

The background of the entire page is a repeating pattern of stylized purple flowers and leaves. The flowers have five petals and are connected to stems with several leaves. The pattern is dense and covers the entire area.

Classic City High School Journal

By: Sami McCabe

Day 1: January 19, 2018

Today was my first day at Classic City High School. I was introduced to the two English teachers at CCHS, Mrs. Johns and Mr. Jones. After meeting both of the teachers, I am placed in Mrs. Johns' class for the remaining hour. She introduces me to the class, which at the time was two kids: McKayla and Chandler. Mrs. John's class was reviewing grammar rules for works cited because they are preparing for a test on Monday. I interacted with the students a little bit, but not really. Mostly, I observed Mrs. Johns' teaching style and the way her students reacted to it.



Day 2: January 26, 2018

Today I got to CCHS early. I did this as a way to get to know the teachers I would be working with more. I, again, was with Mrs. Johns' class. When I arrived to her classroom early, she began to show me different assignments the students were working on. One was an art project from the book *The Odyssey*, they were supposed to use the descriptions from the book to draw what they believed certain mythological creatures looked like. Along with that, they had to write a paragraph about the significance the characters had to the story. When they students came into class, they had to take a quiz, which would take the entire hour. My job while there was to watch over and make sure no one was cheating. Mrs. Johns' tactic to this impressed me. She told me that if I saw someone cheating not to say anything, but to tell her after class and she would have them retake it at a later time with more supervision. I liked this tactic because it made sure the student was doing their own work, while also not embarrassing them in front of their classmates. One of the books I read for this class included an excerpt about how embarrassing kids in front of their peers does not help them learn from their mistakes, but rather leads them to resent you and the class they are in. Because of this quiz, I still haven't had the opportunity to build connections with students in the classroom.

Day 3: February 9, 2018

Once again, I worked in Mrs. Johns' class. Today when I came in she and I discussed the fluctuation of attendance in her class. With the recent snow storm, her attendance rate had gone up, which in most cases is a little shocking. She explained that a lot of kids only have the opportunity to eat at school, so when a lot of days end up being snow days many kids go hungry. Therefore when school goes back into session attendance rates go up because students need to eat. This explanation shocked me because I would have never thought that way. On this day, I really felt my connection to Mrs. Johns progress, which is awesome because she is quickly becoming a mentor that helps me think about different tactics and methods to use while tutoring and teaching her students.



Day 4: February 16, 2018

Today, for the first time, I worked in Mr. Jones' class. I, along with another mentor, brought the class into one big group and worked on a capitalization worksheet. The first thing we did was asked everyone's names and chatted a little with the students. By doing so, I think we made the class more comfortable with our presence. After doing this, we went around in a circle and read the instructions, each person had to read one of the bullet points. The other mentor and I included ourselves in this, which seemed to make everyone else more at ease. Through this, I learned that students like it when you act as an equal to them, it makes them feel more important and made the class feel less like a dictatorship. We went through the activity and took turn answering each question. At the end I shared that I did not even know some of these rules and that I was still learning right along with them. This class period was my favorite so far because I felt connected to these students. I feel that because I admitted that I was learning with them, they were more willing to take the opportunity to learn with me. This method seemed to really work with getting the students to open up to me and work with me.



Day 5: March 9, 2018

Today, I was back in Mrs. Johns' class. There was a substitute, so I helped keep the class under control. Most were working on make-up work or practice quizzes. One student, McKayla, had finished everything so she and I began to talk. She told me she wants to join the Military and become a nurse. I told her that my dad was in the Army and he was a lawyer and she began to ask me so many questions. I helped educate her to the best of my ability about how it all works and the pros and cons to being in the military. McKayla seemed so dedicated and brilliant. We talked and built a connection through this conversation, which seemed to build a trust between us. She shared that the only way she could afford nursing school is through the military, but she did not mind because she loved the idea of a challenge. This exchange between McKayla and I was what I hoped and expected from volunteering at CCHS, so it made me really happy to be able to have this type of encounter.

Day 6: March 23, 2018

Today in Mrs. Johns' class they had another quiz that took the entire class period. It was interesting watching them take quizzes because when I was in high school everything was on paper and we hand wrote our answers. At CCHS, they use the computers to take quizzes. I asked Mrs. Johns about this and she said that it was easier for kids who have a hard time writing or kids that don't have the supplies they need for the quiz. By doing it online it gave all her students more of a chance to be successful. I found this explanation to be mind-blowing because I have never had to think that way. Not much happened this class period because of the quiz, but McKayla said hello to me and asked me about my week, which I found to be really nice.

Day 7: March 30, 2018

When I came in, Mrs. Johns was not in her classroom yet, so I went downstairs to see if Mr. Jones needed me, but he did not. I chatted with him for a bit before class started and he told me about his experiences with student teaching and offered me a few words of advice. After I chatted with him for a bit, I headed back upstairs to Mrs. Johns' class. She was running a little late so I helped her out by making copies of worksheets and passing out supplies to students. Today was a pretty relaxed day in her class. The students were working on make-up work, which I was instructed to help if need be. I mostly walked around the room and asked questions about different worksheets students were working on. By asking them about their work, they were more likely to ask me for help if they needed it. My relationship with McKayla is probably still the strongest relationship I have made in Mrs. Johns' class. She is very out-going and seems to enjoy chatting with me.

Day 8: April 6, 2018

Today in Mrs. Johns' class, they were beginning to read Romeo and Juliet. They read in small groups, so I would bounce between groups and see how everyone was doing. I would sometimes read in with them or ask what they thought of the scene they were reading. Halfway through class, Mrs. Johns brought the class back together and began to discuss the scenes they had just read as a class. I thought this tactic was smart because it gave the students time to try and figure it out all on their own, but also allowed Mrs. Johns' to discuss the parts they may have missed or misunderstood. Also, I liked it because it kept the class from getting bored from doing the same thing for too long. By changing the different styles of teaching, it seems to keep the class interested.

Day 9: April 13, 2018

Today was my last day in the high school. I was in Mrs. Johns' room. They were reviewing Romeo and Juliet. She showed them a rap song that raps about the plot of the story, which I found really cool. I always appreciated when teachers would try and find ways to teach that interested their students; I could tell that her students felt the same way. By playing that simple rap, the whole room felt so much more interested in the subject matter, which was cool to see. Since Mrs. Johns was running a review session, I mostly spent this time observing her teaching style and helping kids who needed it.



Conclusion

Overall, this experience was eye-opening. I did not expect for there to be such a small class size. Each class had about seven students in it, which is very rare. I thought that it was extremely awesome though because it gave the students the attention they needed in the classroom. It was harder than expected to build a relationship with the students, but only because their attendance was so irregular. I would see a student once and then I would never see them again. I did build a nice relationship with McKayla. She was so nice and personable, which made it easy to talk to her and help her. I learned a lot from Mrs. Johns' teachings as well. Seeing the different ways she teaches in order to reach all of her students was inspiring. She is very patient and ready to help anyone in need, which was amazing to see. Overall, this experience was amazing and I learned so much from the students and faculty.