

LINDA – Fieldnotes – May 26, 2007

Subject: Baby College, HCZ

Location: P.S. 242 on 122<sup>nd</sup> Street between 7<sup>th</sup> and Lenox Avenues  
(aka Adam Clayton Powell and Malcolm X Blvds)

Time: 9:45-12:25

304

Notes in purple will be edited out of notes for Betina and Kimberly  
[These notes were written on Monday, May 28, two days after the event]

Topic for day: Discipline I

Week 4 of Baby College, 3<sup>rd</sup> week that I am present

My task for today is to focus on engagement

When I arrive around 9:45, Kimberly is sitting in front of the school, on the low wall that has a fence rising out of it, talking with Mr. Russell (the first teacher we observed). Her forehead has a sheen of sweat on it under the hot sun. The day is already very warm, in the high seventies or eighties and a little humid. She is wearing a sleeveless, low-cut sweater gathered at her chest in lavender, white, and lime green stripes, with a beige knee-length skirt and white high-heeled sandals. She wears small pearl drop earrings, and her hair is in short, tight curls. Mr. Russell is wearing the bright blue HCZ shirt, black slacks, and black sneakers. I don't catch what they are saying, and the conversation ends shortly after I arrive.

57p

39p

As soon as I sit next to Kimberly, Betina arrives. She is wearing a pink shirt and jeans with her brown suede sneakers. We soon head indoors. I think it is Mr. Russell that scolds the young HCZ-shirted men standing in the doorway, telling them to greet us with a smile. They comply, welcoming us. The registration line has about 12 people. Betina says disapprovingly that she'd think that they'd arrange the registration procedure by class, so it would go faster.

38p

41b

Abasi Clark greets us and says that he expected the development team to have fewer people here today, since it is Memorial Day weekend. Brenda joins us then, as if to highlight his point. Again, I forget to note what Brenda is wearing, but certainly not jeans. I am wearing linen pants, a blue shirt, and bronze flats. Betina asks if anyone has a timepiece she can borrow. Kimberly says her watch will not be of much use [don't catch why; doesn't have numbers?]. Brenda loans her her slim pink cell phone, which matches Betina's shirt.

48p

The four of us head into the auditorium, into our usual spot in the second row on the right side facing the stage. Betina is first, then Brenda, then Kimberly, then me. Kimberly is already taking notes as Brenda and Betina chat. I tell Kimberly that I like being called the "development team," and she responds noncommittally. Brenda comments that there are less people than last week. People are still filtering in, so I ask Betina if it's okay that I walk around.

47p

I head to the registration tables. The first table that had held Oprah's waivers the first week I was observing is now empty, save for a HCZ-shirted worker. Two HCZ workers sit at the second table, with a third hovering and speaking with someone in line. It looks like the procedures for checking in have been consolidated. Name tags are now attached to the program and lottery tickets by paper clip, and stacked neatly with the name tags showing. I assume they are in alphabetical order.

Next, I go to the cafeteria, where children and parents eat breakfast. Two HCZ workers stand in the doorway. Betina is getting a cup of water. On the right, breakfast is being served: apples and oranges, and breakfast sandwiches of sausage, egg, and bread. Betina tells me that this must not be their regular cook, since he doesn't serve anything fried or processed. She tells me that the parents have complained in the past about the food he serves, plus the portions are too small. She mentions that people are used to eating so much more that they don't know what a single serving should look like. Mr. Russell starts announcing that people should head to the auditorium.

417

I head back out to the registration area, and ask a HCZ worker if a crumpled program without a lottery ticket attached is an extra, if I can take it. She says yes. I see Kimberly, Brenda, and Betina talking by the window. I join them as well, and ask if I should accompany one of them again. I tell them that my Spanish is not so good but I can certainly look for signs of engagement without knowing the language. Betina says some kind of disclaimer about her language ability in French. She says that plus the simultaneous translations into Mandingo and something else I don't catch, she has a hard time taking notes. She asks Brenda if she takes notes in Spanish or English, and Brenda says both. Especially direct quotations, she takes in Spanish. Betina says that she can do direct quotations. We decide that I will accompany Kimberly again. Kimberly says she really wants to see the three-year-old class. We talk briefly about which topic is which week (Brain Development II next week, then return to Discipline). Kimberly asks to look at the program.

418

#### Introduction, 10:05

We join people making their way to the auditorium. Around 10:05, Mr. Abasi starts the "Good morning" ritual into the microphone. He thanks everyone for coming out, and when there is no direct response, he says louder, "I said, thank you!" The audience responds, "You're welcome!"

