Sarah

Zumba Field notes

I took a zumba PE class for the first time yesterday afternoon. I try to generally take field notes during the event or before I go to sleep the day of an event. Unfortunately my schedule was a little crazy yesterday, so I’m taking the field notes now, a little less than a full day later. I generally take field notes in one or to two forms: sometimes it’s just straight notes. The example below is a format that I used in my Special Ed. class and liked.

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| Observations:  -get to class at 4:15, and peek my head in the fitness room, but no one is in their except the instructor  -I hear someone ask the gym receptionist about zumba and ask her if she is in the class too. She is and tells me the class starts at 4:30, not 4:15  -Class does begin and instructor asks everyone to sit so she can go over the syllabus. A copy of the syllabus is passed around and she reads over it, adding comments here and there. She explains that she is a certified instructor.  -She explains the “Welcome to the Party” official zumba slogan. Zumba is like a party in that the teacher doesn’t teach you the moves and then you do them, but you follow along or can add different moves that you think will look good/be fun/burn more calories.  -After she goes the syllabus, she asks people who are registered to sign in or for people who aren’t signed in to talk to her. People start chatting and/or walk over to the sign in sheet.  -As the room group gathers back toward the center, the instructor double checks that registered people have signed in or if you aren’t registered that you go talk to her. She asks if everyone has done one of the following and people nod. Then she asks if anyone has not done one of those two things and a few people realize they need to talk to her.  -Once everyone is settled she tries to get people in position. She says we aren’t children and should be able to line up, staggered so everyone can see. People are still chatting though and she asks them to listen and says we have already lost a lot of time.  -The instructor shows us a basic meringue dance step, and then starts the music. She dances facing us.  -The majority of the room seems to mirror her movements. The step she taught us before the music began is music faster in the actual dance.  -After the song she tells people to get water if they want. People get water and start chatting. She asks people to please stop talking so we can start the next song. Water breaks often became socializing time throughout class.  -She asks the class if there is enough space because there are more people there than the enrolled number. A few people nod or give a thumbs up, no one explicitly says no, or at least not that I heard.  -The next song begins and the instructor leads at the front of the room.  -After this song, I decide to actually take a water break. I had left my water bottle in my room and had to go out to the water fountain. A few other students also walked out. One woman said she was really enjoying the class.  -I get back to class just at the music is starting and my original spot had been taken. I quickly try to find an open space. I find one, but feel much more crowded than I did at the front and have a hard time seeing.  -It’s also harder to hear in my new position. I’ve taken PE classes in the past where the instructor had a microphone/headset. The instructor said earlier in class that she doesn’t use verbal cues as much as physical.  -We do a song that involves us to be in a squatting stance the entire song. Talk about endurance!  -After this we do a cool down dance to a Beyonce song.  -After class I ask the instructor if this is going to be the class size. She said she thinks so, and asks if I’m registered. I say yes but I’m worried about it being a little crowded. She said it was a little full. | Assumptions/Connections/Questions:  -I was confused because although class does begin 10 minutes late, usually for the first day people are on real time/early  -instructor seems pretty comfortable talking to us, this may be because she has instructed zumba here before  -I had assumed that the class was going to have more instruction, that the instructor would go over the dance moves, and then we would do them along with the music. But you just jump right in and follow along. I wonder if that’s why Zumba has become so big recently: it’s dancing, which many people find fun, and you don’t need to come to every class to learn and stay up to date on the moves.  -I wish she had passed in the sign in sheet while going over the syllabus. We’ve already lost a lot of work out time and there is a long line forming just to sign in. However, she might be nervous or just didn’t think of it at the time.  -I’m a little frustrated with people for not listening. We’re losing dance time, and usually if you’re not in a class, you talk to the teacher/instructor before class begins. I assume people take PE classes less seriously, but also wonder if because the instructor is also a student if people are listening less carefully. On another note, I appreciated how the instructor asked the question two ways: Have you done this, has anyone not done this? Sometimes people need a second to process and asking the question two ways helps to clarify.  -The instructor seems a little annoyed at this point because people don’t seem to be listening. I understand and also feel annoyed; I came to work out, not to spend forever chatting and figuring out where to stand. I also feel bad because I feel like people take adult instructors more seriously.  - Looking around the room, there seems some confusion about whether we should be her mirror image or use the actual side or her body she uses (for example, when she raises her right arm, do we use our right arm, or use our left arm to be her mirror?).  -I wish she had shown us the step both slowly, and then in real time, the tempo change confused me.  -I think people were both excited about the class and wanted to talk to their friends during the quick water breaks, but there really wasn’t enough time and I think this is an issue that frustrated the instructor.  -I thought there were a lot of people in class, but I was near the front and didn’t have any issues with bumping into people so I thought it was okay.  -As the class went on, I started having more fun and worrying less about getting the moves. I realized it wasn’t about looking perfect, but about a fun workout and also that we would probably do a lot of the same songs week after week, so I would eventually pick up on the moves.  -I assume the woman who liked the class was a McBride. I sort of recognize her from around campus, but she was older than most students too.  - At this point I assume some people must have felt the room was too crowded earlier when the instructor asked, but no one spoke up. In my new spot I have a hard time seeing and am bumping into people.  -I wonder if past instructors had their own equipment or if because it’s the first week the instructor just forgot to grab it. She doesn’t use verbal cues very often, but when she does, it stinks not to hear.  -This was tough for me and I think my classmates as well. I found myself wondering if I was squatting right and if I was working out the correct muscles. I was also wondering about my breathing. I never know when to inhale and exhale at the proper times when I work out.  -I, and some of my other classmates, seem to really enjoy the song choices that we danced to.  - I assume/hope a few less people will come in the following weeks. A lot of PE classes start off full and as the semester goes on, less and less people come. However, I’m going to try to show up on time every week and get a space in the front anyway: it’s easier to see and hear. |