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Instructor: Joseph Furlong

English 21002– Writing for Social Science

Mini-Ethnography

It was 9:40 am on a Wednesday, I rushed into the dull lit room that had about 25 students. I was late and walked my way into the classroom, that had mixed-match desks that varied in size and color as well as their condition. As I entered students faced my direction for a second then returned their attention to the professor. The class was proceeding, and everyone was already settled in. I glanced over students trying to find my math friends who I always sit with. Luckily, I saw an empty chair, in the middle of my two friends, the chair was large and in good condition As I walked to the empty chair, I waved to greet my friends who were focused on taking notes on the professor’s lectures like all the other students in the classroom. They bowed their head up and down, looking at the board and back down at their notebooks to write down their notes.

The class offers a sense of comfort, most likely because as a seek community class everyone seemed to know each other and if one person was not in class, we were able to spot out who was missing. I noticed that most students had notebooks and pencils/pens as opposed to computers or other electronic devices for note-taking. However, there were a small number of students who were using their laptops or tablets to take down notes and coincidentally they were all sitting in the back of the room. I wondered how they were able to take down quality notes on a word document, I had tried this myself and preferred the classic pencil and paper to obtain and retain a better understanding when it comes to a math course; however, something work better for others. On the other hand, I did notice that compared to the students who used notebooks they had less head motion. They were more focused on the screens of their devices and occasionally would look at the whiteboard compared to students that didn’t use electronics to take down notes.

The professor is a young tall white male that has a high sweet pitched voice; he always comes to class 15 minutes early an in a casual outfit. On this class day, he wore kakis pants and leather business shoes with a plain gray crewneck. The class respects him as he reciprocates his attention to the students; answering any questions that the students may be confused about. His body language was tense and stiff walking across the room in a longitude way as he gives the lecture. He writes on the whiteboard with different color markers. When he fills up the board, he goes back to the left side of the whiteboard to erase the previous notes and then writes his new notes. The professor repeats this throughout the class as if he were a typewriter. Due to his youthful appearances and uncomfortable stances, he does try to avoid eye contact with the class; most would infer that he is a new teacher.

 It is a diverse classroom that has different types of students from different background. I noticed that there is a small clique in the left side of the classroom that always seems to laugh subtly. However, due to the passive personality that professor Alex has, he will never say anything to stop any interruptions. He continues to teach the class, being aware of the subtle noises and side conversation that is happening. He is bothered. Overall the class is pretty quiet, almost no one participates in class, the professor teaches us new problems and formulas and the student intake in the information that is being given.