

## Introduction and Chapter 1

The Introduction of the text gave an overview of what language is, its effect and how as a teacher I can use it to achieve my intended purpose. Chapter 1 focused on general guidelines for teachers: be direct, show faith, show by action, importance of silence, and keep it brief. Below I will share my three big ideas from the two chapters, two questions that I have and one idea that I will implement in my teaching.

### 3 Big Ideas

1. Teacher's language supports students in three broad areas: developing self-control, build a sense of community, and gain academic skills and knowledge (7-8). This tells me that as a teacher I can use language as a tool to help my students not only to be better learners but also have social skills necessary to navigate themselves. Self-control or soft-skills are the first step to learning anything; with a strong 'self' my student will be able to participate in all other academic and social areas of the school and home. My skillful use of language plays a role in building classroom community. This can be achieved by not highlighting negative behavior but calling out positive behavior that impacts the whole classroom. I have seen my CT do this frequently; when the class transitions from desk work to the carpet, she would say, "Impressive, you all got to the carpet before I walked over with my book!" What this does is calls out 'everyone' as a community and a group effort that made the transition quick and smooth. The student is aware of the 'self', feels safe in the classroom community, and is now ready to learn. Hence, language is a powerful tool that I as a teacher can use to impact important areas of my students life, for him/her to be learner.
2. The section on 'Be Direct and Authentic' was an eye-opener as well brought some questions. Especially, Avoid Over-Generalizations - I am guilty of saying this, "This is such a fun activity!" The author is of the opinion that when we make these generalizations, we assume that the activity is going to be fun but it may not be for some and may be for others. Instead, I should say, "I found this activity fun". Using these words makes it more "authentic"

because 'I' experienced it and it is "supportive" because the students know that I am giving them the space to judge for themselves (17). Extension of this idea is that by speaking in first person and third person voice, students are not burdened to feel a certain way with the task; they will be the judge of how the task is for them.

3. Third big idea I pulled out from chapter 1 was "Keep It Action Oriented" (21). Specifically, about connecting abstract words to concrete behaviors. The author says that when a teacher says, "That is disrespectful" or "Be responsible", those words don't mean much to the student, especially elementary students because they learn through interacting with their environment. The author suggests to ask the student for solution to an inappropriate behavior (Charney too said this) and teach the abstract terms explicitly. The example given in the text is the word COOPERATION, with the help of the students list what it 'Looks Like' and what it 'Sounds Like', make a chart and put it up for everyone to access when need be. I like this idea of learning expectations and rules as a class.

## 2 Questions

1. The author says to use direct language. That is not use words such as, "I like how Michael is sitting"; however, we have been taught to use good behavior to correct incorrect behavior, it is a way of redirecting poor behavior. I remember reading Kohn, who disagrees with this teaching and agrees with Denton, who says that this kind of language does not help in the development of autonomy or self-control; children only comply to gain praise. Or as Kohn would say for a reward which is really a punishment. Denton is very critical and further points out that, "In reality, it's the indirect language that is disrespectful of students despite our best intentions" (14). So, is there a right way?
2. My second question is - Denton says to resist voice-overs, which is "repeating of a student's response right after it's uttered" (30). Is re-voicing same as re-phrasing? We have been taught that to repeat what the student says is good practice because it: helps our ELL's who may need that extra repetition or if the responder spoke softly, the teacher is able to repeat, or it clarifies the response for everyone. The author says, to practice silence and "allow the student's voice to stand on its own" (30). What is the right thing to do? I understand there is no one answer and it is not about taking one extreme side but a balance but in general should I repeat (re-voice) student's response?

## 1 Implementation

1. I would like to implement the T-Chart as suggested in the text on page 22. In my classroom we are learning concept words (part of the Critical Literacy program), which are abstract terms that students are not going to use in their everyday language but words that are important to learn and know. As an example we read a fiction piece called, Saving the Turtles; the theme was Humanitarianism. We discussed the text, and with much scaffolding my CT was able to draw the attention to the implicit message in the text of selfless action. I think for our next text, once we have a concept word I can make a T-chart with the students' help and they can list what the word "Looks Like" and what it "Sounds Like", and then post it up for them and I to refer to as deemed necessary.