

The Middle School Student
An Observation of Two Middle School Students

Course: Introduction to Teaching 111

Professor Eastman

Observation Conducted By: Stephanie Hofer

Students Observed: Kayla Ellenwood and Joshua Buchanan

Date of Observation: January 20, 2009

The Middle School Student

On January 20, 2009, I observed two Shawnee Middle School students in Mrs. Griffey's eighth grade Spanish class. The young lady's name was Kayla Ellenwood and the young man's name was Joshua Buchanan. As I was observing both students, I concentrated on their physical and social characteristics and their behavior in class by comparing their similarities and differences.

When it comes to basic physical characteristics of a middle school student, Kayla and Joshua are great examples. Kayla is a Caucasian female with long, brown curly hair. She arrived to class wearing a pair of blue jeans, a red and black shirt, black shoes, and a lovely silver peace sign necklace. The other student, Joshua, is a Caucasian student with short, brown wavy hair. Joshua entered the classroom also wearing a pair of jeans, but with a white racing t-shirt, black skater shoes, and his student ID card on a lanyard.

Both students were carrying large piles of books to their desks. Kayla's books were neatly stacked according to size and appeared to be well organized and treated well. Joshua's books were also in a mountainous pile, but not as organized as Kayla's. His were more tattered and there were random pages sticking out of his trapper keeper. He was definitely more relaxed when it came to neatness.

The middle school students differed socially as well. During class, Kayla was a very social student. She was constantly talking to her friends, asking to assist fellow students or the teacher, participating in class, and raising her hand for questions. She paid attention during class and her pen was in a constant state of rapidly writing down notes. When it was her turn to present her project she seemed very proud of her work. It was clear to me that Kayla enjoys the Spanish language and has learned a considerable amount in this class so far because her pronunciation and grammar were phenomenal for only being in her first year of this language. I was very impressed with her advanced skills. During the teacher's instruction, she never let her eyes wander around the room or get off task. Kayla was without doubt engaged in Mrs. Griffey's lesson; I never saw her head on her desk once. It is clear that she is an interpersonal learner as well as a verbal/linguistic learner. If I had Kayla as a student, I would have to make sure that I incorporate group work and verbal activities in order to engage her attention and for her to master the given material.

Joshua, however, seems to be the exact opposite. He is a very reserved and quiet student. During class, he rarely spoke to other students or the teacher, Mrs. Griffey. When the rest of the class was working with partners, he still chose to work by himself and to go at his own pace. Joshua seemed very shy and unsure of himself because when he would raise his hand in class, he would not raise it very high. He did not ask others questions, but when spoken to Joshua would answer keenly. He was constantly yawning in class and did not seem to be interested in the

lecture-formatted lesson because he was looking everywhere except for where the teacher was. For that majority of the class period, Joshua's head was resting on his desk. He seemed to be both uninterested and exhausted. This is an example of why it is not beneficial to judge someone only one day; it is not known what the student has been through before entering the classroom. From what I observed, Joshua appeared to be a very diligent intrapersonal learner. While doing his work, he would refer to old worksheets and visual aid, leading me to believe that he is also a visual learner. If I had Joshua as a student, I would need to include some adequate individual work and incorporate powerful visual aid in my lessons in order for him to be able to comprehend the information.

Even though Kayla and Joshua behave differently in class, they still have similarities. Both students were eager to assist the teacher or to do class work. When it was time to turn in their schoolwork, they would pass it in to Mrs. Griffey with a sense of satisfaction and pride. Just because the students prefer to complete their work in a different manner does not mean that they do not do the assignment well. The students mutually shared a passion for completing all work on time and respecting their teacher. Neither of the two students that I observed said any rude comments about the class or Mrs. Griffey. They both seemed to enjoy the class and be on top of their obligations as students. Kayla and Joshua had all of the required materials for class including their textbooks, paper, a writing utensil, and all schoolwork.

As I was observing Kayla and Joshua, I was also able to learn more about the middle school environment. I now understand that how the different learning styles of students can all be incorporated into one classroom. I realize how many different ways there are for students to learn, behave, and respond to learning in the classroom. Each student has his or her own way of portraying interest and noninterest. Some students choose to not respond to questions just to get recognized by their peers. Others do not respond because they are simply not interested or unsure of themselves and their answers. At the middle school age, students are going through many changes. Most students at this level need extra motivation to concentrate while doing schoolwork. This is a challenge that I will have to face if I choose to teach in the middle school setting. Students at this age highly value the praise of the teacher as well as the praise and acceptance of their peers. I noticed during my observation that learners will do almost anything to feel valued. As a future educator, I vow to make my students feel as valuable as possible, no matter what age level I am instructing. I believe that the only way to make all students feel valuable is to involve all styles of learning. In my future classroom I will have equal opportunities for all learning styles. All students are created equal and they must be treated as such!

**EDUC 111
ANALYTICAL WRITING RUBRIC**

Name: <i>Hofer</i>	Section: Student observations	Date: 01.20.09	Score: <u>30</u> /30	
	5	3	1	0
Ideas & Content [Ex., Answers to four questions; Details and examples]	Clear, focused topic; Provides interesting and relevant details; Fresh ideas	Clear, focused topic; Shows promise; Sketchy development of expected content	No clear purpose or central theme; Reads like a collection of random thoughts	No content knowledge provided; Unclear or confusing
Organization [Ex., Introduction; Body of Information; Closure]	Strong introduction and conclusion obvious; Smooth transitions between ideas; Displays order as structure moves reader through text	Introduction and conclusion present; Some good transitions; Logical, yet ineffective structure	No internal structure; No clear transitions; Awkward pacing throughout; Details in random order	No order within text; Confusing pacing
Word Choice [Ex., Details related to grade level; Professional terms]	Specific and accurate terms; Strong imagery; Striking, yet natural phrasing; Powerful verbs; Incorporates professional jargon	Correct, yet terms not precise; Lacks punch, yet gets message across; Few energetic verbs; May sound verbose	Limited vocabulary; Vague and abstract words used; Incorrectly uses clichés and/or jargon	Inappropriate terms throughout; Predominately slang and informal language
Sentence Fluency [Ex., Complete sentences; without run-ons]	Easy flow; Easily read aloud; Varied sentence structure; Sounds natural; Complex sentence contains closely related ideas	Good control of simple sentence structure; Favors one pattern; Sentences go together	Difficult to follow; Choppy, rambling, or incomplete sentences; Not natural sounding; Monotonous	Awkward to read; Incomplete sentences difficult to read.
Conventions [Ex., Capitalization; grammar; punctuation; spelling; paragraphing] meaning	Grammar usage correct; Smooth punctuation; Correct spelling; Sound paragraphing	Spelling usually correct; Grammar problems not serious; Acceptable paragraphing; Internal punctuation errors	Frequent spelling errors; Incorrect paragraphing; Grammar/usage errors cloud the meaning; Many punctuation errors	Errors distract from content; Need to improve writing skills
Voice	Writer speaks to reader	Sincere, but not engaged	Distanced from topic	Confusing; Inconsistent

Comments: