

Kassandra Marin

Professor Kirsten Cole

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The school site I've been visiting is called Earth School. The first thing I noticed walking in the classroom is that up on the walls there are photos of the students along with a self portrait of them. The classroom environment does indeed focus on language and literacy practices. Considering components such as: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Talk

What really caught my eye was that the cooperating teacher has built a caring community of learners. I really love the emphasis on the idea of creating a "Class Community." A classroom environment where we take time to get to know each other and share experiences.

In terms of talk, it is effective in which there's clarity and being that since the covid-19 pandemic learners have lacked face to face interactions. Kimberly talks in a loud and clear voice. She raises her voice when needed. For example when we are walking in the hallways there are some days when the children will lose their form of the line and be loud and so the teacher raises her voice to explain to them that they must keep it down because there are other children working in the classrooms. The children are engaged and refer back to outside information and express their thoughts based on class discussions. When children talk to each other they become very chatty and jump from topic to topic. In terms of how language is used in the classroom there's definitely vocabulary involved. There's a word wall and throughout the week a new word is added.

Being that the class is a mix of kindergarten and 1st graders some kids are learning letter and letter sound recognition and others are reading at F and P level F. Children use more verbal communication in content areas including: foundations, phonemic awareness, developing print awareness, language through song, reading fluently, and there's alot of social emotional involvement. As for content areas where there's less communication include: story acting, story concepts...

I have noticed which children talk more and which are less communicative. For example Olivia gets easily distracted during meeting time and she will completely zone out and rock her body back and forth. Ms. Kimberly usually will grab her attention by asking her a question related to what we were going over at that exact moment, and ask her to put her mind into the morning meeting. On other occasions when this occurs the teacher has teddy bears, fidgets, and jump ropes available for the students.

What Kimberly does to encourage collaborative inquiry is for example sometimes she'll have the students work in pairs. Jordyn and Elliot were working in their math workbooks and Elliot had finished earlier and Jordyn was trying to copy his work. Ms Kimberly went up to them and explained to them that they are doing pair work meaning they are supposed to work together to answer the questions. Then there was Francis who didn't want to communicate with Cory to solve the problems. Elizah was using the colorful counters on her own to help solve the problem. Kimberly had stopped the class to remind them all that pair work means working together to answer the problems.

I think having routines help guide the class through daily tasks and responsibilities. "Routines make active learning possible. Organization and structure are especially necessary in classrooms where teachers value student initiation activities. By communicating an expectation that the care of the room and materials is children's responsibility..." During morning meetings the children gather around the rug and go over the schedule. We may also consider, where do things go? The cleanup process is necessary. During quiet time the students were decorating their teddy bears houses that were made of out cardboard. I noticed a connection between this choice of activity to the book we read earlier in class. The story had to do with the bear's home and what's inside to keep them cozy. Beforehand Ms.Kimberly mentioned to the children what materials they will be working with. Students used materials including: scissors, construction paper, shiny paper, crayons, and glue. Lily drew a chair for her bear to sit on. She also drew a refrigerator where it has the bear's meat so he can eat it. When it was time to clean up they were to put the material back where it belonged. They then sit quietly until their table is called on to go line up.

"As the children share their feelings, values, and concerns with one another through these stories, possibilities are created for the children to authentically communicate and relate to one another." The class has been working on "How To" books. Kimberly gave out instructions, "You will write independently about something you know alot about and it could be something you can teach us." Kimberly's example was, "I know alot about riding horses. So I might want to write about how to teach others how to ride a horse." They get to create their own story specifically aiming to teach the reader how to do something. For example Saeed wrote a book about how to feed a fish.

Dialogue context

Read aloud of Drum Dream Girl

Ms.Kimberly: Who remembers what this page is called?

Francis: The title page

Ms.Kimberly: What's the difference between the cover page and the title page?

Saeed: The picture is different

Ms.Kimberly: Why is it blue on the bottom?

Jordan: Its water

Ms.Kimberly: Gives description about islands

Ms.Kimberly: Do you think only boys can play drums?

Rex: NOOO!

Teacher: Why did she dream quietly to play the drums?

Jordan: Because only boys can play the drums

Ms.Kimberly: What do you think she's thinking about when she says ...her footsteps...her heartbeat...

Class: DRUMSSS!

