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Intentional Teaching Project

Part A: Getting to Know Language and Literacy Practices in your Fieldwork Classroom

During this semester at BMCC, I will be continuing my fieldwork hours at the elementary school, PS 527. I am currently in a kindergarten class, with the cooperating teachers Michelle and Amy. Amy being the main teacher, and Michelle being a TA, their partnership is what helps the class and lessons move in unison. PS 527's school culture is very diverse from their faculty members to the students. This is a zone school, so many of the families and parents live around in close proximity to the school. During drop off and pick up daily, most children are joined by their nannies since they have to be at school for 8:30, a lot of parents aren't able to make the commute themselves. It's located on East 91st street, where it's downtown Manhattan but it's also not too far to the small community in Manhattan, known as Harlem.

Amy, who also happens to be expecting children of her own, is very energetic. With a classroom like hers, with so many different personalities, she notices that they like to move around and that they like doing fun activities. She incorporates a lot of videos into her teaching lessons that have sing-a-longs and dancing activities. During their morning meeting, which is the activity after they come in and put their things down, they learn about the weather, what today's

date is, and many more. She includes fun interactive videos for the children to stay involved which is basically what helps guide them through the lessons. This helps with the children who don't really like to speak or are really shy, it helps them break out of their shells so that they can get comfortable with their peers. There is one child, who will remain anonymous, she has arthritis and she struggles to get up from the floor mats or it hurts when she walks, so she give the options to all students on whether they want to sit down for stretch breaks and other activities, so that this child won't feel alone. Every morning meeting they include turn and talks in their social skill question. After their turn and talk, Amy makes sure that if she does't get to all students, she prioritizes the students who don't talk as much to share their partners ideas and theirs as well. Even with their floor mat spots, she pairs up the shy students with the more talkative student to help them build off of each other. I find this to be a very efficient way of helping kids get through their shyness.

A lot of their nonverbal communication would be their signs on what they need. 1 finger is for water, 2 fingers is to be quiet, 3 fingers for bathroom. Even when they're learning their sight words and have word study, they use a lot of body motions to remember the sounds of letters, which I find to be very helpful when they are on their own because I see them doing it at their tables when they have independent work time. For example for the letter L, the teacher would point to the screen, and they automatically say "L, lamp," and then with their hands, they will make move their arms in circular motions, one overlapping the other and drag out the sound that the letter "L" makes. This gives help through Phonemic awareness in the classroom.

Verbal communication becomes increasingly vital as we get older. It is the predominant method of communication. Since verbal communication is so important to us, any changes to it would be

a handicap. To comprehend the potential challenges and unease brought on by the inability to verbally communicate, just picture two people who speak different languages meeting for the first time. A child in our classroom, let's call him Bobby, realized that his classmate, Arlen, was having a hard time writing his name and she typically struggles with it. Instead of shaming him or embarrassing him, he tapped Arlen on the shoulder and said, "It's okay Arlen. Keep trying your best." This verbal communication between them shows that they are able to express themselves and their feelings and emotions very easily.

Literacy/ Emergent Literacy:

During their teachings, the teachers utilize their smart boards in order to go through their lesson plans. This can include a read aloud book that's on the screen, a video that I previously mentioned before in my last statement, or even a new sight word. I noticed that the teachers are mostly the ones to write on the electric board, but on big eraser board is where a lot of the

students get to write on the big board. Especially when learning new alphabets, the children sit around in a circle, rewriting their new letters. In the beginning of the semester, the children were told to draw a story. With drawing the story, they had to label what's in their drawing. Some students found it a little difficult to label because they weren't able to spell, however, through what I learned from the article, Emergent Writing and Reading Skills, it states, "You can ask them what they're doing... they are not planning to produce a picture of a



written message,” (Beaty 2014). As long as they are able to articulate a sentence on what they did over the weekend, who was there, in a sequential matter, that enough shows me where they are in their literacy development skills. Even while doing their sight words, they obviously aren’t able to read full sentences yet; however, because they repeatedly go over their sight words, they can find the sight word that in the following sentence, “Mom told me that she loves me.”