419

He introduces the topic, discipline, which he calls "one of the more interesting topics." He tells the audience, "We're going to turn away for a little bit from the discipline practices of the parents." He says, "OK now I'm gonna ask, by a show of hands, how many of you will hit your children?" A few hands go up, and he adds, "We will not judge you." He explains that when you work with social services, there are some things that need to be reported. "For this five minutes, at this auditorium, we're gonna turn that off." [This makes me wonder to what extent HCZ and other nonprofit agencies are seen as extensions of government services.]

He repeats, "How many of you will hit your kids?" It seems to me that the same few people raise their hands. Next to a mother raising her hand, a young child raises his hand. Mr. Abasi then asks, "How many of you will scream at your kids?" At least two of the same people raise their hands. Again, only a few people raise their hands. Mr. Abasi asks a third question, "How many of you use foul language?" He mentions how people used to "go get a switch," explaining that "a lot of things you were brought up with as far as discipline" have changed.

351

### Jeopardy, 10:10

Mr. Abasi then asks instructors to help him find a volunteer from each class. "I need one person from each class, because we're gonna play a little game." The first volunteer is from the Spanish class. As this happens, there is a lot of talking, some of it quite loud.

[As people get up to volunteer, including a woman I identify as African-looking, I wonder to myself what signals "African-looking." Her hair sticks out in maybe nine miniature ponytails, she is heavysset, and she wears a pink shirt and long denim skirt. I find her beautiful, with high cheekbones. Later in the hallway I notice her bag, which has odd patches sewn onto it that recall Taiwanese immigrants who wear t-shirts with nonsensical English phrases on it—that is, something that no American would wear. I also see that each of her miniature "ponytails" is bound with some sort of ribbon or cloth. I don't think I've ever seen a hairstyle like this.]

The first question is, "What are three things you should do with your baby every day?" The audience quiets down as the man who answers gets it correct: "Read, sing, play." People clap for him. A man from the audience yells, "What class is he in?" The response is, "2 year olds!" [I think, that must be Mr. Russell.]

The second question is, "What do the letters MMR stand for?" I can't hear the response, but Mr. Abasi says, "Ohp, she says she needs a little time." He starts singing the Jeopardy theme song and people join in. The noise level has gone back up. The contestant for this question gets the answer right, saying that she wasn't given enough time. People cheer for her as well.

Around 10:15, he asks, "How many home visits should you have had by the ninth week of Baby College?" A baby starts crying, adding to the noise level. The contestant answers, "Nine weeks," and Mr. Abasi replies, "That's right." A tall HCZ worker starts to clap, and the audience joins in.

I notice a mom sitting near us fanning her infant. Mr. Russell, who is walking up the aisle, and asks her to fan him. She obliges. After a few seconds he thanks her and keeps walking.

I don't hear the fourth question. I note that the mom with the crying baby is now feeding the baby from a bottle. The baby is quiet. It seems that the contestant got the answer

right, as Mr. Abasi teases, "Ok, did somebody give you the right answer?" People in the first two rows burst out laughing. A man with a toddler a few rows back is smiling. The people in the first two rows lean forward, interacting with Mr. Abasi and the contestant(s). I cannot hear what they are saying.

[I am trying to figure out how to gauge the "engagement level" of the crowd, but it seems futile. At this point there is a small buzz of conversation, but I cannot assume that this means those talking are not engaged. Those with babies, of course, are distracted by their babies. It seems that most people are looking forward, toward the speaker(s). Judging by the burst of laughter, the people in the front of the room are directly engaged. This makes sense given the large size and bad acoustics in the auditorium.]

When Mr. Abasi addresses a mom who looks African, people are yelling, "that's not a fair question for her." I miss the question and why this is not a fair question. The next person gets the answer correct: "Dr. T. Brazelton." Mr. Abasi asks for the name of the other doctor, then remarks, "Nobody ever remembers Dr. Josh." He tells the audience they will receive the *Touchpoints* book.

350

At 10:20, there is a question about some sort of training before three weeks. I'm not sure what this is. A bunch of hands go up in the front two rows, a few in the back.

Next question: Give me three characteristics of a book that you (should get for your children?). A woman from my last class (then wearing a gold sweater, now a tight white rayon t-shirt and a gathered skirt of lavender, green, and white, with silver shoes) answers this question. I do not catch the full question or answer.

