

Fieldwork Paper

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EDDN 637

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Educators pave the way for students to achieve their academic goals with the help of students understanding the tools they need to succeed when learning a new language. Like anything else in life, acquiring a new language is a difficult task for both the teacher and the student learning. Therefore, teachers need to understand the importance of phonetics and sounds to help support students effectively while teaching them new words. Teaching students the fundamentals of “Phonetics” is a great way to prepare students to understand the difference between target language and sounds. It is a crucial part to include in daily instruction with your students to allow the development of phonetics and sounds to be a part of your student’s daily routine.

Date: 5/2/23

Time: 1:32 p.m.

Instructor: Mrs. S.

Grade Level: 7th Grade

Lesson: Which Claims to Believe

URL: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePFtxG9bnv0>

In my first observation I conducted it in a seventh-grade language arts class in the Lafayette Parish School System in Louisiana. This middle school is a mixture of 475 diverse students. The percentage of White students is 51%, Black 23%, Hispanic 17%. This school contains about 24% of students with disabilities. “The student: teacher ratio of 18:1 is higher than the Louisiana state level of 17:1”. This observation was an informative educational addition to my knowledge in my teaching experience. Mrs. S. teaches for the arts and career center for the Technical Education District Academic Intervention Early Childhood Development ESL program. Their program provides high-quality, grade appropriate instruction to students that

speak a language other than English. Their school includes students who speak 30 different languages and come from all different backgrounds. They provide a safe inclusive environment for all students learning to become proficient in English.

The focus of the lesson was to teach students about “Which claims to believe”. The teacher clearly identified the learning objectives before starting the lesson by having one of her students recite them. The student demonstrated the objectives in front of the class with hand movements that all students were participating in as she stated them. “Effective teachers present instructions in a step-by-step manner, preferably using modeling or demonstrating the task for students” (Echevarria, 2017). This allowed her students to understand what was expected of them during instruction. It is critical to ensure that all students understand the material before beginning a lesson to deliver the highest level of effectiveness out of your lesson. The teacher used a variety of techniques to make the concepts clear in her lesson.

Throughout the lessons I observed the teacher demonstrate using gestures, body language, visuals that accompanied her speech. During my observation I noticed all of her students being engaged during the entirety of the lesson. The teacher gave ample opportunities for students to use learning strategies. “As English language learners develop English proficiency, it is important that their language, literacy, and content instruction include a focus on learning and practicing a variety of strategies” (Chamot, 2009; Dymock & Nicholsan, 2010; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000; Vogt, Echevarria, & Short, 2010). She distributed index cards to the students with claims listed on them to either agree or disagree with the statement. She had the students brainstorm about why they chose their option to disagree or agree with the claim. She then had all her students choose a side of the room to stand on. The left side of the room was all the students who agreed with their statement. The

right side of the room is all the students who disagreed with the statement. All the students lined up on each side of the room that they chose to stand on. Mrs. S asks for a volunteer to read the claim listed on their index card and to state the reason why. One of her students claims stated “Parents of bully’s should have to pay a fine”. The student agreed with the claim and stated that “She believed if this happened it would end bullying because the parents would enforce their children to stop their behavior”. After the student finished talking about her claim the whole class used a method of snapping their fingers to acknowledge her effort. After this activity the teacher displays examples of claims on the white board for students to learn about. She has multiple students participate and come up to the whiteboard to circle the claim.

Teachers that are compassionate about teaching demonstrate all of the traits that this teacher showed me by observing her lessons. She used multiple techniques to show that her students are comfortable in their learning environment. “Remember that having students list, identify, and label strategies is not the end goal. Instead, the desired outcome is for students to engage in various learning strategies while they’re reading, listening, writing, speaking, and working with other students” (Marcell, DeCleene, & Juettner, 2010, p. 687) (Echevarria, 2017). The students understood the material being presented to them by their vocal opinions, and the group discussion that they had during the lesson. After the group discussion the students transitioned into their collaborative writing groups to brainstorm about their claims. Mrs. S’s class management skills were excellent during my observation and as a result, all her students were able to reach the learning goals intended. One thing that I would change in delivering this lesson to my students would be adding differentiated instruction. I would have provided handouts of all the reading material in my student’s native languages. I would have also added “wait time” to allow students to gather more information on their claims.

To conclude, my observation in Mrs. S.s class was beneficial to me educationally as I learned many new effective teaching methods to use with my students. I will be able to incorporate many new techniques to help my students meet their learning outcomes. I will also be able to use her scaffolding techniques to guide my students in their learning. All students in her class were able to learn the material by understanding her delivery of instruction. Her class is an example of a safe, fun, effective learning environment. Additionally, her students all know how to work together and collaborate with their peers to get the highest level of learning out of their instruction.

My time spent observing has shown me all the hard work that goes into all the aspects of our students' everyday learning. The development of the planning and preparation is one of the hardest challenges I have witnessed. I have learned both educational and informative ways that will allow me to incorporate new techniques, methods, and assessment tools to address the needs of all my students. "A successful classroom, our educators agreed, is one in which students feel known, appreciated, and comfortable taking emotional and intellectual risks. That requires intentional planning and consistent messaging by the teacher" (Kaplan 2019). Even with incorporating the correct strategies and standards into our daily teaching we cannot forget to make our classrooms inviting and safe for our students. This is one of the many strategies to use to set the right expectations for a successful year for our students.

