

At Woodrow Wilson, I felt that overall there was a positive learning environment in the classroom. Students were comfortable in the classroom and all loved music and Mrs. Augustine. As students walked into the classroom, there were different ones each day that wanted to give her a hug and were glad to be there, or would hug her when leaving as a thank you. It was precious to see that Mrs. Augustine set up a music classroom where students enjoyed being there.

Overall there was an expectation of respect and rapport. This group of students was not very well developed in social skills and so sometimes they were put in a situation (such as games) where they were not able to keep up this respect. However, they knew the expectations and were used to being taken out of the activity should poor respect occur, or even more so the activity would just be stopped.

When observing this class, it was easy to see that the students were engaged in the learning process. They were always expected to be singing. If not participating, Mrs. Augustine would use proximity, addressing the problem, or complimenting those that were participating.

There were many classroom procedures in place. In my time there, I continued to pick up on little procedures throughout the class period. The students enter the room down a hallway with instrument racks. They form two single file lines in this hallway, quietly and not touching the racks, and are not allowed to actually enter the music classroom until Mrs. Augustine invites them. When they are invited into the classroom, it is an expectation that they sit in assigned rows in front of the teaching stool and wait for directions. Mrs. Augustine knows how bad downtime is, so often she will begin singing a song as the students walk to their seats. There are also rules about instrument use, there is a gong to signal no talking, and then at the end of class, they line up in two single file lines in the hallway just like they did before class until they are dismissed to PE. It was clear that the students knew the routines and procedures very well, and they were followed for the most part without question.

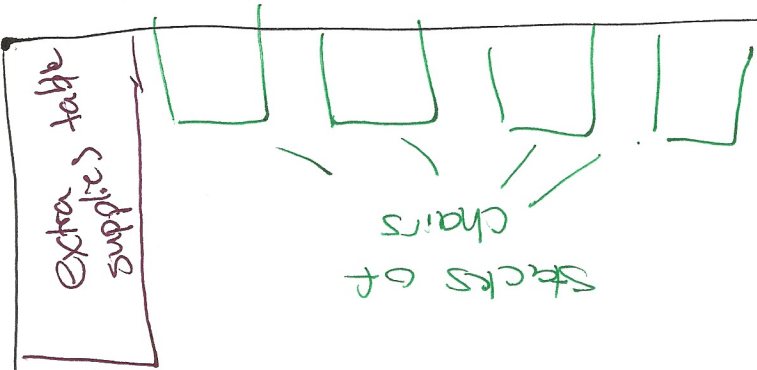
In order to encourage the students to use appropriate behavior, Mrs. Augustine first would go to making points about the students who were behaving well. If necessary she would tell students what they were doing wrong. Most of the time this resulted in them having the option of giving it up or doing things right. I liked that the students knew what was right and wrong, and as soon as they were called out, they would fix it.

Her classroom set up is really well organized. There is a *large* amount of free space in the middle of the classroom for learning to occur. The students have a good understanding of what is off limits (essentially anything bordering the free space except the "student needs" table). The student needs table has Kleenexes and hand sanitizer, so they know where to go should they need either of these. The only portion of the room that was ever a problem while I was there was the open instrument racks in the hallway as these were a huge temptation to touch as they stood there. However, the students in general would not touch them, and I'm sure the older classes have no problem with keeping hands off after a few years of being told this.

door from
hallway

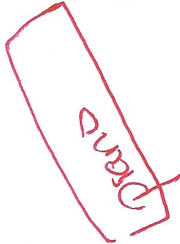
open-faced instrument racks

instrument & supply closets.



extra tables

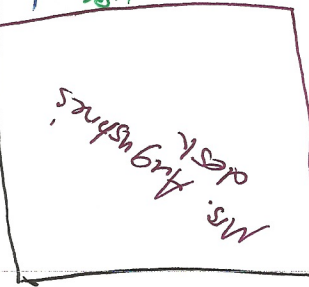
stacks of
chairs



teaching
table

white board

stacks
of
books



door
to outside



handicap
ramp

stairs to
stage

building
wall

