

See/ Notice

Upon entering the classroom, the students were seated at their seats, and the teacher was located at the front of the room. On students' desks were white boards and markers, where they were engaging in a review lesson on parts of speech. I saw the teacher prompting students' questions around parts of speech where pupils were asked to combine parts of speech into sentences of their own construction. Teacher gave agency to the students to make their own sentences and meaning from a given set of part(s) of speech. Students were given the opportunity to move around the room- taking control of the space that they might feel more comfortable and able to succeed. These new spaces were often with a preferred partner that they might communicate and build schema around the curriculum.

Think

In order to extend student agency in this classroom, an opportunity is missed with the graphic novel that was chosen FOR students (not by students). We thought this was important to note when you consider the perennial question of "Who should control knowledge selection and distribution." We would like to see the negotiation of choice, perhaps choosing their own novels. Margaret Vaughn defines negotiations as "the ways in which students negotiate and balance their beliefs and desires and enact their identities in practice in complex social communities"(Vaughn, 2021). Again a choice can be made to read individually or as a group or small group. The summer curriculum allows more flexibility and choice of novels and skills that need to be taught. This program did not allow for the negotiation to occur, blocking this element of student agency from this classroom.

Another area where student agency could have been extended was in the area of student purpose. In Chapter 1 of "Student Agency", it highlighted the dimensions of agency as: Purpose, Intentionality, Perception, Persistence, Interaction, and Negotiation. Purpose is defined as, "Students ability to have a vision or ideas that relates to their own personal goals" (Vaughn, 2021). Here in this observation, students were not given the opportunity to identify their "purpose" of agency. They did not appear to have a conversation about their goals for the summer program, aligning this time with their own purposes. In this summer curriculum, no assigned standards are required to be taught- this is a great opportunity to allow students additional voice into what and how content is approached.

This was a crucial piece when we reflected on the perennial question of "Whose knowledge should be taught?" Allowing students to set goals and identify a purpose for learning allows them to take ownership of their learning. When students have ownership they are more likely to engage and excel. More often than not we are forcing our information on our students versus allowing them to take charge and choose their own knowledge.

Wonder

As educators it is crucial that we practice feeding-forward versus providing feedback. Feeding-forward allows us to have dialogue early on in the process and speak to what we hope to see in

the future. Where leaders transition from being “mirror gazers to mirror holders” where the intent is in allowing teachers to reflect on their own practices. To initiate a feeding-forward conversation one may begin with one of the four leads “I noticed, I wonder, What if and How might?”

How might this lesson go differently if you allowed students to share their responses with pairs? I wonder if they shared their responses with each other if they would begin to provide feedback and critique one another. How might the impact of this lesson change if students evaluate the use of these parts of speech in their own reading (through class novel or text excerpt) or even their own writing. I noticed that most students showed a high level of understanding or even mastery over these topics. I wonder if they hold and understand the value of breaking down text by part of speech.

I wonder how different the lesson would be if you allow the students to work together to create their POS sentences and then work in different groups to identify and/or apply the skills in the lesson. What if you allowed the students to self correct during the application period, rather than you self correcting as a whole group. How might their learning be more self guided? I wonder how we can incorporate this style of engagement with more rigorous content?

Other quotes shared in our debrief/ group reflection

“They do not teach to students, but alongside them, as they integrate their knowledge of effective instruction with students' individual learning needs, interests, and ideas.” (Vaughn, 2021, pg. 19)

Schools continue to afford access to some, while leaving others behind. **Present knowledge in one way