Classroom Narrative

This semester in my Instruction II education course I am observing, teaching and interacting with Sarah Harris’s intro to design class at Poudre High School. The class contains thirty-three students and is a mixture of students grades 9 through 12, but the majority are freshman and sophomores. This class is an intro to art, so students create projects by working with basic mediums and processes that include collage, making a color wheel and currently intro to creating relief prints. The class population mainly white with only a few Hispanic students, as far as I know and have been informed there are no ELL students but majority can speak English and Spanish fluently. The classroom is broken up into two separate studio rooms and her class is held in the smaller room. The desks are set up in groups of four and are arranged so nobody has their back the teacher during presentation and announcements. At the beginning of the semester students were given assigned seats but recently they have allowed to sit where they wanted and with who. Sarah or Ben will move the student to a different seat of their choosing if they are getting distracted or not working because of the people they are sitting with. During work time students can work in the other room if they are staying on task and making progress on their work. Sarah has a student teacher leading the class right now and due to his discomfort of other adults being in the room I am not allowed in their while he is teaching, he is leading all the classes and wants as little interruption as possible. During his demo’s I am usually doing prep work with Sarah. I have had very interaction time with the students and have only had the opportunity to talk with a few. Since I not had a chance to be in the classroom and talk with many students only a few briefly. I am going to touch on what I know from observations, conversations, students artwork and the syllabus quiz Sarah had students complete at the beginning of the semester. At the end of the quiz students were given an option to answer questions about what they were concerned about in the class, how can the teacher help you be successful and is their anything you want me to know about you as a student. I read each student answers to these questions and found that majority of the students were very shy and had not practiced art in a few years or had never taken an art class. Some students were uncomfortable reading out loud or being called on in class because they couldn’t read very well or were not comfortable speaking in front of the class and were able to work better if they were working with friends and did not like it when the teacher or others watched them work or hovered. Students also talked about how they wanted the teacher to come up individually and check for understanding and be nice. I have observed from students many of them struggle with generating ideas and staying focused on certain tasks that they feel that they are struggling with. There also seems to be problems with students rushing through work because they do not want to be there and are disinterested in the assignment. During presentations or introductions students get antsy and seem to stop paying attention after about 5 to 10 minutes. I interacted with a total of four students so far, two of them love art and are unbelievably creative, passionate and fully invested in their projects. The other two expressed that they liked art but were not trying hard on their assignments because they hated what they were doing. They did not want to be there nor did they like the student teacher so they were doing the bare minimum. From student’s artwork, similar from my observations and interactions many students put very little time, thought and effort into them. I took pictures of the students completed collage projects and right away could find those who spent time and care and those who did not care or had no interest at all their was a range of skill level, thought and process in each work. These projects were a great way to see the beginning stages of those who are passionate about art and those who are not. It was helpful to identify where students were with materials and creative processes and thoughts.

In this class, there are no IEP/504 students so accommodations have not been in action. It is apparent however that some of the students in the class are restless and have trouble thinking creatively and investing in the projects, whereas the other half are excelling and have a clear passion for art. When teaching this class I plan on using a power point to present that includes pictures and works for those who are visual learners. I am going to make the presentation short so students who have trouble staying attentive and focused are not restless and zone out. Mainly I will have students practice the skills individually or in groups to give them the chance to interact, share ideas, stay on task and help students who are having trouble with lesson gain a better understanding without having to ask questions or feel called out. For students struggling I will give suggestions that will not overwhelm them but just add a little extra using something they already know or have worked with, such as what if you did this…. Why did you make this decision…… can you tell me about the process and the work in general…..What can you add to this to fit the assignment or express your concept… could you add anything….. what would/could you add……? For those who are advanced and finish quickly or do not feel challenged I would ask similar questions but push these students to explore new material and work with something unfamiliar to them or concepts. For both I would provide examples of artists or encourage them to research artists who created the type of artwork they have been working with. Research their processes and their concept behind the works, for understanding and inspiration. If students are unfocused or discouraged I would have a private talk with them in the other room and find out what the problem was and what I could do to help them. If the students are distracted by other students I would move the students to different tables.