Some of the instructional strategies that I have learned during my observations will allow me to accommodate all of my learners. One of my favorite lessons to include all of my students and their cultures and backgrounds is during the holidays. For example, during thanksgiving I use a specific lesson that explains why we celebrate thanksgiving and what it means for all different families. For another lesson that ties to this one, I will bring in play food for them to

practice identifying, categorizing, saying the names of the food and some phrases. I continue with the students by creating their own books about thanksgiving. Explaining what it is, what we do, phrases we say, and what we are thankful for. The week of thanksgiving I will bring in actual food and replicate how Americans (culture) celebrates thanksgiving. We will all sit and say phrases such as “Pass me the corn please” and “ I am grateful for ___ because ___ ” These activities that I use are from Near Pod and I also create my own along the way to align with the state standards. I find these particular lessons to be great when students get to learn about each other’s cultures and what is important to each of their families around the holidays.

Furthermore, my planning and preparation challenges that are faced when selecting content, planning instructional experiences, and developing learning goals are challenging to adjust to all my students individual learning needs. The teacher I worked with have spoken on multiple occasions regarding classroom issues and how to implement tools to utilize along the way for my students. When educators are planning instruction for students they must first evaluate each of their students to learn their individual learning needs. Once this is done you can incorporate differentiation for all students based on your findings. It is critical that you understand your students and what their learning needs are.

In addition, educators must find a way to continue challenging our students daily to use higher order thinking skills when answering questions. During my observation experience, I have seen multiple students benefit from being given graphic organizers as well as checklists in the beginning of class to have my students write down notes and to check that all their information matches up with the checklist by the end of the lesson. This has helped my students become more organized throughout their learning. I have a variety of checklists that I use based on the type of lesson I teach that day. Some of my checklists include key vocabulary for my students to

reference back to in case they don't understand a particular word. "Involve students in actively developing their understanding of words and ways to learn them" (Echevarria, 2017). This is a critical part of students learning a new language. Teaching academic vocabulary is a crucial part of their learning. During my observations I have seen students improve significantly from being provided academic vocabulary before the lesson.

During my observations I was able to see a variety of reading and writing approaches, methods, strategies, and techniques used by my cooperating teacher. The speech was appropriate for the student's grade level. She slowed the time down during the lesson for students to understand and modeled each part of the content objectives and defined them clearly before beginning instruction. During the lessons I seen students struggle with some of the reading and writing approaches that were used. Witnessing these small road blocks inside of the classroom while observing is extremely helpful to me as an educator to be able to plan for these types of obstacles. I will utilize multiple types of differentiation inside of my classroom with my students to ensure the highest level of learning. One of the successful strategies used in one of my cooperating teacher's lessons was the read aloud's she would do with her groups inside of the classroom. Instead of reading the text she stopped and dissected the character development which was highly effective for the students to understand what was occurring, but more importantly why things were happening. The success of read- alouds were evident in the students learning because when they were answering the questions on the interactive slides she had created for them, they were making connections between both the story and the characters. I will be incorporating this method into my own ESL classroom in the future.

During my observations inside of the classroom, I have observed students using their native language. This is essential when students are acquiring a new language. A native language

is often lost when students come to a new country and are put into an educational setting where only English is being spoken. I have seen students feel isolated and lost when their native language is not used inside of the classroom. If students were to lose their native language it would have a significant impact on their identity. Your native language defines who you are and where you are from. The importance of this is critical in our lives and our students. “Your cultural identity is a critical piece of your personal identity (and worldview) that develops as you absorb, interpret, and adopt (or reject) the beliefs, values, behaviors, and norms of the communities in your life” (Wilson, 2023). The importance of keeping your native language is critical to evolving in your life. It is important that while we develop and learn in our lives that we keep our native language to hold on to our beliefs. Students tend to be influenced by groups and communities to be like their society.

Throughout my observations this semester, I have gained an overall understanding of the basics for students to be able to achieve an understanding of learning pronunciation to be able to achieve success. This will require practice and rigorous work from both the teacher and student. “What Harmer (2001) suggested about the perfection of speaking bears an entire dissimilar practice and presentation in the ESL context. Teachers concentrate on one sided discussion in the classroom rather than learner autonomy, consider speaking as barrier to struggle with phonetics, phonology, phoneme and morpheme and prefer to conduct with the principles of Grammar-Translation Method where reading literature and writing and exactness are the focal points of teaching-learning” (Md, K. A. (2018). Teachers that plan meaningful instruction will be able to create a focal point in their teaching that allows for students to grow and acquire new knowledge in their student’s grammar. This will allow students to develop strong skills in phonetics, phonology, phoneme, and morpheme to allow their communication to improve. Language is not

limited to one technique of learning concepts which will help them achieve perfect pronunciation. “In contrast, most second language (L2) learners, certainly those who are the concern of the present Special Issue, have an extensive native vocabulary already in place. Moreover, they have acquired additional relevant skills, in particular reading (also social skills and explicit learning skills)” CUTLER, A. (2015). This will help students acquire newly taught phonology to add to their prior knowledge of vocabulary. Students that come to our classrooms with these skills in place will be able to learn new skills to strengthen their prior vocabulary. However, students will need to be consistent in their learning to be able to achieve success in their progress in a language.

In conclusion to my fieldwork experiences this semester I have learned that educators must include strategies to address their linguistic, cognitive, psychological, emotional, and sociocultural as well. When teaching ELL students, you should remember that it is not limited to only academics. “Students have best intention to implement what their teachers attempt inside of the classroom and how their teachers instruct and sincerely perform what assignment is assigned upon them” (Md, K. A. (2018). I have learned how to closely and effectively work with ELL learners to support their development. I had the opportunity to work with a diverse group of students from all different backgrounds with a wide range of language proficiency. I will be able to apply all of my new techniques and skills in my future career as an ENL teacher.

References

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