

October 3rd – 7th

This week went on quickly. I can't believe we are already on October and I'm still not teaching and planning daily. This is something for me, my practice supervisor and C.T. are aware of. I've noticed since day one that this semester has been different for Mrs. Trinta. Kicking it off with the fact that she doesn't have her own classroom. At first I thought that it was no big deal as long as she had a space for her planning, but I have learned that a teacher without a classroom is like a coffee cup without a holder; you can still grab it but it'll be uncomfortable and too hot. Planning classes and teaching in five different classrooms with borrowed materials from other teachers is ridiculously inaccurate. Mrs. Trinta often sends me back to her corner at Mrs. Fufftat's classroom because she either needs some materials or forgot the copies for the students. Imagine if she didn't have me; she would have to leave the class on hold which would abruptly cut off the student's focus, pop the learning atmosphere that is so hard to build, just to go get her materials. Not only that; at ELACS, most of the teacher (if not all) are contemporary educators which means they still practice and believe in obsolete practices such as classroom rules and techniques that are just pointless sometimes. We must follow and respect the classroom rules of every room we visit. 1-2 home room teacher does not want us to put any decoration in her classroom; 3-1 home room teacher only gave us a very small space to put up something related to our class. She also denied Mrs. Trinta permission to move students from their seats during English class. There was this one time where the class was already finishing writing and a student had barely finished the date. This student often is one of the first to finish and turns out, he couldn't see well to the board, so I moved him, and he worked beautifully. The home room teacher later asked me not to move them again. Why? There is no reason. In another occasion, a student with diabetes had his device beeping, marking a high level of sugar during English class. Mrs. Trinta quickly checked and called for the school nurse. The home room teacher said that the kid was fine, that she has diabetes too and is no big deal. She and Mrs. Trinta didn't agree, and you could feel how uncomfortable it was to see the two disagree and try to take control.

As days pass by, I grow conscious of how different and difficult it is for my C.T. to teach. She doesn't look as confident as she used to, except when she is teaching 4-1, because she teaches

in the classroom that used to be hers. She told me I may not get to teach my practice group all five days of the week, but I will teach 4th and 1st to comply with that. I understand that because 3-1 is a special group. As I have mentioned before, several students are under medication and new to the school, and Mrs. Trinta is barely getting to know them. I would love to push in, but as long as I am planning and teaching daily even if it's not my practice group, I will be grateful.

Even though I have not been teaching daily, I have been doing a lot of things. I have had time to complete my projects and at school, I always make sure I get involved with the students. With all three of my groups, I interact daily, helping them out, correcting their notebooks and giving rewards. This week, on Wednesday I asked Mrs. Ruffat if I could decorate her door with an autumn design and she allowed me. I went to the library right away and picked up the materials I needed. I covered the door with black paper and traced a ton of different fall leaf shapes. On Thursday, during observation period, I finished the door. The next day, Friday, was so crazy. First, Mrs. Trinta was on an appointment with her dad and said she would be late. So, I started preparing a handout for 4th grade about antonyms to review for the test. Suddenly, Susana, a T.C. who will be visiting to observe, called me and told me she was downstairs. I thought, "how do I tell her that Mrs. Trinta isn't here???" Once I made it upstairs with her, I saw my practice supervisor right behind us, and (not going to lie), I freaked out. Mrs. Trinta was not in the school, I was about to teach without a proper plan, and poor Susana was going to witness me improvising. However, the three of us talked a bit and agreed that I wouldn't be evaluated. I would have loved it if my supervisor stayed because I ended up teaching fourth grade. The school principal said he would send the math teacher to take the students while Mrs. Trinta was gone, and then remembered that I am there and instructed me to teach. I had fun, even though I did not have a great plan, I managed time wonderfully and my class had objectives, initial, developmental, and closing activities easy to recognize but well blended into one smooth class. Mrs. Ruffat was very happy with my work and Susana got to check notebooks and observe me.

For first grade, I am not happy with the class I gave. The idea that I had ended up taking up too much time; I thought things would work but they didn't. At least I had them involved with the class topic, but that is not the point of a class. Mrs. Vazquez helped me twice to keep one of the students under control and then it was time to walk them to the lunchroom. Susana helped me

do so, but that is always a very messy task. You can tell a student to keep quiet inside the classroom, but outside? Nu-uh. We managed to get the students to the lunchroom, and we stayed until the last one was inside the dining room and eating. At 11:00 am, I called Mrs. Trinta and she picked up asking “are you alive?”. I told her how the morning went, explained to her that Susana was gone but she helped me a lot, and told her that I was not evaluated by my practice supervisor. Mrs. Trinta came back to the school to teach 3-1 and her other groups. She took advantage of my experience that day and gave advice about it. We had lunch together and then went to 3-1.

The last thing that I want to add to this reflection is the episode of the student with an anxiety attack. I can’t hold myself back from talking about this from a personal and emotional perspective. During the situation I stayed calm and neutral, but here I want to talk about it freely. I identified the visible symptoms of an anxiety attack in this student because I am diagnosed with an anxiety disorder. The kid was on the verge of panicking and first, the homeroom teacher told me to “step back” because he was “making it up” for attention, and number two she also told Mrs. Trinta to ignore him and C.T. didn’t pay much attention. She realized something was wrong when she saw me pull my face mask down and tell the student to breathe. The student had short breath, was blinking very hard and crying, his feet and hands were shaking, and when I asked him to think about “the now and here” he said he couldn’t. At this point, the homeroom teacher walked up to me and said he was back from an appointment with the psychologist which made the whole situation make sense (at least to me). Mrs. Trinta immediately acted and took the student out of the classroom even when the other teacher insisted on leaving him alone. The kid and both teachers walked outside and left me with the group. The kids were worried about their friend and started asking questions like, “why was he shaking”, “is he sick?”. I told him he is just a little anxious and needed a break and that’s where they asked what anxiety is. I took the opportunity to educate them, and we did a little exercise to see how much they know about being stressed or anxious. I asked them to be empathic and understanding with their friend. When the teachers entered the classroom with the kid, the group was supporting and didn’t attack the poor kid with questions.

Even though the week went of too fast, a lot happened, and I learned many things.

