

3/18/15 Field Notes

As I entered the classroom before the class of kindergarteners had arrived, the teacher explained the lesson for the day to us. She was going to teach the most difficult lesson using dance that she taught the class all year. "Loud and ugly is okay, let them learn through failure."

The students enter silently in a single file line. As they enter they follow the procedure of forming a circle by standing on the black tape outlining it for them. Ms. Reed is singing the welcome song to the class while they enter, and begins teaching her lesson immediately. The classroom teacher and aid help individual students get situated and make sure that everyone is focused on beginning music class.

While doing an activity identifying instruments, Ms. Reed asks students to raise their hands to answer each question. When students are talking, she announces that she can't hear their friend telling her what instrument she was holding a poster of.

Ms. Reed motions silently for the students to stand. When some students continue sitting and talking to friends, she announces

she will wait for everyone to be ready for the next activity by showing her that their hands are at their sides. At the end of each activity, she plays an octave pattern on the pattern that indicates to the students to sit back down on the circle.

During a movement activity, she stops singing to move a student to a different location in the circle and tells him "I'm moving you because he (points at boy standing next to him) can't stop talking to you, not because you are talking."

When beginning to pass out rhythm sticks to each student, she reminds them of what to do when she gives them instruments to play. They are to take the instrument from her, place it directly in front of the on the ground, and place their hands folded in their lap. Approximately halfway through the class when students are forgetting the procedure she asks the class to "show me where you put the sticks, then show me where you put your hands." When they are ready to start the activity, she reviews what resting, ready, and playing position looks like. Throughout the activity she points out individuals that have their sticks flying too high or are not in one of the three acceptable position. During pauses, she waits to start the activity until every student has their sticks in ready position.

She also alternates having smaller groups playing by asking either the boys or girls in one section of the room to perform for the rest of the class.

Ms. Reed physically positions herself within the classroom to be next to a student that is having trouble focusing, or being disruptive. When reading a book to the class, she sits right next to a student that is talking to his neighbor, and states "I will sit here so you can hear me read this book and so I can remind you to be with us." She also asks students that are struggling to participate to stand. For example, she asks a student that is falling asleep to stand up in the circle so she can "help him stay awake."

The students are doing an activity with partners. Ms. Reed physically moves each pair of students two at a time to line up in the way that she wants them. She has the students hold hands with their partners, and put their other hand on the person in front of them in the line. She then walks down the line while singing and moves the students that do not understand the instructions to what they should be doing.

Near the end of the class, the class was not paying attention to the activity, so Ms. Reed asked them to sit back down in the circle. Once they are seated, she tells them that they need to sit silently for the rest of the class and cannot play the princess game as she had planned because they are being too loud.

3/25/15 Field Notes

The students entered the classroom following the normal procedure of entering in a single file line, and walking around the tape on the floor until they have completed making a circle. At this point Ms. Reed begins singing the welcome song and the students begin beating the macro-beat.

As Ms. Reed begins playing the introduction of a song, she scolds students for singing during the introduction instead of thinking of the first word that they will sing. She stops playing each time she hears someone sing, and stops 6-7 times.

When the teacher plays the octave pattern on the piano that indicates to the students to sit down, a few of the students jump up instead of sitting down. She asks those students to show the class how to properly respond when the piano gives them the "secret signal." Since the rest of the class is already sitting, this gets it so that these students are getting her attention while having them do something that will bring them back to what the rest of the class is doing.

When a student raises his hand and asks to go to the bathroom, the teacher reminds him that when he needs to leave class he should quietly walk to the door and wave at her. She then reminds the class about the procedure of waving to her from the door instead of talking to her during class. Later in class when a student goes to the door and waves, Ms. Reed thanks her in front of the class for following the procedure for leaving the classroom.

As they begin to learn a new song, Ms. Reed announces that this song will eventually include instruments. She reminds them that when they learn a new song, they have to know how to sing it and mirror playing the instrument first before she will get out the instruments for them. If they stay focused while she is teaching them this new song, they may even be able to play the instruments in the next class they have.

While teaching a dance to go with a song they learned in their last class, Ms. Reed continuously sings while asking them to copy what she is doing with her body. Once most of the class is successfully following her but a few students remain unmoving, she goes to each student and moves their arms to follow the motions she is doing. This allows her to get the entire class

participating without disrupting the activity or calling out any specific students.

During an activity using several different instruments, she reminds students to keep their instrument on the floor in front of them until she points at them to play them. She goes through quick reminders of how to hold each instrument and quizzes students that are holding an instrument different than the one she is talking about. A little way into the activity, the students with cabasas are playing out of turn. She asks them to put them down in front of them and asks if they can look "like the triangle students that have the triangle in front of them so nicely." The students get to trade to a different instrument one time. She does this using the "silent trade" where 2 students at a time leave their own instruments on the floor where they were sitting, walk behind the circle and tap the person that they would like to switch with. This procedure continues until everyone has a different instrument than before. When a student walks in the middle of the circle instead of going behind, she quickly tells them to go behind and reminds them that we don't want to risk tripping on the instruments and hurting them or ourselves, so we walk on the other side of the circle.

Ethnography

The kindergarten music classroom at Hiawatha Elementary School is a highly structured and procedure based class. In order to keep the students organized, on track, and focused throughout the class every activity has a clear beginning, middle, and end. Due to the young age of the students the class is taught at a fast pace with almost no breaks in instructional time. There are clear procedures to be followed during the entirety of the class, and specifically for each activity. Although often reminders are needed to stay on track, procedures are the basis of the classroom management for the kindergarten level.

The physical layout of the classroom allows the teacher easy access to all of the students, and helps keep the students focused. By having the students sit on the floor in a circle facing the center of the room, the teacher is able to walk around the outside of the circle and have access to every student throughout the class. By having the students face the center of the room for the majority of each class, they are less likely to become distracted by the posters on the wall or the surrounding instruments.

Having clear procedures makes the expectations for student behavior clear, and helps the students remain on task and focus

on the musical material. Specific procedures, such as keeping instruments set in front of you on the floor, keep the class engaged in the music while being efficient and safe with their movement. General procedures, such as leaving to go to the bathroom by waving at the door, allow for the lessons to flow and keep disruptions to a minimum. By making these procedures, and consistently reminding students of them, students are aware of the expectations for their behavior. When students know how they are expected to act during each section of the music class, more time is able to be spend on learning musical material instead of physically managing the class. Especially with a large amount of young students, having so many clear procedures allows the class to stay in control and students physically remain in a place where everyone will be able to learn.

By keeping the focus on musical material and having continuously flowing lessons, students are not likely to become distracted of stop participating. Simply by using the material that is being taught, students are able to stay engaged. Having students playing an instrument, dancing, or tapping the beat keeps them physically aware of what is happening and gives them little opportunity to become unfocused or stop participating. This also allows the teacher the opportunity to be able to clearly see when a student has become off task so she is able to

walk over to them and encourage them to join the activity again while continuously giving instruction to the rest of the class.