

Albert D Lawton Middle School 9/9/15 - Alanna

When I arrived a group of seventh graders came into the room, gathered their work and headed to their spots. You were helping students get settled and greeting them in a friendly way. Tina counted down from five to get their attention in order to go over directions and review the expectations for the project, which included primary and secondary colors, and patterns. You were checking in with students and helping to find lost work. It is clear that you are working as a team with Tina. I know she is so happy to have you in the classroom with her.

Once the students got working you continued to circulate and talk with them about their work. It is important to build connections with students in order to help with classroom culture. When students feel connected to the adults in school they will be more successful and there will be fewer issues with classroom behavior. I can tell you are very comfortable with this age group and are easily able to connect with them. This is truly a strength of yours that will serve you well as a teacher.

This is an engaging project for students with both structure and choice. Although students had to choose either secondary or primary colors for one side of their circle and a pattern for the other, they could choose what materials to work with. Some students were using paint while others were free to use markers or oil pastels. Structuring projects this way is perfect for middle school students who need some concrete boundaries yet love making personal choices. The collaborative aspect of this project was also great for the beginning of the year. It has allowed students to start the year with creating something that they can contribute to their classroom community. It gets them thinking about how to work together and about being apart of a larger group.

It is clear that the students enjoy having you in class and feel comfortable asking you questions about their work and where things go. They see you as one of the teachers. This sets you up for taking more responsibly in the classroom. Your kindness and openness make you approachable.

There seems to be many systems already set up in the classroom. Students knew where to put their work and how to clean up. Tina reviewed the expectations before clean up and students went to work getting the room in order. Clean up is a time when behavior issues and disorganization can pop up, especially in elementary and middle school. It will be important for you to really think about this part of class and plan for it thoughtfully. Sometimes right after clean up there are few minutes when students are waiting to be released. This can be a great time to squeeze in a quick assessment by asking reflective questions about the class/project.

After talking with you and Tina it sounds like the two of you have a plan for your solo teaching. I like the idea of you mirroring Tina next week to begin finding your

voice in the classroom. You can watch her lead the class and assist her then you can lead the class and she can assist you. You are going to do great!