long, but there are only 6 periods a day out of 8. So depending on the day of the week, you are skipping two of your scheduled classes. Monday Mrs. Ziff taught her 3rd period painting, but 4th period was dropped, she then taught her 5th, 6th, and 7th period fashion classes. On Friday she did not see her 3rd period painting class, but did see her 4th period painting class. And she only saw her 5th and 6th period fashion classes.

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

Friday Mrs. Ziff shared in a conversation with me that she likes having student teachers because it lets her see what today's standard practices are. She did not use edTPA format and there's a lot of comparing and contrasting in teaching methods between us. Her teaching philosophy is 'teach others the way you want to be taught' and her motivation behind becoming an art teacher was because of a bad academic experience, although it wasn't with an art teacher.

The lesson:

Discuss the central focus and key concepts of the lesson.

In Monday's painting class a new lesson was introduced: landscape painting. Students were shown an intro slide with they're objectives. They will be moving on from their watercolor still lives to acrylic landscapes with attention to balanced compositions, colors that are mixed and placed accurately, depth and atmospheric perspective must be used, and they are to experiment with using brush stroke techniques and creating textures. On the next slide, they are presented with the *why*. She asks students to talk with their neighbors to come up with 3 reasons why artists paint landscapes. At this point, I thought an additional question at this point would be to ask them to try and name any landscape painters they can think of in order to give them a historical context for this assignment. After a minute of chatter, there is a class discussion on why artists create landscapes. Mrs. Ziff shares a brief background on Van Gogh which made me happy because they were getting the historical context, however she did not include any slides of his landscapes. Then she brings up an online article and they go into the Anatomy of a Landscape. She asks "what do you see?" students list sky, trees, asks leading question to get them to name the horizon line. Asks them about foreground, middle ground, background. Illusion of depth = atmospheric perspective.

In the fashion classes they are also beginning a new lesson on sustainability in fashion. Some classes watched a video on the creation of a tee shirt last week, some were just getting to the video this week. Today they have a slideshow exemplar as initiation. They will be creating their own slideshow on their own research on sustainability later in the week. In dealing with ethics in fashion. Talking of fast fashion and slow fashion. Asks who has heard of either term, some students raise their hands. Does not ask if students have any examples. Shares a story on \$5 tee shirts she bought that fell apart after one wash. This gives context.

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

There is a lot of exploration and research involved this week in fashion and painting. I don't know what the specific standards are for this lesson but if I had to guess:

HS: Proficient VA:Cr1.1.Ia Use multiple approaches to begin creative endeavors, because students in fashion class are finding their own secondhand denim to bring in and manipulate in a way they choose.

They can make a bag or just alter a pair of denim to wear using stitches, patches, lace, buttons, paint, etc. The fact that students have to find a pair of jeans to manipulate cements the concept of sustainability because they can't buy a new pair of jeans to manipulate. Manipulating the denim into whatever they wish allows flexibility for exploration and with materials.

In painting: HS Accomplished VA:Cr2.1.IIa Through experimentation, practice, and persistence, demonstrate acquisition of skills and knowledge in a chosen art form. I believe this is the case because on the second day of their landscape lesson, the students were shown a video demonstrating different techniques for acrylic painting like wet on wet, scumbling, sgraffito, impasto, masking tape, etc. The students experimented different painting practices this day to get ideas for how they want to treat their landscape paintings which they will start next week.

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

There is a lot of student choice for both painting and fashion classes. The students in painting must use a reference photo that they took themselves and not an image from a google search, etc. By showing the demo video on techniques Mrs. Ziff introduced new ideas that students could choose to use in their paintings instead of just brushing on paper. At the end of the lesson, there should be completely original landscape paintings with a plethora of techniques.

In fashion, students must use denim, but have the choice of how they want to manipulate their denim. Some students might not want to wear their denim but might want to make a bag. They have opportunity to decide on what they want to manipulate their denim with and what materials they would like to use. This allows for individuality and originality because everyone will be working differently.

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

With painting, although they are using new materials with acrylic paint, the students already have a lot of foundational knowledge with painting from their watercolor still lives. Color theory and elements and principles apply to both still life and landscape, they are just switching up the artistic medium, so they can apply what they already know with the new techniques they are learning for acrylic painting.

In fashion, their previous lesson dealt with fashion sketches of an outfit using unconventional materials. Students made dresses out of paper towels, ribbon, paper cups, etc. anything that one might find just lying around. The current lesson on sustainability has all students working in denim but shows students how to enhance second-hand clothing.

Supply Organization

In the painting classrooms, supplies are well organized. A large counter houses bulk paint containers where students get their own paint. There are stacks of water cups, sponges, and paintbrushes next to sinks where students get water and clean their brushes. There are also drying racks where students can leave their work to dry while they go to other classes. Upstairs in the fashion room where fashion takes place, the room seems unorganized, but Mrs. Ziff knows exactly where everything is. She has her own storage closet where she keeps some materials locked. But there are stacks of colored pencils and paper on a counter, scissors and hole punchers and other paper supplies are in a storage container next to her desk, and on the windowsill counter there are sewing machines, hot glue guns, etc.

