

Coda

I would say the most influential aspect of this class was the reading content. The *Adolescents In School* book was the most helpful for me in terms of understanding students behavior and tendencies towards certain behavioral responses. Throughout the month of October in my elementary student teaching placement, I struggled with reprimanding students. I had difficulty with differentiating students who simply needed more supports and students who were acting out for other reasons. It was the aspects of providing discipline that I found most difficult. This book was incredibly helpful to me in providing understanding of why students act as they do. Even though the narratives in the book were often geared more towards secondary age students, it still provided useful reminders of what could be going on in a student's home life that might be affecting their behavior at school.

There is one class in particular that stands out as being my most difficult class behaviorally. It seems I have so many stories of students from this class talking back and refusing to participate. Much of my conversation with my university supervisor was about my struggles with this particular class. However, I found that the *Adolescents In School* book was even more helpful in that it allowed me to approach the situation from the point of view of the student. There was one student in particular that I struggled with. My mentor teacher and the school nurse would describe her as "the one." She was a student who was perpetually in the nurse's office, usually multiple times a day. She would blatantly ignore me when I gave instructions, oftentimes I would catch her sitting in the corner of the room reading a book instead of working at her seat like the rest of the class. This was clearly a student with emotional and behavioral disabilities, but what stood out to me most was my

experience with her during our last class period together. It was during this class that I realized that the rest of the class was aware of this student's differences and they were making fun of her for it. Not only this, but she was aware that no one else wanted to work with her. I found the *Impact of Disability on Adolescent Identity* chapter in "Adolescents At School" to stand true in many of my interactions with this student. The book states: "students may have more skills and knowledge than they demonstrate, yet they may not display these skills because they do not believe that it will make any difference." I found this to be not only true for this particular student but also for many of the students I've worked with in art no matter what their cognitive ability may be. For some reason students have gotten the idea that they are "not good at art," so they simply do not try. For the majority of my time spent with this class I thought it was my fault for not being able to discipline this student who refused to do her work. However, in reflection I realize I should not have been attempting to discipline her but rather encouraging her involvement by allowing her to make choices for herself and such.

In art you don't always get the full story of what a student's home life is like, so it's often kind of a guessing game as to why they are doing what they are doing and what kind of help you can provide them. I think back to our discussions on English language learners. I felt particularly lost in our Socratic seminar when it came to the discussion of ELL students. I honestly had very few, if any at all ELL students in my elementary setting. This felt like a turning point in our class discussions. I finally understood how greatly teacher's experiences could differ. Whether it is the fact that you are with young children who are just beginning to read, or possibly you're with advanced high school students who often no longer struggle with this sort of barrier. With this said, there are still so many comparisons

to be made. I have several students from my October experience that immediately pop in to my mind. One such student was an elementary student at the Title I school I was at. This kindergartener was noticeably behind his peers in his speech development. This communication barrier proved to be quite an issue, as he would struggle to communicate not only with me as the teacher but also his peers. However, he was a very vocal student and was extremely upbeat. This experience proved to be another example of the lack of information available to art teachers. When I attempted to get more information on what exactly was going on here I hit a wall. From my experiences I've found that this can make it difficult to provide useful supports when you cannot fully understand what sort of help the student is already receiving, and how you can utilize these in your classroom.

I found discussions about the various classroom learning environments incredibly helpful. To understand the layout of other classrooms and the structure that students are used to for all other hours of the day is helpful in order to prepare for a smooth transition from one classroom setting to the next. It is helpful to be flexible and adapt to meet the needs of the students. Often times the way in which you are doing things is not going to work perfectly for every student. It is always great to hear in our discussions in class how someone found a successful way to differentiate for a student they were struggling with. New ideas are always welcome.

I think this book and the knowledge from this class will be really helpful in my future student teaching in high school. The discussions and conversations that we had were incredibly helpful in preparing me for the differences between the experiences as an elementary educator versus a high school teacher. I now feel I am more knowledgeable on the behavioral traits of students. The knowledge of Erikson's stages of development

provides with me another avenue for which to approach classroom preparation and discipline.