Have You Noticed?: Noticing and Naming in Writing Conferences

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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.

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Have You Noticed?: Noticing and Naming in Writing Conferences
Senior Project/College of Education, 2011
Research Team:
Erin Ichimura, Nicole Miyashiro, Stephanie Manning

ABSTRACT
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RESEARCH DESIGN (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.

LITERATURE FRAMING THE PROJECT

CRITICAL VISUALIZATION

RESULTS

Synthesis Statements
1. Given the data from our research, as student teacher researchers, we need to notice the past tendencies and personalities of students in order to know whether to use direct or indirect statements with them because students respond differently to statements given and language used by teachers. In order to formulate these statements, we must use “linguistic and meta-cognitive processes,” by interpreting what students are thinking while simultaneously providing instruction to foster the growth of their writing identity (Suleiman, 2000).

2. Given the data from our research, as student teacher researchers, we should use specific, constructive, and relative feedback when noticing particular aspects of the process and outcome of students writing in order to sustain a dynamic-learning frame (Johnston, 2010), and to create a safe and comfortable learning environment for students, which allows them to take risks, develop the desire to learn, and grow as self-sufficient agents of learning (Adams, 2009).

Positive feedback:

T: I noticed that a lot of them are like abbreviations of the words. So, they try to like the words without the vowels in them. You have the correct letters, but you’re missing some letters in your words.

Negative feedback:

Emergent from Field Notes:

T: I noticed that he erased what he had written for the second question, so I asked him why he erased it, which seemed to discourage him. It was very evident andhardtwotoright. Incorporate that were one of the first students to finish, so I knew that he was capable of doing this work.

"It is a teacher’s responsibility to build a community that encourages children to fully demonstrate their knowledge. This community must be caring, and the children must feel safe to take risks” (Adams, 2009).

LINGERING QUESTIONS
How effective will the teacher talk that the 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?

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.

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