

Montserrat Granados
Journal Entry #1
February 14th, 2016

Experience Narrative:

Wednesdays February 10th was our first service learning class with artistic abilities. We did not know how many students we were going to have until that day. We ended up with 11 students, all with different capabilities and personalities. The class was also mixed with students who had taken the class before and some that were new. For the first project our group taught an exploration of tissue paper as an art material.

Immediately I felt un-easy of how this lesson would flow. I noticed some trouble in following the lesson plan. I was unsure of what needed to be said and what needed to be done. I also noticed I was unsure of where I should physically be. Our group has 6 teachers total. I kept wondering if I should move around the room or stick with one table since we had so many teachers. Some other problems began to arise. I noticed some people were not interested in the project. Two students began to wander around the room and were touching the looms. I didn't know what to say. Willow decided to stay a long with one of the wandering students. She continuously helped him regroup with us and had him work on his piece. I also noticed that some students didn't really want to create their final piece with tissue paper, they instead wanted to draw. By the end of the class I had a headache; the whole time I felt unsure of my role. What do I do? What do I say? This made it difficult to fully appreciate my time with these students.

Interpretation/ Content Meaning: Two days after service learning I had time to reflect on my experience. Immediately after that first lesson I felt like I couldn't remember any specific details, but afterwards I slowly began regaining some of the events. I realized that some students felt comfortable because they knew each other, but for others this was a new and strange environment. Some students were also more verbal than others. They were not shy to talk to us or express their needs. This made it easy to get stuck in only paying attention to them, because we understood what they needed and wanted. I recognize that I need to make sure all students feel comfortable and safe which may also mean not bothering them. One student was really interested in her patterns and would rather work alone than having to answer questions from us. I also accepted that flexibility is key. Though Allison and Patrick both told us over and over that the main part is having fun I kept thinking I needed to intervene more. Flexibility also applied to being open to what students wanted to do. For one student it meant no longer working on his art and instead playing with wood blocks. He was new to the class and was exploring his surroundings. This caused a quick anxiety for the teachers. The student with the blocks threw a block at another student. None of us knew what to do or say. Thankfully the other student handled the situation extremely well by not making a big deal about it. When and how to redirect students was also a challenge.

Personal Significance:

After this first experience I understand the importance of rehearsing with my group. We need to work on who will introduce what part. I also learned the importance of personally knowing the lesson plan and exploring the materials prior to class. Even if we do not cover all of the information we need to understand the reason for the lesson. What are we trying to accomplish? Learning to take things as they come is also important. A bump in the lesson plan shouldn't overthrow everything else; it's just something I need to be able to work with.

Future Actions:

As a group we understand our students a little more and can accommodate their needs better. We understand that closing the curtains might prevent distractions. For this coming class I hope we will learn the lesson plan a little better so we can keep an organized flow, with space for unplanned events. Another important thing is that we know one of our students' needs individualized help. This means we need to divide up our time to redirect him or help him communicate with us.