Have You Noticed?: Noticing and Naming in Writing Conferences

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Recommended Citation
Ichimura, Erin; Miyashiro, Nicole; and Manning, Stephanie, "Have You Noticed?: Noticing and Naming in Writing Conferences" (2011). Undergraduate Capstone Projects. 1. https://commons.pacificu.edu/educu/1
Have You Noticed?: Noticing and Naming in Writing Conferences

Abstract
This project involves facilitating effective writing conferences through teacher talk, listening and responding to students’ needs in a timely manner. Drawing from Johnston's (2004) *Choice Words* our research topic focuses on noticing and naming or making students aware of areas they can improve upon in addition to their achievements. This helps scaffold students into self-sufficient agents of writing. Researchers spent six weeks conducting writing conferences with children grades K-3. Research teams met weekly to review, question, critique, and analyze their findings and prepared two analytic memos. By noticing and naming in deliberate and collaborative ways we foster a students’ growth in agency as writers.

Degree Type
Capstone Project

Degree Name
Bachelor of Arts

First Advisor
Donna Kalmbach Phillips

Subject Categories
Education
**ABSTRACT**

This project involves facilitating effective writing conferences through teacher talk, listening and responding to students’ needs in a timely manner. Drawing from Johnston’s (2004) Choice Words our research topic focuses on noticing and naming or making students aware of areas they can improve upon in addition to their achievements. This helps scaffold students into self-sufficient agents of writing. Researchers spent six weeks conducting writing conferences with children grades K-3. Research teams met weekly to review, question, critique, and analyze their findings and prepared two analytic memos. By noticing and naming in deliberate and collaborative ways we foster a students’ growth in agency as writers.

**RESULTS (cont’d)**

**Limitations of the study**

Time constraints. Writing conferences ranged from 20-50 minutes to work with numerous students within the day.

Context structures: Through sampling of private and public school systems.

Researcher biases: Own ideologies can vary from the mentor teacher.

Experience: Limited exposure to writing conferences before study.


**RESULTS (cont’d)**

3. Given the data from our research, as student teacher researchers, we should be aware of and analyze our own interactions with students on a multi-dimensional level, which encompasses teacher talk, modeling and scaffolding, student responses, and the outcomes of their writing within our limited writing conference time, in order to realize what should be done in particular situations. In addition we must be attentive and observant of the environment, students’ writing and the students themselves in order to create authentic moments of teaching that can encourage students to develop the ability to independently notice and name things about their writing.

**LINGERING QUESTIONS**

How effective will the teacher talk that the we used with this age group be when applied to older ages? How would our language vary in different contexts other than those studied in this project? As action researchers, would video recordings have provided more evidence supporting our research question?

**FINAL THOUGHTS**

We applied peers’ techniques and the ideas of distant colleagues, advisors, mentor teachers to our own practices. By using direct and indirect statements, and constructive and positive feedback, we can stop and analyze both our work as well as the work of the students. We each grew in our use of language and scaffolding. Prior to our collection of data we had no previous experience with writing conferences, but we are now equipped with the tools and knowledge to make us more insightful teachers. We can use these skills in the future and beyond the subject of writing. We not only learned a lot about ourselves but the abilities of students in our various classroom contexts. Not only did we help students grow, but we will continue to grow through action research by constantly analyzing our methods and collaborating with colleagues.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Thanks to our advisor, mentor teachers, and staff and students from the participating schools of our self-study. We would also like to thank supporting CDE staff, faculty and friends.

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