

Classic City: My Experience

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The Institution

- Classic City has a mix of online and face-to-face classes. A number of factors go into the decision on which of these students will take, some of which include their own preference and the number of credits they must recover.
- As with most high schools in Georgia, my own was entirely comprised of face-to-face instruction, as opposed to this hybrid that can be found at Classic City.
- The online courses are beneficial to some students as they learn better from getting a general idea from the short video lessons and working through things on their own. However, others need the support and scaffolding that an actual human can provide, so these online classes can be both beneficial and detrimental to certain students.



The Institution pt. 2

- When we were first discussing Classic City in our classroom, I thought that it would be a prison in which students were lined up in rows of computers, rarely ever getting breaks or human interaction. I imagined the teachers to be more akin to prison wardens, who's jobs were not to educate, but to manage behavior. My experience there was completely different. Ms. Johns' fourth period class, the one I worked primarily with, was a face-to-face classroom, and students rarely even got onto the computers. Each class period was often split into a number of various engaging activities where the teacher was able to give support and explain through what was expected of students.
- We didn't use much technology within the class, so I cannot truly comment on how effective it was in regards to the students I worked with.



Teachers and Administration

- As stated earlier, I worked primarily with Ms. Johns, an ELA teacher at Classic City. She was kind and personable, holding individual relationships with each student within the class. This was extended to myself and fellow tutors. She welcomed us with open arms and truly seemed to care about our well-being and what we were getting out of our experiences in the school.
- Ms. Johns' decision to utilize direct instruction during her fourth period class was one that I felt worked well for the students. It is my belief that her people skills would have been put to waste if the instructional software were used, and that the students would have missed out on an opportunity to develop a relationship with a teacher who actually cared about them. While at times some students may have gotten off task, or certain lessons didn't particularly stimulate them, for the most part, the direct instruction worked well and helped the class to grow.



The Students: Joshua

- Joshua has quite the vibrant personality. He's bursting with energy and every class with him was a guaranteed good time. That being said, this energy could often times spill over to his other classmates, many of whom didn't quite appreciate this. He had a group of two other friends in the class that he primarily stuck with. Joshua wasn't particularly passionate about much. He enjoys hanging with his friends and playing video games at home, but he isn't quite sure what he wants to do with his life just yet, which I'd say is quite normal for any 15 year old boy. There was an obvious air of wanting to be "cool" that I got from him. His acts of defiance were often just acts that he put on to display to his friends, which is something that I could have related to at his age. We shared quite a few similarities which is why I believe we got along rather well.
- Joshua is a second generation Mexican immigrant, who grew up in Dallas, Texas. He and his mother moved to Athens last year to be closer to their extended family. His worldview is that of a typical 15 year old boy, often apathetic and close minded in a lot of ways. While I was there he was written up a number of times for using homophobic slurs. He also doesn't feel much connection to his family's heritage and doesn't speak Spanish at all.



The Students - Joshua pt. 2

- Joshua was an interesting case when it came to school. He was extremely bright, and often knew what was going on, but the combination of his overflowing energy and desire to be seen as a sort of rebel often hindered his ability to do well in class. This has garnered him the label as a “problem child” and even Ms. Johns often grew frustrated with him. Surprisingly, I had no trouble getting him to do his work. Perhaps because it was a one on one interaction, it was easier for me to reach him, but anytime he was assigned something, he’d put up a little resistance and then would cave after we joked around for a bit. He never truly struggled to get anything done after we got to that point, the only issue he had, if you can even call it that, was staying on task.
- He hated writing and ELA in general which is unfortunate, given just how intelligent and talented he is. While I do think that Ms. Johns did a commendable job at giving the students engaging work that was relevant to both their cultural backgrounds and their interests, Joshua never seemed to enjoy any of the assignments given to him.



The Students - Jalen

- Jalen is a reserved young man who sits at the back of class by himself every day. He enjoys the sorts of activities typical of boys his age, playing video games, sports, and relaxing with friends. He's quite timid and has trouble opening himself up to others, but once that shell is broken, you'll come to find that he's very kind and much funnier than you might have thought.
- Jalen is a member of the black middle-class. While it may seem that this doesn't match my own cultural background, most of my friends in high school were both African-American and middle-class, so it is a culture that I am fairly familiar with. I didn't get to know Jalen quite well enough to see how this affected his world views, and his lack of interaction with peers also made this difficult to unravel.



The Students - Jalen pt. 2

- Jalen's relationship with school is an interesting one. He has only been at Classic City for one semester and is returning back to Clarke Central after the end of the school year. From what he has said, he hates it at Classic City and looks forward to going back to Clarke Central. The curriculum at the alternative school bores him and he believes the teachers to be more invested at Clarke Central.
- For the most part, he doesn't have too many issues when it comes to school. While he does struggle a bit with the more creative/abstract aspects of ELA, he seems to have a good grasp on grammar and the other more tangible elements. The only major issue is that he often sleeps during class. Jalen has been having problems sleeping for the majority of his life, so he's always tired and class provides an opportunity for him to relieve himself of that. It's an issue that Ms. Johns recognizes so she allows him to sleep for a little while in class so long as it doesn't disrupt his ability to get work done.



My Role

- I absolutely loved my time at Classic City. I'm not sure if I was able to "reach" any of my students per say, but I developed relationships with some great kids. We were able to joke around and have fun, but also get work done so that was really encouraging to me as I go into student teaching next year. I think that building that trust made it a lot easier to be able to get the students more motivated in class. I'm not exactly sure how I would resolve any of the academic struggles that students faced there, however, I do think that my time there helped me to see how every student has the potential to do well and get work done, no matter what the system may label them as. I'm truly grateful for the opportunity to have been able to work in Classic City and I think that I'll continue going for the duration of the school year.