

My main goal with observing at Metcalf this semester was to see how an entire lesson plan would play out with a group of students so I decided to observe a second grade class three times in a row in order to study how they did with a lesson from start to finish. The lesson I observed was about intricate yarn paintings made by the Huichol people from South America. The teacher started the first class by introducing who the Huichol people are and where they live, she connected the lesson to what the children were learning in history class about immigrants and native people (the Huichol people being native to their area) and she really got the kids engaged in the lesson right away because the concept of natives was not foreign to them. Though the beginning of the lesson went very well, towards the middle of the presentation many students started getting distracted and more talkative; it was clear they were getting bored of being lectured so the teacher sped up the slides and instead of talking as much as she had originally planned, she played a video that showed a Huichol man using the yarn painting technique on a skull. To say the students started paying attention is an understatement because they were absolutely in awe of it and the room went dead silent as soon as the video played. This concept reinforces the idea that younger children are more visual learners, they can't be expected to sit still through a lecture, but they are great at paying attention when they are interested.

The second day I observed, the students were instructed to decorate a frame for their yarn paintings; this frame could be anything they wanted as long as it was not messy or sloppy. Many of the students seemed to enjoy this activity and the simplicity of it, however some of them colored on their frames for about 10 minutes and then got bored of the activity. I think that this just demonstrates that teachers have to deal with different types of students in a

classroom setting and must be prepared for those who finish early. The teacher I observed had a fantastic strategy for the students who finished early that kept them busy and happy: sketchbook time. Having time set aside for each class to be able to freely draw in their sketchbooks is a crucial part of child development especially in this stage where the students are transitioning between developmental stages and have to just try out new materials and subjects to learn how to draw them. It's also a great activity because it's not too messy and the students can easily clean up in almost no time so they have almost the entire class time to actually be working on something.

The third day I observed this class was actually quite a disaster because the activity proved to be a little bit challenging for second graders. The technique used for the yarn paintings that the teacher developed was first to transfer the childrens' sketches onto their final pieces of paper, then attach the paper to their painted frames, and then to use cut up yarn and regular craft glue to stick the yarn to the paper in the designs. The way the class time was organized was pretty much at each student's individual pace because the teacher just wrote the instructions on the whiteboard and expected the students to follow the instructions on their own with no guidance which is super challenging for younger children because they are just learning a new media when they haven't even mastered simple mediums such as colored pencils or markers. The most difficult part of the lesson for the students seemed to be getting the yarn to stick to the craft glue because they either used too little of the glue or way too much and then they just made a mess. I think this activity would be wonderful for maybe fourth grade and above with these materials but using some easier materials such as just using those

bendy wax strips (I think they're called Wikki Stix) could have definitely helped in making it work for the second graders.

Aside from the second grade class that I observed, I also had the chance to observe an eighth grade class which was really interesting when comparing the two age groups. The second graders had to have constant direction of attention and guidance from the teacher while the eighth graders were all doing independent work and it seemed that they barely even noticed the teacher was there except for when she went around the room and asked each individual about their work. Another thing I observed about the two age groups was that the eighth graders were all attempting to do very representational and realistic work while the second graders didn't really care if the images were real or made up as long as they were colorful and looked okay to the teacher; this observation definitely goes along with child development and how children in the preadolescent stage are concerned with all realistic representations of the subject matter.

Overall I was very pleased with the experiences I had at Metcalf this semester and I feel that they just reinforced what I learned about child development. I wish I would have been able to see more of a range of ages but I am really glad I was able to at least observe an entire lesson plan from start to finish because that was honestly the most impactful part about the clinicals for me and I think I'll carry the lessons I learned about that class with me into my future classroom.