

The volunteering experiences on my hours log do not reflect the experiences that have most informed my decision to become a teacher. Many of those happened outside the five year window, in more informal contexts or out of the country. However my time at Olympia Family Theater, the YWCA, and Roosevelt Elementary was a good reminder of both the wonderful and challenging parts of teaching and working with youth.

I had a great time volunteering at Roosevelt Elementary in Lindsey Retherford's 2nd grade class and chaperoning a field trip with her son's 3rd grade class. I was an assistant in Lindsey's class at Madison Elementary the first year I lived in Olympia, and we've stayed in touch since. I had a blast talking to students about what the measurements they took from the creek in Squaxin Park might mean for the salmon. The activities I ran with the 2nd grade class were much simpler, but with much greater time constraints. It was an interesting challenge balancing asking questions to try to help them get the concepts we were working on (properties of solids), without getting too lost and not completing the activity.

The Olympia Family Theater is quickly becoming one of my favorite centers of art and community in Olympia. The music and movement class I co-taught there last summer was an idea that my co-teacher and I had been conceiving of for years. Initially we imagined it as a dancing/ DJing class, but for 5-7 year olds it became more movement game oriented. We did have one day for tiny DJs, and during the final performance half the class made a song on a loop pedal for the other half of the class to dance to. I'm really looking to continue my involvement at OFT. I have lots of ideas for non-traditional classes and the theater seems like it could be an amazing venue.

I had an amazing time giving a DJ workshop at the YWCA. The youth were really into it and asked a million questions and we had a lot of fun playing around with the equipment. I wasn't teaching during the Youth Action Circle. I mostly participated in activities and discussions while observing the peer to peer work they are doing. As was similar to my prior experiences working with teens, it was important to go into the meetings ready to have many youth there or only one.

Utterly corny as it may be, everytime I get to work with young folks it reinforces that teaching is what I want to do. Obviously there are frustrating moments and it is often exhausting, but getting to watch people understand something new, or do something that they weren't able to do before just lights me up inside.