10:22 A HCZ male worker with long dreads sits in the first seat of the first row in front of us, and a woman joins him in the seat directly in front of me. "You're a hard man to find," she tells him. She says something about an apartment [I do not know whether she means hers or his, and if this is an outreach worker who does home visits.] She is plump, and wearing a T shirt with orange, yellow and white stripes over beige pants, carrying a black nylon bag.

56p

I notice Ms. Marie holding a baby up front. She has probably been there for awhile, since it turns out that she is holding the baby of the woman who wore the gold sweater last time. Francisca stands with Ms. Marie near the piano. [Betina had earlier remarked on the chairs arranged on the stage, signaling that the infant class was returning to the stage.] Ms. Marie hands the baby back to Gold Sweater when she finishes.

4w

Next few questions: again, MMR (the answer is correct, measles mumps rubella), first shot (Hep B), and location of Baby College office. While this is going on I look around and see people eating, reading what looks like the HCZ textbook for the class (a thick volume bound by plastic combs), and one person talking on a cell phone. I see a man and woman exchanging papers.

10:29 Mr. Abasi says something about having to do something before graduating. He reassures the audience, "I know it's hot, we're gonna move out of the auditorium soon, very soon." He tells the audience that Oprah show will air on Tuesday the week of the 1<sup>st</sup>, at 4pm. Someone in the audience called out, "That's Thursday!" Mr. Abasi amended the announcement to Thursday, June 1<sup>st</sup>, Channel 7. "Now I didn't see the show," he told us. "Nobody at HCZ has seen it." He explained that "they usually highlight the programs that don't work because of funding" and other reasons, "But the Baby College does work."

319

Song, 10:29

Rayven comes to the front of the auditorium. "Good morning," she said into the microphone. When nobody answered (within my earshot) she repeated, "GOOD MORNING!" This time people responded. "I need 5 volunteers," she announced, and hands start going up. "Ok today we're gonna do today, we're going to do a counting song." She teaches the audience to rub their stomachs while saying, "Yum yum!" when she sings about eating delicious bugs, telling us we shouldn't make faces since frogs like to eat bugs. She sets up five volunteers behind a blue cloth held up by HCZ workers

[I miss some of the lyrics]  
 Five [green?] speckled frogs  
 Sitting on a speckled log  
 Eating some most delicious bugs, Yum Yum!  
 One jumped into the pool  
 Where it was nice and cool  
 Then there were four speckled frogs

As the song progresses to four, three, and two speckled frogs, Rayven makes jokes about people not knowing how to count. A mother takes her infant's hands and claps. Several people drink water and do not sing along. "Are you guys counting with me?" Rayven asks. An HCZ worker pours water into plastic cups and distributes them to people in the audience, then leaves the auditorium with the plastic pitchers [presumably to get more water].

Rayven then goes over the letters and shape for the day: LMNO and star. [I assume she also did color, which I missed.]

Mr. Abasi says, "That is the woman in charge of the children, so please, thank her." He asks if there are any questions. A woman behind me asks, how many people can we invite to graduation?

[notes below written on Tuesday, 5/29/07]

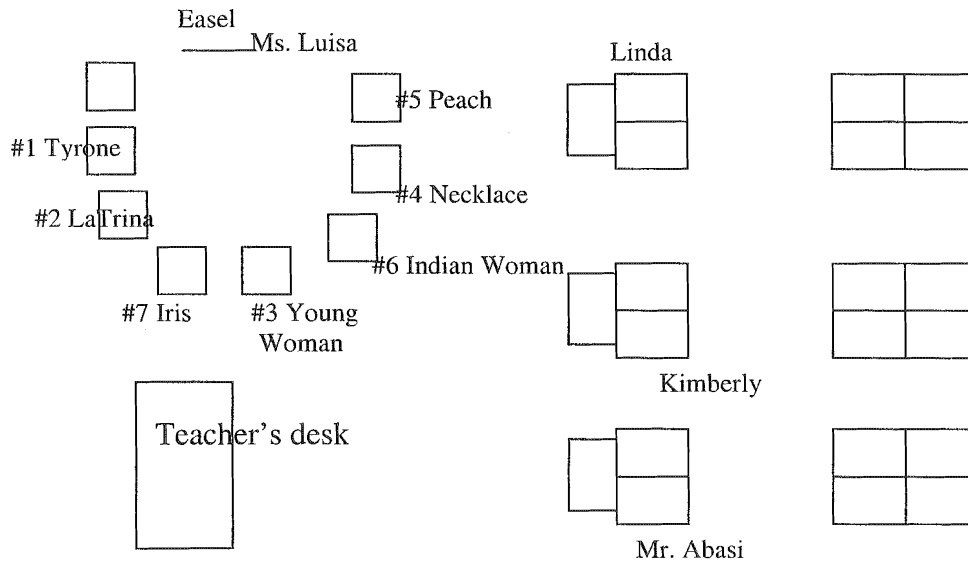
3-Year Old Class, 10:42, Room 116

The instructor, Ms. Luisa, is standing in front of a circle of chairs arranged towards an easel that stands in front of the window. Kimberly and I sit at a set of four desks just

68p

behind the circle. Ms. Luisa asks Kimberly and I to introduce ourselves. Kimberly, who seems to be getting ready, says I can go first, and I introduce myself as Linda Lin, on a development team. Kimberly introduces ourselves.

