

Hannah Bradt

Mr. Speice

ISM 3A

November 17, 2016

Interview Assessment 3

Vanessa Olson

Professional Counselor

Sanford Support System

November 18, 2016

As I continue my focus on the issues of shame and guilt in a classroom setting, along with worthiness, I decided to shift my focus on interviewing with elementary music teachers to conducting a few interviews with therapists who specialize with children. This way, I would be able to better understand the ways in which children function most effectively, as well as the ways in which I will need to conduct myself in a classroom. Because of this, I decided to conduct my third interview with Dr. Vanessa Olson, a professional therapist who is certified in the work of Brené Brown, a scholar who has created many works, which I have decided to base the majority of my studies on.

With this interview, I was hoping to gain a deeper overall understanding of both the ways in which a teacher should interact with his or her students, and the ways that Brené Brown describes concepts such as shame and worthiness. Through this interview, I was able to learn about many different ideas, which can be used in my personal future classroom. One idea that I

learned about, which I found extremely interesting, was the idea of social and emotional learning. This teaching and learning concept is centered around the focus on emotions of students. When a subject is being taught, it is important that the emotional aspect of said subject is also addressed, rather than simply teaching a topic and immediately moving on. In elementary education as a whole, it is important that emotions that children are feeling are addressed and validated. When a child explains situations and feelings to a trusted adult such as a teacher, they are searching for validation and acknowledgement of these emotions, rather than providing ways that these feelings can be changed.

Because Dr. Olson is certified in Brené Brown's work, she was able to provide me with a strong amount of insight on the topics that are covered in Brown's work. One of the most prominent ideas that I had the opportunity to learn about was the idea of "Stormy First Drafts." This concept basically claims that, when anyone encounters any certain situations, that person must immediately create a type of 'story' in order to allow their brain to understand the situation that took place. Although individuals do create these stories, many times they happen to be incorrect or lacking factual support. Because of this, the overall result of the original situation is changed. One topic that Dr. Olson stressed was the importance of one's ability to revise the story that their brain creates, ultimately allowing a much more positive outcome of the situation as a whole.

Finally, Dr. Olson shared with me the difference between self esteem and self compassion. Self esteem is defined as 'confidence in one's own worth or abilities,' while self compassion is defined as 'extending compassion to one's self in instances of perceived inadequacy, failure, or general suffering.' These ideas were created by Kristin Neff, a professor

at the University of Texas. While explaining the difference in these two concepts, Dr. Olson stated that “Happiness is something that needs to be practiced,” so that self compassion can be made more apparent, rather than self esteem. This will ultimately result in an increase of happiness, as one will learn to accept themselves no matter the situation, and see themselves as worthy.

As a whole, this interview was very successful, and provided a very strong and solid foundation for my understanding of the ways to interact with children in a classroom, so that I have the ability to become a very effective and open teacher, avoiding shame as a whole, and promoting worthiness. As I continue my research and interviews, I plan to focus on these topics, and to increase my understanding through thoughts from other therapists specializing in working with children.