PART B: Developing a Mini-Curriculum Unit

For my lesson plan, I'll be doing a word study. Every week, they learn a new letter to write. Most of the letters they've learned have the same concepts. For example, they learned how to write "o" "d" "a" "c" and many more. These 4 letter I've listed are used to write others. A "c" can transform into "o" if you continue the line of "c". For the letter "a" you can continue with a "d" if you continue the line, so this just helps them understand that they are all similar in some way. In this lesson plan, I taught the letter "T" since they learned the letter "L" the prior week.

In my small group, I had Arlen, Elly, and Gwen. Arlen had troubles understanding emotional and social skills, Elly has trouble retaining information, and Gwen has trouble with fine motor skills. Gwen is able to tell you what letter he see on the board, but he's unable to physically write it himself. Despite them not getting these specific skills, they are still learning and excelling in other concepts. One of the few questions I wanted to address from the book *Kidwatching* by Owacki and Goodman, from the chapter *Writing*, it asks, "What functions of written language are familiar to my students? What functional knowledge do they demonstrate during free writing time; choice times?" So in other words, what am I going to be bringing to the classroom to help them learn, build, and expand on what they know that they've used around each other. Another question I'd like to address is, "How comfortable is the child speaking with the teacher, one other child, small groups? How does this change across contexts and subject matter?" (Owacki and Goodman). With his assessment, I'll be comparing their willingness to verbal in small to big group discussions during my lesson plan. One comparison I seen amongst the three children I'll be doing my lesson plan with is that they all tend to stay quiet with our bigger group talks and they like to repeat what they hear instead of actually trying to understand what's being taught to them. With this, I'm hoping I'm able to help them feel comfortable

enough to share. A strategy that I have in mind is doing work on small dry erase boards, which helps them learn and try it on their own rather than waiting for. Teacher to call someone else besides them to go to the board and write in front of everyone. That way they can peacefully and comfortably share on their own and think to themselves without feeling the pressure of being rushed to do their work faster.

PART D

While teaching my two lessons, it gave me a better understanding on what it is that I need to work on, what really needs to be fixed with my approach to new learners, and how I should be assessing each child, based on where they are in the spectrum of learning. During my literacy lesson plan, I challenged the students by finding words that start with T. Granted they watched the video; however, challenging them to find words that they already know from prior knowledge is what can actually challenged them. During my social studies lesson plan, challenging the children to read with me was something I wanted them to overcome. A lot of the children cannot read, so when it came to them repeating what I had said, I realized that that was the better option. What I might have differently was having them repeat, as stated before. It not only helps them with their literacy development, but also social development, so that they don't feel singled out to those who can read sentences. For literacy need, I made sure that we all did most of the lesson together on the rug, from watching the video, to drawing on our tiny erase boards. They were able to do it together and learn together before they went back to their seats to complete the worksheet. I tried my best to ask more open ended questions, so that I'm able to have a conversation flow. Whether it's "What does it mean to vote?" "Why do we vote?" etc. I believe what I could've done differently was probably the order I had for the literacy lesson. I probably should've let them watch the video on words that start with the letter T, then have them tell em word so I can write it on the board, and then demonstrate how to write the letter T and them practice on their own. The way I taught the lesson seemed ab ti all over the place, but that was also due to me being nervous on teaching for the first time. This can definitely change the way they're learning because everything needs to be sequential with them. In the class I'm in, they go over their schedule for the day, they know which days of the week they have science, art and

math, so when there's a change in their schedule then it can completely change their enthusiasm when learning. I tried my best to mimic the way my cooperating teacher has done her "Foundations" learning, so I realized the kids were so quiet and one student even said quietly to another student, "don't we watch the video first?", so that's something I think I should change when it comes to improving their learning. Let it flow sequentially and well thought-out as well.