There are five “students” present (other than the instructor) when we arrive. A man says, “It’s hot!” Ms. Luisa responds, “I opened up the windows!” She moves to open another window. She then says, “Can I have your attention?” A young woman asks if she can turn on the lights, since every other classroom has lights on. Ms. Luisa responds that she thinks the other classrooms also have air conditioning, and they do not. An older woman (perhaps in late thirties) gives a book to the man. A young man in an HCZ shirt comes by with water and cups. A woman who looks Indian comes in, dressed in a pink and light orange tunic with a matching scarf around her neck. The older woman, identified below as #2, gives the sign-in sheet to the Indian woman, #6.



Ms. Luisa is wearing the blue HCZ shirt with jeans and black sneakers. She also wears small silver earrings, wire glasses, a silver bangle on her left wrist, and a large silver ring on her ring finger (did not notice which hand).

Ms. Luisa reads a story from a picture book. She reads slowly, with inflection, holding up the book so everyone can see the pictures. Everyone is quiet initially, and looking at the book.

At 10:46 I notice Mr. Russell walking by outside. A young man wearing an HCZ shirt is pushing a cart loaded with plastic green and white water pitchers. Tyrone and LaTrina whisper. Ms. Luisa keeps reading.

72p

73p

Ms. Luisa interrupts herself reading to ask, "When is the best time to do things?" No. 6 ventures, "At the appropriate time?"

Luisa: Who is the most important person?

#3: You!

Luisa: One more question. [I miss the question]

People offer answers.

[Notes continued on 5/31]

Luisa: The most important time is now. [Tri-part saying from book, something like, the most important person is you, the most important thing is being here, the most important time is now.] When she says this Student #2 looks to the side.

[This question-and-answer ritual looks to me like a clear sign of engagement, both on the part of the teacher and student. That is, engagement is in the interaction: the teacher eliciting responses that both student and teacher can recognize as "engagement."

When LaTrina looks to the side, I interpret this as a possible expression of skepticism in response to a sentimental sayings. This is of course an over-interpretation that has to be confirmed with the student, but I do not read it as a sign of disengagement. Rather, it is a sign of clear engagement: listening closely and responding. However, if a teacher notices this, they might interpret it as disrespectful.]

Student #1, Tyrone, is wearing a short-sleeve light green button-down shirt with thin white stripes over a white tank top, dark dark blue jeans, sneakers, and a gold colored watch.

Student #2, LaTrina, is wearing a knit tank top with navy and white stripes of various thicknesses and blue jeans. She also wears silver earrings, a heavy silver necklace, a silver bracelet on her right wrist, a metal cuff on her left wrist, and a silver belt. Her hair is tied in a high ponytail to one side of her head. She is heavysset, with a generous chest.

Student #3, Young Mom, looks very young. She is wearing a polo shirt with dark blue, green, and white stripes over jeans. She is dark-skinned and very slight.

Student #4, Necklace, is wearing a white blouse with lace with black pants and shiny black slingback flats. I can see a peach or beige bra underneath the blouse. She also wears a three strand necklace with round gold bead interspersed with clear beads, and matching earrings. She wears a silver bracelet and has faded red polish on her fingernails. She has short straightened hair slicked close to her head.

Student #5, Peach, is wearing a thin shirt in peach and light peach over beige pants in a linen blend with black dress shoes. I can see a bra through the shirt. A strap that peeks out

the top is hot pink. She wears a gold necklace with a thin chain (can't see if there's a pendant), and large earrings with orange and white thread threaded in a pattern around a round base. She wears her long hair straight in a ponytail.

Student #6, Indian, long ruffled peach and pink tunic in thin fabric over beige pants, matching pink and peach scarf. Hair in long braid down her back. She is also petite.

Student #7, Iris, comes in later. She is wearing a white halter top tied around the back of her neck. It has gold decorations on the straps, holding up a soft scoop neck. Her straightened hair is tied back, with bangs hanging down her forehead.

