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Mr. Speice

ISM 3A

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### Interview Assessment 1

Janis Dahl

Elementary Music Educator

Smith Elementary School

September 29, 2016

For my first professional interview with the Independent Study and Mentorship 2016 - 2017, I chose to meet with Mrs. Janis Dahl, an elementary music educator at Smith Elementary School. Through this interview, I was hoping to practice acting in a professional manner, as well as to gain knowledge based around my field of study. I hoped to learn more about what it means to be a teacher in general, and more specifically, how a music teacher can impact or influence a child's life. Because of my focus on the ways in which a teacher can separate shame and guilt, as well as praise in a classroom setting, I was also searching for ways in which Mrs. Dahl either did or did not incorporate this into her own teaching abilities.

Going into this interview, I felt very nervous, as this was the first meeting that I had scheduled with a professional; however, once I was in the school and found my way to the music room, I began to feel more relaxed. Ultimately, this interview was very informational and beneficial to my understanding of what it means to be both a good teacher, as well as a strong positive influence on young students. During my interview, I was able to learn that Mrs. Dahl

uses a variety of methods for praising as well as adjusting poor behavior. These methods were changed based on grade level. Overall, the method of correction and praise that I found the most interesting was the one in which Mrs. Dahl would praise a student who was showing positive behavior, therefore encouraging a child who was not showing the same behavior to adjust their actions, and to act in the same way as the child who received praise from the teacher. According to Mrs. Dahl, this method is almost always effective, especially with younger students, such as kindergarteners and first graders. Although I did focus mainly on the more emotional and mental aspect of teaching, I did ask some questions based around the physical curriculum that is required of elementary music teachers in the Frisco Independent School District. In FISD, elementary age students are required to obtain basic knowledge of music theory, including tempo, rhythm, beat, notes, scales, and many more terms. Also, students must learn about the overall history of music. In the interview, Mrs. Dahl referred to music as the ‘universal language which everyone understands.’ I fully support this statement, and was very impressed with the ways in which she chose to physically share the ideas that surround this quote with her students. As my first interview began to come to a close, I decided to ask about performances that each grade level put on, and the ways in which Mrs. Dahl chose students to take different roles in playing instruments, singing a solo, having a speaking line, or being a member in the chorus. She then showed me a book, ‘Mallet Madness.’ which provided different diagrams showing ways in which an elementary music teacher could set up a variety of stations. Each station contained a different instrument and concept to go along with it. For example, a xylophone would have a simple card with a short tempo pattern, which the students would then have to play. This way, a teacher has the ability to get a feel for the ways in which different students may excel in one

area, and lack much skill in another. This then allows the teacher to decide where to place students in a performance, as well as where students need to improve throughout the remainder of their time in music class.

As a whole, I feel that my first interview was very successful and helpful to my overall understanding of the topic that I have chosen to study in ISM. I still have many interviews to schedule, but Mrs. Dahl's passion and interest in her career appealed greatly to my ideas of what a mentor should have, and I will look into considering her to be my personal mentor.