Case Study 11

I chose to do an interview with a girl that I nanny every summer named Campbell as well as a girl that’s in my class named Lilah. The reason why I chose Campbell is because I am pretty close with her so I felt that she would be more comfortable with our interview since I see her every day over summer (for the past three years). With Lilah, we connect well in the classroom and I see her in my 6th period on Tuesdays and Thursdays so therefore I felt that we would be a good fit. Both of them come from different schools, one being Wellington and the other being Rocky Heights which is in Highlands Ranch so I felt that I might get some diverse answers from them knowing that they are from opposite areas of Colorado.

 With Lilah, one of the answers to the questions that stood out to me was what she thought of school. She said that she likes it because she feels like she has made a lot more friends this year being in middle school and that she likes how there are “lots of different classes”. When I think back to middle school, it was a huge and scary change because I was thrown into a school that had two other feeder schools that went into it so I felt intimidated by that fact that I didn’t know everyone. Lilah is different in that sense. She feels like she is able to make friends easy and she enjoys the classes that she is in. She would like to change how much homework that she has because she says that its a lot more than what she had to do the year before and she wishes that she could choose what class and teachers she got to have so she could be with more of her friends. Campbell on the other hand is opposite where she cares more about the fact that they have a really good cross country team as well as music program. Campbell also says that this year is way harder than when she was in middle school and she says that she wishes that her school wasn’t so picky and that the 8th graders didn’t call her a pixie. She likes the fact that her school offered what’s called “early flight” which is a week summer camp where she could get used to the school and know where everything is as well as where all of her classes would be. She said that that really helped her feel more comfortable when she started her first day even thought the 8th graders made fun of them. Both of them had the same answer for what their favorite class was which made me smile and you can probably guess what that class was… yes it was art class. Lilah said that she liked her art class because she said that it was her fun class and she made really cool “stuff” like her chia pet made out of clay which looked like a bunny more than a squirrel she said. She also made a comment on how she enjoyed that her teacher let her class take brain brakes and go outside so they can run around etc. They also had the same answer to what the most important things that were in their life which was their dogs. Lilah actually made a portrait of her pit-bull with her spikey collar in her FCS class with Mrs. Broste and I am actually painting a portrait of all 4 of Campbell’s dogs for Christmas so I was not surprised when she said that they are her favorite things. When I asked what advice they would give to a new teacher I was eager to hear what their answer would be because I take this very seriously so I can reasonably apply it to my teaching. Lilah said that I shouldn’t give any homework (which I knew that answer was going to come) and to make sure to give students brain breaks because its hard to sit in classes where the teacher just “talks” the whole time and doesn’t keep them engaged. Campbell said to not be too harsh/ be nice but also make time to make a relationship with all the students. She said that some of her teachers don’t ask her how her weekend was but will talk to other students which makes her feel left out. She said to also make fun activities that are out of the ordinary and can challenge students. She says that she is good at art and she wished that her teacher provide other activates to push her.

 Listening to both of the girls made me realize how much they want to learn and be engaged in a class. They want to be active and moving which surprised me because I always just thought that the boys were the only ones in class. Every student needs to have brain break because if you think about it, the students are in school for around 7 hours of the day. I was definitely nervous the first day that I taught my lesson in Mrs. Broste’s classroom but after hearing what they had to say it made me feel more confident. I know that they really just want to have a relationship with me and want me to care which of course I do. Middle school is an awkward time where little things to them matter like when they have to read a loud in front of the classroom or have to present. That was one of Lilah’s comments that she made and how its really uncomfortable for her to have to be called on or put on the spot.

 I didn’t realize how much information and insight I can get from two little girls on what they prefer in the classroom to what their home life is like and how that effects them. This interview just shows the importance of getting to know your students so that you can better your own classroom and build those relationships. I think that I will definitely interview/ one on one talk with my students so that I can help them succeed in not only in my classroom but others as well. I want them to learn valuable lessons that are higher than art and that they can use for the rest of their lives. Just asking a couple of questions begins to build that bond with your student which is crucial to their experience.