At 10:51, Ms. Luisa puts the book down. She asks, "What do you think? Do you think I should read it to my daughter?" Young Mom asks, "How old is she?" Peach nods. Ms. Luisa answers, "Five," and there is a brief discussion of the book's appropriateness for a five-year-old, with the concern of the book being "deep." Ms. Luisa says that this is why it's good for adults. "I really like that book."

At 10:52 an HCZ worker comes in to "follow up on the home visits." She has long dreads with gray threading through them and glasses. She informs us that Saleef (?) is on vacation, so come see herself or Francisca.

There is a discussion about activities that are appropriate for three year old children. "At our age, it's not reading writing and playing, it's what?" Peach responds, "Singing." Ms. Luisa instructs the class, "At least one hour a day." She asks, "How many people [do that] at least one hour per day? Don't answer that."

I notice at 10:53 LaTrina's eyes close. Her head dips down, and she jerks it up at 10:54. Tyrone is looking into space. When Ms. Luisa passes out booklets, the other four students present open up their books and start looking at them. Student #2 is looking out the door, Tyrone is looking around the room, and LaTrina eventually puts the booklet into her purse without opening it.

[I do not want to imply that these students are "less engaged" than the others simply because they do not display it at this time in ways recognizable to teachers; when class turns to discussion, they are highly engaged.]

Ms. Luisa has a K-W-L chart on the easel, along with an agenda and a brainstorm chart of 3-year-olds, including words like "fearless."

The Agenda sheet reads,

- I. The Three Questions
- II. Brain Development Review
  - Sing, read, play
  - Child development
- III. Discipline Survey



IV. Icebreaker – childhood reflection(s)  
[I didn't get the rest.]

At 10:55 Ms. Luisa is writing the names of the two pediatricians who visited last week on a blank sheet of paper. She tells us they might ask again next week. In telling us she didn't write the names down for the class, she seems to imply that she should have done so. Peach says, "That's why I didn't get it." Ms. Luisa tells the class, "The white man with the hearing aid was Dr. Brazelton. The other white man is Dr. Sparrow. Think of a bird." For Dr. Brazelton, Young Mom suggests, "Brassiere," to the amusement of the class. Either Necklace or Peach agrees that she also thought of "brassiere." [Explicitly teaching a memory aid of word association, with students demonstrating understanding]

At 10:55 LaTrina leaves.

Ms. Luisa asks, "What is a game we can play with our three-year-olds?" Indian Woman suggests, Ring around the rosy. She sings it at Ms. Luisa's request. "What else," Ms. Luisa asks. "Hide and seek," someone else offers. Ms. Luisa tells the class a story about playing Hokey Pokey with her little girl at the bus stop. "She didn't know her right hand or her left hand," Ms. Luisa told us, smiling, seeming to imply that the playing was more important than getting it right. [Also, that you can find everyday moments to play.] She says something about getting older and "not in the same physical condition." Students #3 and 5 nod.

Young Mom starts talking about bringing her son to the library to pick out books to read. She tells Ms. Luisa, "He wants me to read it." Ms. Luisa asks, "And how does your child read when you read to him?" She replies, "He tries to read it. He picks up the story and makes up words himself." Ms. Luisa asks the others if their children also do this. Student #5, who speaks with an accent, says, "My nine year old, yes. My three year old, no. He plays with the books." Young Mom continues, "I don't know if I'm rushing him. I don't want to push him."

Luisa suggests putting ABC's on the wall and pointing while singing the song.

At 11:05 LaTrina comes back. Luisa is reading from the booklet. As she reads, Young Mom stares into space. When Luisa stands up, demonstrating how a child learns to climb stairs in stages, she looks at her. LaTrina is looking at the other students. Three people have books open on their laps.

At 11:10 Ms. Luisa passes out new books on helping your child to succeed in school. Indian Woman, Necklace, and Peach open their books. Young Mom tucks it away, then resumes taking notes. Student 1 opens the book and flips through.

Ms. Luisa then asks people to fill out the discipline surveys from their books (the textbooks for the course). "Ooh, I left my book at home," says LaTrina. She says something about being "stressed." She then holds up a booklet to her face, talking behind it to Tyrone.

330

327

11:13 LaTrina continues to talk behind the book with Tyrone, who flips through the pages of the textbook in his lap. Luisa tells the class, "Parents, I'm gonna run and get some books."

