

Chapter 5 & 6

Chapter five of the text focused on teaching Academic Skills and chapter six focus was on Social Skills; both of which go hand in hand, although I believe acquiring social skills is paramount to acquiring any other skill. Three big ideas that I found in the two chapters are:

1. Interactive modeling engages students in the learning process, allowing them to discover on their own merit and deters us from monotone repetition “at” (106) our students. Before I did the first interactive modeling on how to come in the classroom in the morning and starting the day off quietly, my CT told me she used different strategies to keep this transition as quiet as possible. She had used strategies such as - walking with the hand raised showing the peace sign (schoolwide sign), draw attention on students who are demonstrating positive behavior and repeatedly telling them to keep quiet. After the interactive modeling, she said it has not worked all days but if she reminds them of what I had taught that is a cue to engaging in the appropriate behavior and transitioning quietly. She would like me to do the interactive modeling again so the students are reminded.

Similar to the example given in the text of how the author used interactive modeling to teach kindergartners how to sound out words; at my TK placement the teacher taught academic skills by interactive modeling, the five year olds responded very well to her.

2. A second big idea that I select is embedding “Think-Aloud’s” (123) in the modeling lesson. This connects to the idea of explicitly telling students what you are doing, what you expect them to do, and what the purpose for the activity is. This may seem like common sense however, it is easy to assume what we are thinking is how it is perceived by the students or anyone else. Hence, verbalizing what we are thinking is beneficial to both teacher and the student; the student understands the purpose and goal and the teacher is able to assess progress or not and change his/her lesson accordingly.

Two weeks ago at my placement, I brought the students in from lunch and 'assumed' they knew the schedule of the day and remembered to sit on the rug for number talk. Some sat on the rug, others continued their lunch time conversation with a friend and others yet roam around aimlessly. Seeing the aimless activity, I called their attention and asked them to sit on the rug with their math journals and pencil. They did immediately.

3. Third big idea that I learned from the reading was, "Don't expect perfection" (147). This is because social skills are not linear or simple; they require practice, feedback and "effective coaching" (147) to hone these skills. Secondly, perfection is a relative term; what I think is acceptable may not be someone else's acceptable, hence having a clear goal that is explicitly stated helps in mitigating the differences of understanding. My personal example is when I was teaching my daughter how to make her bed; she would say it is done but from where I was standing it was far from made. I showed her multiple times (interactive modeling at home) explicitly modeling what a made bed looks like she learned over time and understood what I meant by making your bed.

Two questions that I have from the two chapters are:

1. In chapter seven the author says to "consider the diversity of children's background" (149), at the same time she says we (educators) need to teach them how to be successful "within and across" (149) cultures. I believe this is difficult to achieve, definitely not achieved in one school year, rather over time the student learns and discerns the different cultural ways. The threat is that the dominant culture does impose its ways and the student succumbs to the ways of the hegemonic culture.

2. The seven interactive modeling steps includes a step that asks to give positive feedback to students who demonstrate the learning. My question is how do you deal with a student who refuses to participate in the activity? Do you leave him/her alone? Do you do one on one with him/her? Will doing so encourage others to follow and get attention?

One idea that I take away from the two chapters is differentiating instruction (125). This strategy is beneficial in my classroom this quarter and I am sure it can be in any classroom as classrooms are diverse not only racially but ability level too. Via the tool - interactive modeling - various student needs are met according to their need. At the present moment, with a diverse racial and ability levels, I can use interactive modeling when teaching academic skills such as reading comprehension and/or subtracting three digit numbers with zeros (they are having a hard time with these).