This week I had the opportunity to observe a class critique of the work the students have been working on (windchimes made out of ceramics). In art there aren’t many grades given out so a critique is one way to evaluate student progress. The students were to first go through the rubric given to them for the project and grade themselves honestly; the grading was based upon creativity, completeness, neatness, time management, and ability to use the tools/techniques. The students were to give themselves points and then write at least two sentences describing what they liked about their finished piece and then what they would change or add to it. The students responded well to this because they were able to be critical of their own work, but also were able to take some responsibility for their grade. After grading themselves, the students would present their work to the class one at a time, telling everyone about what it is, what they like, what they would change about it, and then finally they would tap on the windchime to show the class what type of noise it made. The students didn’t use any art vocabulary, however they did seem to enjoy critique and there wasn’t any time where it was awkwardly silent or where nobody had something to say about their peer’s work.

Observing the critique in the classroom, I was very pleased with how responsive the class was and how much they encouraged each other about their artwork. I will definitely strive to create a positive classroom environment like this one where the students feel comfortable sharing so early in the semester. I also really liked that the teacher had the students grade themselves based on the rubric because then it lead to further understanding for the students. I remember sometimes receiving a rubric in school and not caring about it because it wasn’t given a purpose besides what the teacher would give feedback on, but in this classroom it was an opportunity for students to see what they were successful at or what they may have missed. This could be a great tool to use to evaluate student growth through the semester as well as allow students to evaluate their own growth too. The only difference I would make in my critique is that I would like the students to use the language that is involved in art instead of simply saying, “it looks really cool”, they could say “the way you used blue and orange together makes the logo pop”. This could be done by simply writing prompts and vocab for them to use on the board.

As far as returning work goes, it seems like most of the work is actually displayed in the classrooms and not taken home by the students which is very interesting. Usually work will be displayed for a short period of time and then students are able to take it home. I do like the idea of decorating the classroom with student work, however some students may want to keep the work they spent so much time on so maybe they could be given the choice to either keep it displayed at the school or they could take it home to keep for themselves.

This week is homecoming week for Central Catholic so I had the pleasure of seeing all of the fun activities the students and teachers take part in. My CT is actually the senior class advisor so he’s extremely involved in all of the extra curriculars. He made sure each student came to class dressed in the spirit wear, encouraged them to get involved in the festivities, and like I had mentioned in my previous reflection he had the students making their own decorations for homecoming which was awesome and really cool to see. I think him being so involved creates a great bond between him and the students. He dressed up funny for all of the spirit days and the students would laugh or comment about what he was wearing when they walked in which created an environment that is more fun and carefree. He also does a great job of creating a sense of school pride and inclusiveness that many students appreciate, especially those in his class who are a part of the football team. They felt appreciated and special that they had so much support from the teacher and from their classmates even if they may not know much about football or really care too much about it either.

Seeing my CT so involved makes me want to be just as involved in school activities. In high school I wasn’t very involved with anything except for my own interests, however when I teach I want the students to feel supported and know that even if they aren’t artists, I still am there to encourage them and guide them to follow their own paths. I had a gym teacher that was so amazing at encouraging everyone to do what they love; he came to every single art show the school had even though he knew nothing about it and always made it a point to come find me to ask about my art or ask about the show. This made me feel truly special and supported by my school which gave me more reason to continue to do what I loved. This feeling is what lead me to want to become a teacher as well because I want to be that person in my students’ lives that pushes them and encourages them to be themselves. I also would love to help with fun events like homecoming because for some students, those events are everything to them and they are things that will be remembered for the rest of their lives.