The other four students fill out their survey. Indian Woman leans over to Necklace to ask, "What is profane language?" I can't hear the answer, but Indian Woman raises her eyebrows and exclaims, "Ohhh!" When Ms. Luisa returns, Necklace asks Ms. Luisa the same question.

421

Ms. Luisa asks, "So everybody got a book?" Young Mom asks, "Can I put, every day?" [filling out the discipline survey] LaTrina says, "It's necessary."

The HCZ worker who spoke to us about home visits comes in again. Ms. Luisa tells her, "We have one parent who forgot their book." She tells the class for next week, "If you forget your book we won't give you a raffle." She informs us, "We made them [the books] lighter so you could bring your book."

People return to finishing their surveys. At 11:17 LaTrina is saying under her breath, "Oh well. Jesus Christ!" Tyrone says, "Hmm."

I ask Ms. Luisa if I can take a look at the discipline survey. The first question is, "Were you ever spanked as a child?" There is space to check either Yes or No. Someone is saying, "You're not supposed to spank the kid. You're just supposed to, 1, 2." Ms. Luisa says something about time-outs.

Ms. Luisa interrupts the quiet to pass out bookmarks listing library hours of a few local branches. There is some discussion of their locations.

Meanwhile I am copying a few other questions.

2) How often were you spanked as a child?  
 Once a week     Once a month     Once a year     Other

3) Has a guardian/parent every used abusive language?  
 Yes     No

4) Do you spank your child(ren)?  
 Yes     No

5) If expecting, do you plan to use [didn't get to copy any more]

6) Would you yell to make your child(ren) stop doing something bad?  
 Yes     No

7)

11:20 In a low voice LaTrina says something to the class, then to Tyrone. Luisa starts collecting the discipline surveys. She then asks the class if their parents spanked them when they were children. After several people try to talk, Ms. Luisa asks if it's okay to go around the circle.

Tyrone starts. "When I was growing up, it was old-fashioned. It was the belt. It was screaming." He smiles, "And we would call it child abuse." He continues, "There was no time-out. You understand?"

LaTrina says, "Mines was the belt." She talked about being punished, "we couldn't go outside." She says something about, "It's sad that people take advantage of that." [I understand this as, parents are frustrated at something in their adult lives and take it out on the children.] "Sometimes they break the spirit of the child. They're angry at the boyfriend and beat the kids."

At 11:23 Student #7 comes in. Ms. Luisa says brightly, "Hi Iris!" LaTrina also greets her. As she takes the seat between LaTrina and Young Mom, LaTrina tells her, "We talking about what kind of discipline we got as a child." She responds, "I got spanked."

Young Mom says, softly, "I got hit every day." Somebody responds, "Every day?" "Let me explain myself," she says. After her mother died, she moved in with her aunt, who "treated me like a step-child." She got beaten, yelled at. LaTrina is shaking her head, murmuring, "Takes advantage." Young Mom tells the class, "I don't know if you noticed, but I'm by myself. It's hard for me to show my feelings." Ms. Luisa responds, "We are products of our environment."

Indian Woman goes next. [After such a moving story, it's a jolt to hear her affectless account, told as if nothing deep had been shared.] "I got spanked usually with the hand, sometimes with a slipper." Ms. Luisa asks, "Did you feel it was justified?"

Necklace begins with, "In my country discipline is different." She tells of getting hit. Tyrone, the only male student, says, "I notice that the [women], you got it easy! You got beat by your mom!" Multiple women protest, with Necklace saying she got beat by both her mother and father. LaTrina talks about single moms being stressed. "When you have so many kids, all you know is hah hah hah!"

11:32 A HCZ worker comes by to check the water pitcher, which seems to have enough water.

Peach also begins with, "In my country." She says that since everyone knows everyone else, "You have to be sneaky" so that your misbehavior doesn't get back to your parents.

Tyrone tries again, saying, "You know males are more constructive." Peach interrupts, telling the class that she beat a boy. The class laughs. Iris, says, "She's funny." Tyrone tells a story, finishing with, "You guys got beat by your mothers. My dad brought out the

422

423

belt.” This starts another round of side-talking, and Luisa admonishes, “Ladies! Listen!” She crosses out the names of the doctors written on a sheet posted on the easel. The discussion moves to whether they deserved their punishments (sometimes).

11:37 Ms. Luisa interrupts the discussion and points to a section in the book about “never violence.” She asks, “Does anyone want to read it?” Everyone is quiet. LaTrina closes her eyes and leans her head to the right as Ms. Luisa reads. Everyone else is following along in the book. Ms. Luisa interrupts herself, explaining, “striking means hitting.” [attention to those learning English as a second language]

Several people try to talk at once, and Ms. Luisa intervenes, telling LaTrina, “Wait, wait a minute, let her finish.” Peach finishes her story. Tyrone says, “My pops used to say, take it like a man.” LaTrina says, “I was a hard-headed kid. And I had a mouth. Mouth action.”

