

Cameron Stevenson

January 22, 2018:

Today was my first day in Mrs. Johns' class. The class size of 6 students was surprisingly small for a high school class. Mrs. Johns' seems to have a decent relationship with her students and continued to call them here 'darlings.' Maybe this is a way to keep a positive vibe in the classroom. As far as the students there was a lot of forced class participation today, as they read an excerpt of *Hamlet* from their textbooks aloud. However, there was not a lot of active participation outside of that.

January 31, 2018:

The first thing I noticed in class today was that there were a couple of students that were not here last week present while a few of the students that were here last week were absent. It is a lot more noticeable when someone is absent in this class than a lot of other classrooms I have been in, due to the size of the class. Today the students just worked on worksheets. I helped Chandler with his worksheet some today as much as I could, but he honestly knew most of it and was done thirty minutes before the period was over, and that was their only assignment for the day. When the students were done with their assignments, most of them were on their phones. Well honestly, most of them were on their phone even before they were done, but the teacher did not say anything about it.

February 7, 2018:

Today was the first day I stayed for two periods. The first period in Mrs. Johns' room was structured very similar to how it was when I came in last week. They watched a short video at the beginning of class over Shakespeare and The Globe Theatre. After that, they worked on a worksheet that related to the video. After Mrs. Johns' class, I went to Mr. Jones' class. His classroom setup was a little different than Mrs. Johns' class was. Here class was smaller and she had her desks in a circle while his classroom was more set up in the traditional lecture style with a projector at the front of the room. I helped a girl with her research paper by showing her how to edit a paragraph. This was a tenth-grade class, and I was pretty surprised when reading her paper that she had no punctuation whatsoever in her paper. There was not a single period or comma. My ignorance to some people's situation, and the luxury of the school district I grew up in really shined in this situation. I would not think that people so close to UGA and other good schools and school districts would be struggling so much with the curriculum. There was a part of in one of our books, that talked about escaping poverty and the intergenerational poverty cycle, and I do not know this girl's home life; however, I know it will be extremely difficult for her to make it through a college class that requires written work with her current writing and grammatical ability.

February 14, 2018:

Today I started to pick up on a pattern in Mrs. Johns' class. Pretty much during the whole period, there is rarely a point in which every student does not have his or her headphones in. While I do think that music can help students focus when doing work, they would be on their phones even in the middle of her teaching and instructing the lesson. There was one time today a girl that sits right beside the teacher's desk and the girl was on FaceTime with someone. I am not trying to

enforce that I am an expert on teaching styles and which is the best; however, I was worried some that the students were too disengaged. However, the counter to that would be, at this point I do not know what she does to get them engaged because besides a few, I see different kids there almost every time I go. If I had to guess, the roster of the class is around seventeen students, but I have never seen more than eight students in the classroom at any given time.

February 28, 2018:

Today Mrs. Johns' class was structured a little differently. The students had an assignment in which they were to write their own myth. The students had been reading excerpts from, *The Odyssey*, and also read a few short stories based on Native American myths. I thought this assignment was actually really interesting, and she gave the students a graphic organizer to help them organize the structure of their myths. I helped Chandler with this today, and he did not have his headphones in which I thought was a good thing. When I was in elementary and middle school, I adored Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson Series*, so I was eager to answer any questions he had based on Greek mythology because of my love for it. Also, the classroom seemed to have a lot more liveliness. A lot of kids were asking questions, and pretty much everyone was on task and working.

March 21, 2018:

Today Mrs. Johns' class had a substitute, so the students just had a worksheet to do. The sub sat the desk and was doing her nails while listening to R&B music on her phone. While I help other students that have questions, I help and talk to Chandler the most. We did not spend that much time talking about classwork today, due to the fact, he finished the worksheet in about fifteen minutes. While me and him did not talk about anything deep or meaningful, we did have a long conversation about Fortnite (a videogame) and basketball. However, I did ask him if Mrs. Johns' is out a lot, and he said that at least a couple of times a month because she has to go to meetings for her other job. That was pretty surprising for me to find out that she had another job.

April 3, 2018:

Today was another day that I went for two periods. Mrs. Johns' had a few students from other classes in her room working on the computer today. I think it was students that either had courses or quizzes online or possibly credit recovery. Either way, they were quiet and did not seem to cause a distraction with the students. The class read part of the *No Fear Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet* play aloud in class. It was the type of structure where each student was assigned a role and was instructed to read their parts allowed. In Mr. Jones' class they were working on another essay. I noticed that Mr. Jones' approach to discipline differed from Mrs. Johns'. There were multiple times when Mr. Jones' got onto students for having their phones out, and he confiscated one student's phone. The students were obviously annoyed with this; however, I was not able to tell if it made a difference in the students' attention to their work.

April 4, 2018:

Mrs. Johns' class today were working on questions that were written on the board over comparing *No Fear Shakespeare* to the original texts of Shakespeare. This was an interesting concept because even as a Sophomore in college, it is hard for me to read Shakespeare without some type of guide to my reading. The idea that tenth graders could read it without a guide is kind of absurd, so her using this tool was a great choice in my opinion. Mr. Jones' class was still

working individually on their papers. Every ten minutes or so Mr. Jones' would go around the class and ask each student how they were doing on the assignment and if they need help. I helped a couple of students with simple things such as punctuation and sentence structure. There were still a few students that it seemed they had not done any work since the previous class, and the work they did in that class was very minimal.

April 17, 2018:

Today is my last day at CCHS. Mrs. Johns' class is watching, *Gnomeo and Juliet*. They are doing this to further compare the different mediums and versions of Romeo and Juliet. This is another interesting concept that I truly love in literature. I am one of those people that believe that literature does not have to be ancient to as good or better than what we consider the "classics." While I am a proponent for Shakespeare, I think exposing the youth to mediums that they can relate with and are less bored with, only encourages literature. I felt like this was a good example of that.

Synopsis:

I think I learned a lot in the short fifteen hours I spent at CCHS. One of the biggest things that I learned was that there are multiple teaching styles. While a lot of the classroom management decisions that were being made are different than what I would have done, when I spoke to the students they never relayed anything negative to me about their teachers, and that moves me to my next point. You have to take the time to know your students. I was only there for fifteen hours. These teachers know their students' way better than I do. Maybe taking away their phones would have caused more of a disruption than it was worth, and at the end of the day, the students seemed to be getting their work done. There was a book that we read that had to do with blue collar people with white collar dreams. When I first started volunteering at CCHS, those dreams seemed too far off. However, when I was there some of the students told me about programs they have that let you finish school early and things of that nature. Programs like that could really increase a student's chance of fiscal and career success. Ultimately what I learned is that you must keep an open-mind when in education. Do not assume you know the students and the situation. Let them tell you and show you before making rash decisions when it comes to punishment, classroom management, and instruction.