Distribution of materials:

I'm curious to know how the beginning of the year went. Since we're living in pandemic times, students get their own supplies and know where to find them. Mrs. Ziff must have shown her students how to collect their materials during the first lesson, and they've just been doing it that way ever since. It's all very orderly and non-chaotic.

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?

There isn't really a class discussion where students share their ideas on their projects, but she does allow students to submit their plans virtually in google classroom so she can see what they're planning to do. Whenever she walks around to check on students progress she never asks any questions to promote further understanding, she is just checking to see that they're on task. I also appreciate how she has adapted her critiques for her classes during pandemic times. Students submit their final work to a shared google slides presentation where instead of having a group discussion, students may leave comments on other students work within the slides. This gets students participating and thinking about their work and that of their peers artistically, since students have a big fear of critiques.

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)?

On Friday a student in one of the fashion classes brought her sketchbook for Mrs. Ziff to review. Unfortunately, the marking period grades were due that morning and had already been turned in. I'm not sure if this student had been present in class, but out of the 4 or so days I've been observing she's told each class that the marking period was ending on this day. The student was only minorly upset and there wasn't much that either of them could do at this point because grades submitted were final. My only critique from this weeks observations is that I wish Mrs. Ziff gave more formative assessments. There is a lot of lecturing and free time in her classes and I don't get a strong sense of community within the classroom. Students aren't willing to share thoughts and ideas as a class, but sometimes there is collaborative work that happens from time to time, but only with partners that they chose to sit with on the first day of class. I can't wait to teach a lesson and see if I can stir things up or if these students are really stuck in their ways.

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

Mrs. Ziff plays music during work time; students have said in class surveys that they really enjoy that they get to listen to music in class.

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?

There wasn't much one on one instruction this week. On Friday the girls at the table closest to me probably worked on the in-class assignment 3 out of the 20 minutes they had to work. The rest of the time they gossiped, scrolled on their phones, etc. Mrs. Ziff typically circulates the classroom to see what students are working on, but doesn't ask any formative assessment questions, just makes sure students are on task.

Clean-up procedures employed:

Students are told to clean up about 5 minutes before the period ends and they do so on their own. If they clean up early they line up by the door with their things as Mrs. Ziff sits at her computer prepping for the next period.

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?

The only closure that ever exists is the students being asked to clean up. Perhaps she has gotten out of the habit of doing closure, I can't imagine that closure didn't exist when she became certified. There is plenty of time for her to do closure at the end of most classes. I've never seen any kind of exit ticket and checking for knowledge/learning isn't a thing. I wonder if closure doesn't happen because she has just gotten tired of trying to get students to participate. They really do just keep to themselves, go through the motions, and don't seem to care about anything. Today's painting class would have been a perfect opportunity to check for closure. The video on acrylic painting techniques showed wet on wet, sgraffito, impasto, masking tape, sponge, layering, and more. She could have easily asked someone to share what their favorite technique was or what they think they might want to incorporate into their own landscape painting. But it did not happen.

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

Cell phones! Always.

Reflecting on the lessons now after the day has ended and reading what I have written above as I observed in real time, it seems like the main factor that affected students learning was apathy from all parties. From what I've seen the students are always so shut off and uninterested, but at the same time Mrs. Ziff could be more engaged/enthusiastic and challenging her students more. She does not ask students what they're thinking/feeling or their opinions on the subject matter. There is no assessment happening during the lessons and there are no vocab words or other procedures in place to check for student learning. After my second week of observing, I have yet to hear a single student participate in a dialogue with the teacher in front of the rest of the class.

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

I would be interested to know how students and teachers' behavior have changed in the exact same setting pre-pandemic. When talking to her, it is clear to me that Mrs. Ziff is a competent, knowledgeable educator, who is passionate about art and her students. But in the classroom, anything she says to students seems to go unheard by the students. I can imagine that after a while of teaching to essentially no one in a classroom full of people can be disheartening and discouraging. I have dance students now that for whatever reason don't seem to want to be in my class. "How many more minutes?" is something that I hear a lot from them,

and it hurts. They are young and I'm their last class after a long afternoon of dancing and I think they are tired, so I try not to take it personally. I only see them for 45 minutes once a week and it bothers me when I think about it. I can't imagine what that must be like for a teacher like Mrs. Ziff who teaches 5 classes a day, 5 days a week.

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

I'm going to be interested to see what I've put down here after next week, when I teach my first class. I will be including a formal initiation and closure and asking many formative assessment questions during my lesson. I hope to get students to participate in a class discussion and share their thoughts and ideas not only with me, but with the class as a whole. Participation and engagement is a big concern of mine because I haven't seen much of it thus far.