Tyrone asks, “Is it possible to raise our kids” in something about a “hereditary” way. Everyone answers at the same time, and Luisa moves to establish one person talking. LaTrina says, “I would never, never raise a child the way she was raised,” motioning towards Young Mom. “You’re creating a new personality that wasn’t there.” She talks about how she might have been “looking for a father figure” while “watching my mom.” She says if things were different, “Maybe I wouldn’t have met a man that was 11 years older and had a baby with him.” ... “You repeat the cycle of how you were raised. I didn’t want to do that.”

Luisa shares that she was also a single mother, and that you can find a good role model. Somebody says, especially for girls. LaTrina says, “Everybody think I’m looking for a father” for her daughter, but she already has a father. Tyrone mentions his two boys.

Indian Woman raises her voice as she describes being hit by teachers in school. “Back in those days, it takes a town,” she begins, and Luisa supplies, “It takes a village.” LaTrina talks about child abuse. [I’m not sure what the disagreement is here, or why the Indian woman seems upset.]

At 11:57 Luisa tries to change the subject, when Tyrone says, “You know what I realized, before we change the subject, if you abuse the mother it’s like abusing the child.” Indian Woman says something about money not being enough. Luisa interrupts her to say, “Let him finish his point.” Mr. Abasi comes into the room. LaTrina says, “I got you!” She rolls her eyes, leans back, and laughs. Necklace and Peach start side talking in another language (unfamiliar to me). LaTrina tries to explain what Tyrone means to the class, then says, “That’s why I understand. You change the whole personality.” Indian Woman talks about hiring a nanny and a maid when both the mother and father work. [I am a little confused as to whether she’s talking about India, where this is possible, or here in the US, where you’d have to make a lot of money to hire a nanny or a maid, much less both.] LaTrina explains, “What he’s talking about is [?] stay at home and do nothing.” Indian woman leans back. “Well that’s different,” she says in a softer tone.

424

425

At 12:01 Ms. Luisa goes to the chart, on which she's written "Discipline" on one side and "Punishment" on the other. She asks, "Discipline, what is discipline?" Tyrone suggests, "Screaming." People immediately voice disagreement. Tyrone holds up his hands in a gesture of surrender. LaTrina suggests following the guidelines of ACS, "like Pow Pow! But not Bang Bang!" Mr. Abasi interrupts list-making and emphasizes the distinction between discipline and excessive punishment, repeating what LaTrina says: it's ok to sit a child down firmly, but not to shake them.

Indian Woman suggests using a strong voice. Luisa asks, "What is a strong voice?" LaTrina answers, "Authority. Put some authority into it." Peach suggests, "Use your face."

Ms. Luisa reassures the class that they are going to talk about discipline again, and about "what works." LaTrina expresses skepticism. "I don't think that one Saturday is enough." She continues, "When I go home to my life," she tries to apply what she learns, but "Sometimes your first reaction is," she slaps her thigh. She says it's "so overwhelming being a single mom." Ms. Luisa responds, "You're absolutely right." She talks about HCZ's no hitting policy.

Peach asks Luisa to explain about tantrums [not sure about this, notes not clear]. Indian Woman tells her to ignore the child, who will learn not to throw tantrums. Young Mom disagrees, saying that her child will keep going. At 12:09 Mr. Abasi says, "I have to step in, I'm sorry." He explains that time-outs are for parents, not for kids, so you can calm down. At 12:10 Rayven comes in, holding up her hand with five fingers [perhaps for five minutes left].

Tyrone talks about his son diagnosed with ADHD. Everyone is listening, or at least quiet. There is a short discussion. At 12:14 Mr. Abasi raises his hand. "Luisa! You have five minutes."

Ms. Luisa wraps up the class with methods you can use with your children: reward, negotiate, and ignore/direct attention. She tells the class that they did not use these words, but the words summarize what they said. People nod with her when she mentions reward, and Tyrone repeats, "Chocolate milk." Luisa responds, "Right."

Ms. Luisa shares a story of how her own daughter threw a tantrum. "We were coming out of Baby College so I was very conscious," she tells us. People smile and nod knowingly. She tells us that her daughter threw herself on the floor because she wanted an Icee.

