

Personal Reflection: 10 December, 2012

Today we ended social studies a little earlier than usual because Sam had made the class sugar cookies on Friday, and he wanted to share them. I also wanted students to have time to change and get ready to do the first actual testing day for the strength and fitness portion of the fitness test (we spent last week practicing curl-ups and push-ups).

After Sam's cookies, I asked the class to stack their chairs and to get ready for p.e. I said that students who wished to change could. Then I stood and watched while some students got ready; others just seemed to be wasting time and talking. I started to identify individual students and prompted them to do specific things: "X, stack your chair;" "Y, please stop talking and get ready for p.e.;" "Z, your books are still on your desk; we're waiting for you to get ready so we can go." It took well over ten minutes to get ready, and then I had to count down from ten to get people moving into an orderly line. Before we left, I asked that people move quietly in the hall so that we didn't have to return to class and do it again.

As we left the class, people were mostly quiet, but as soon as the first students got to the stairs by the photocopier, they started to run and talk loudly up the stairs. Some of the students behind me were also talking. At that point I determined that we would have to return and try again, but when I got to the top of the stairs I saw students yelling and hitting one another with the yoga mats, and all of this was with Ms. Taggart and the kindergarten students standing and watching at the door to the gym. I was utterly disappointed and told the class that we would not be doing p.e. today. I sent the group back to the classroom to write a reflective piece on the whole experience. I didn't want to have a talking circle: I wanted students to have some quiet time to think about today but also about what has been going on in p.e. generally. It might have appeared that I got *mad* and then *punished* the class, but over the weekend I had decided that if our next class broke down the way it had the last two times, I would stop the activity and follow a series of steps, the first being a piece of writing.

I have felt for the past number of weeks that the behaviour in p.e. has been deteriorating – especially since we started the fitness test. It has not been the case with every student, but it also hasn't been the case with only a few. I ask myself if it is the fitness test itself that is causing upset because it is new and even a bit intimidating. Or is it simply that we're approaching the winter break and people are getting excited? After discussing the situation with Joanna, I took time to think of ways that I, myself, may be sabotaging p.e. Could it be that my expectations are unrealistic? Perhaps. Regardless of the cause(s), I ended the day feeling unhappy about the turn of events but hopeful that we will be able to learn from this experience. I care deeply about our class and would like to make it the best place to be that it can be. It won't become that place without cooperation.

I'd like to have a talking circle tomorrow so that everyone has a chance to have his or her voice heard. After reading the eight reflections that were handed in before the end of class, it would seem that you have some pretty clear feelings about this issue.

Please ensure your one-page single-spaced *or* two-page double-spaced reflection is ready for tomorrow: **it is your admission to class**. If you are unable to complete it at home, I'll arrange a place outside of class for you to do it tomorrow morning.

Mr. Marshall