Ms.Kimberly: Why does it look like she's flying?

Arian: Because she's dreaming

Finally her father offers to look for a music teacher to decide if her drums deserve to be heard

Ms.Kimberly: Who can make a prediction?

Saeed: I think there going to say yes

Vale: I think there going to say maybe

Ms.Kimberly: Touch your nose, if you think yes

Touch your chin, if you think no.

These interactions touch on culture, relationships, and the children's funds of knowledge. Funds of knowledge including: Home language, family values, traditions, friends, family, and family occupations. For example when Ms.Kimberly asked if the class thinks only boys can play drums Rex had said no so that may be based on his values. All children were responsive to Ms.Kimberly's questions.

Literacy/Emergent Literacy

Literacy involves effectively being able to communicate both verbally and in writing. The signs of literacy (oral and written) that the children use for example during writing time they have been working on "How To" book. Writing independently about something you know a lot about. Something you can teach us. Kimberly says, "My example, you cannot use it for your writing. I know alot about riding horses. So I might want to write about how to teach others how to ride a horse. Does it need to be perfect class? No, try your best!" She proceeds to put up steps on the whiteboard. Ms Kimberly reminds them to first think about what they want to write, then proceed to write, draw a picture, and use the cited words on the word wall, capital letters, and periods at the end of every sentence. Since we are in a mixed classroom with half kindergarten and half 1st graders the kindergartners are expected to write at least one word and the 1st graders are expected to write a couple sentences.

Emergent literacy involves effectively being able to communicate both verbally and in writing before they actually learn to read and write. "Emergent literacy theory supports teaching phonemic awareness and phonics deliberately and within the context of a larger literacy program

(Yopp & Yopp,2000). In terms of curriculum the class goes by Heggerty and foundations. For example Kimberly will go over nonsense words. Kimberly says, "Mog." The class says, "Mog, not mog frog." Kimberly will go over rhyming words. Kimberly says, "Dime. Lime or Dark?" The class says, "Dime and lime." Kimberly says, "We will say two parts of a word then say it together." The class says, "Ma-p, MAP!" All of these help the kids develop reading and writing skills.

Print involves understanding that there are meanings behind words, books contain letters and words. Ms Kimberly guides the children by reacting to print and reminding the children. For example on 3/4/22 we had a read aloud using the book Drum Dream Girl. Kimberly asks, "Who remembers what this page is called?" Frances says, "A title page." Kimberly then asks, "What's the difference between the cover and title page?" In order for children to really understand and use print it may be helpful to point out letters, words, and other forms of print. For example every week the children are assigned jobs and one job is to read the morning message. On 3/31/22 Jordyn read the morning message, "Dear class, Today is Thursday. We have science with Andrea. Today's word is go. Did you bring in a box? Love Kimberly, Korinn, and Cassandra" Jordyn knows to read left to right, sounds out words that she gets stuck on, and understands that today's word go will be added to the word wall.

Read alouds in our class community is a consistent process that is implemented in the schedule everyday. Read alouds is a key element to a balanced literacy approach. It gives the children an opportunity to see a great demonstration of reading while being engaged with the story. On 3/31/22 I was able to lead our read aloud. I had chosen the book, "Loud Who Couldn't do it" by Ashley Spires. I had also come up with questions in advance. For example, one question I asked was, "Why do you think Lou doesn't want to climb the tree?" My goal reading this specific book was to emphasize that just because you can't do something the first try doesn't mean you should give up. You can keep on trying or you can also ask for help. Kimberly jumps in and adds on, "Kids a lot of you have been saying "I Can't do it" you can keep on trying!"

The teacher guides the children in their writing and reminds them of the strategies they've learned so far. For example during writing time once the kindergarteners are done with their writing piece they raise their hands and wait till KImberly or myself go over to check their work. Kindergarteners are expected to have at least a word written. Kimberly will ask them to read their sentences and she'll write the complete sentence on the bottom of the page. Kimberly doesn't necessarily check their spelling but rather tells them to tap out/sound out the words.

Writing is used as part of daily routines. Miss Kimberly's goals for the children's literacy development is to make sure the children are trying their very best and meet the goal by teaching them strategies that will help them excel as young learners. Such as tapping out, going over their

work, reading what they wrote to their peer, if they can they are welcomed to write as much as they can, referring back to the word wall.

Citations

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