At 12:17, LaTrina stands up. Luisa pleads, "Wait wait LaTrina, sit back down!" She points to the book, telling us about a chart that shows the difference between discipline and punishment. She mentions an article in the textbook about Dr. Maria Something, a "good article." She asks, "Any questions before we leave?" Tyrone raises his hand, "I have a question, I have a comment." [can't remember what he says] At 12:20 Luisa announces, "Now we need to go down to the Land of Make-Believe."

Participants in the class walk together. Kimberly and I walk down the hallway together.

426

In the Land of Make-Believe, Necklace's son runs to her, calling gladly, "Mommy!" The childcare worker has all the children scream as loud as they can, to get rid of stress. Most of the parents join in. LaTrina brings her child over to me and has her tell me her name. When a childcare worker has the kids jumping up and down, LaTrina jokes that she can't, since she's not wearing a bra.

Kimberly talks with Tyrone in the room, who seems to be the only parent without a toddler. I chat with Ms. Luisa, complimenting her on how engaged her students were. She says something to the effect that she was asked to go to the Spanish class, and didn't want to go, because she had connected so well with her class.

I walk out to the cafeteria, where moms are sitting with their kids. Tyrone is behind me, and we start talking in line for lunch. I tell him that we're interested in finding out how to improve the program, and he says immediately, talk about topics like ADHD. I ask him who made the diagnosis of ADHD for his son (since I am suspicious of such diagnoses), and he explains that they knew something was wrong by the time he was 2. He wouldn't look people in the eye. We talk until he moves up to the food, and I rejoin Betina, Kimberly, and Brenda, talking with Mr. Abasi near the front door. Betina is telling him that they will send him the protocol on Tuesday (after the Memorial Day holiday). He says something like, Yes! I'll know something before Marilyn! Mr. Abasi jokes that we look like we are ready to leave. We head outside, where we talk for a few minutes before heading out. Kimberly mentions that our class had a lot of discussion, not a lot of lecture. Betina says her class started with discussion and got to lecture. Brenda mentions that her class had a substitute.

[Is lecture desirable? I felt that people were engaged with the discussion. Did Ms. Luisa not cover what she was supposed to cover?]

Kimberly and I walk together for a little bit, after Brenda decides to go to the Theresa campus. (I'm not sure how or if Kimberly is connected to the Theresa.) It turns out that Kimberly also likes to take dance classes, and she suggests the Latin Jazz class at Broadway Dance Center.

Some preliminary thoughts on engagement:

It can be said that there was a high level of engagement in Ms. Luisa's class, and specifically, positive engagement. What I mean by positive engagement is an environment in which people seem open to hearing one another's perspectives. People are responsive, showing that they are thinking about the topics at hand.

Based on only one observation, I felt that "student engagement" is an interactional phenomenon: Ms. Luisa and the students cooperated in setting up and displaying "engagement." For example, Ms. Luisa repeatedly asked answerable questions. When she read the book, she asked open-ended questions, and people supplied her with answers. Later, she asked about childhood experiences of discipline, a topic that anyone can participate in, and

people shared memories. There were times when potential actions could have signaled disengagement, such as LaTrina falling asleep or people side-talking. Ms. Luisa did not treat these as misbehaviors, and they never escalated to disrupt the class.

Much of this work, I would guess, is relational. Ms. Luisa seems to like and respect her “students,” and they seem to like and respect her. For example, LaTrina’s suggestion that one class will not be enough to cover discipline was not said in a challenging or blaming tone, and Ms. Luisa responded by validating her concern. Everyone got to participate in the class, and in interrupting arguments (or misunderstandings) or asking people to speak one at a time, Ms. Luisa did not seem to favor or ignore anyone.

Given that all teachers ostensibly cover the same material and have access to the same organizational resources, my guess is that “student” engagement reflects multiple factors: pedagogical skill, relationships between participants and teacher (which are shaped by the teacher), and of course, environment. Ms. Marie had to deal with horrible acoustics and layout in the auditorium, and Mr. Russell had to talk over drills and construction work. In terms of pedagogical skill, does the teacher plan for multiple modes of participation, e.g. listening, reading, speaking, especially throughout a long class? Does the teacher build on prior knowledge of the students, e.g. what they already know about brain development or health? How can the teacher set up an environment that is open and not judgmental, while still making clear HCZ’s position on touchy issues such as discipline?

Some measures for “student” engagement might be:

- responsiveness to teacher’s questions or requests for participation (offering answers, stories, opinions, etc.)
- participation in group discussion
- no excessive side-talking (not prolonged, does not disrupt class)
- asking questions