**Chapter 2:**

**Conversations: Classroom and School Structures That Support Adolescent Literacy Development**

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| Headings/Subheadings | Information of Interest | Reaction |
| Conversations: Classroom and School Structures That Support Adolescent Literacy Development | * Learning is a community function, not an isolated one. * The conversations between learners foster growth * Both student and teacher should be defined as learners | This supports the socialization aspect of brain-based learning that I am studying for my senior thesis.  I really like the idea of still considering the teacher a learner, too. |
| Grouping Strategies to Promote Peer Learning | * Ability grouping and tracking are shown to be harmful to students’ emotional well-being. * Typically, when the low-level and remedial permanent ability groups are eliminated, achievement increases. * Flexible grouping, where students are grouped and regrouped by different abilities, provides all students with an opportunity to shine. | I know that research has shown that low achieving students do better if they are grouped with a range of abilities, but I have mixed feelings about tracking. When my classes were tracked (i.e. I moved onto a more advanced math class faster than others), I did better in those classes and my teacher was able to be more attentive. I do believe that always tracking is bad, but sometimes having different groups/classes that were more advanced helps all of the students have a more attentive teacher, as long as all three—advanced, middle, and low level—teachers are excellent. This kind of tracking is generally started in middle school and is of benefit to those seeking certain future career goals.  I love flexible grouping because your abilities are able to shine. If you always put the same students together, one or two will begin to do all of the work. |
| *The Benefits for English Language Learners* | * Language and learning are inexorably bound. Academic language is a necessity. * Peer learning arrangements that require language learners to discuss content are of benefit because they allow them to listen to, ask questions about, and furnish explanations of concepts being learned. | I cannot imagine attempting to learn content and another language at one time.  I liked this sentence because it concisely explained why discussion benefits ELL. This idea makes logical sense, but it can be hard to use, depending on the group size and level of language acquisition. In my junior internship class, there was one boy who always opted to pair with two ELL students. Although the teacher never required it, this little boy greatly helped his classmates. It was encouraging to see his patience and desire to help them succeed. |
| Think-Pair-Share | * Introduces an intermediate stage between when the question is asked and the answer is delivered. * More hands will go up because they have already had time to consider their answer, listen to someone else, and refine their response. | I was never in a classroom that used this method of questioning, or at least where that was the name it was called by. Since entering the education department, I have seen it used in many classrooms. It engages the students and encourages discussion and success. |
| Learning Stations | * An optimal time for students to work collaboratively is during learning stations. These are small heterogeneous groups of three to four students who are working on tasks designed to reinforce concepts and skills previously taught. * They allow for the teacher to work in small homogeneous groups of students who need specific instructional needs. | I don’t remember participating in learning stations at any point in elementary school, except maybe kindergarten. I love the idea of separate activities to boost skills, so the teacher has time to advanced specific skills with students who need it. A fear I have is how to meet the needs of those who need the extra help, but learning stations are a wonderful way to do so. |
| Jigsaw | * Great for when students need to analyze multiple texts at the same time. * Readings may be chosen because they each offer similar perspectives of the same concept or event (complementary), or because they present very different views (conflicting), or because it divides up one topic into smaller elements. * Involves two groups: home group and expert group. The home group divide the task of reading multiple texts among themselves. Students meet in an expert group with others reading the same text to discuss and take notes for the home group. Students return to the home group to share their section. | Jigsaw is a confusing cooperative learning activity to get started the first time. It also has the potential for students to learn a significant amount about their one topic, but they might not pay attention and learn much about the other home group member’s sections. I think this activity needs to be followed up with some sort of activity or activity sheet that solidifies that all students are going to be held accountable for this information. |
| Reciprocal Teaching | * Reciprocal teaching is used in student-directed groups of four to jointly understand common piece of text. The text is segmented into smaller chunks, allowing students to check their understanding periodically throughout the reading, typically done through structured discussion. * At each stopping point, students will: question, clarify, summarize, and predict based on the reading. | Interesting idea. I’m not sure if I’ve seen it used in a classroom, but it sounds like it would be an effective way to encourage student interaction and learning. |
| *Research on Reciprocal Teaching* | * Its use is widespread in schools. * Motivates “at risk” students. * Positively impacted standardized test scores on reading comprehension. | The fact research shows that reciprocal teaching helps to raise scores doesn’t surprise me. Students work best when they are encouraged to interact with their peers. |
| *Introducing Reciprocal Teaching* | * Techniques used in it must first be taught, so students are willing to use them collaboratively. * It is recommended to practice each role one at a time. (i.e. whole lesson series where students are predicting) | This section seems obvious, but I don’t know that I would have thought to create a series with just one role used. This would be more time consuming, but students would feel more comfortable in the collaborative groups. |
| *Role Sheets* | * Used in the beginning of the year to support student dialogue. * Question stems help students when they are at a loss for what to say. | Role sheets seem like a great way to introduce effective group discussion. By practicing it in the smaller setting, students will be easier able to participate in a whole-class discussion, too. |
| Reciprocal Teaching in the English Classroom | * Includes an example of students reading *The Yellow Wallpaper and Other Stories* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman * Student jobs rotate and groups remain constant throughout the week | Because I wasn’t sure I’d seen reciprocal teaching in a classroom, it was nice to see an example explaining each individual’s role in the process and how it continues. |
| Schoolwide Conversations That Promote Learning | * Peer learning provides opportunities to refine their skills while providing valuable assistance to one another. * There are 35 teachers in the classroom, not just one. | Every student has strengths and weaknesses that they can use to help other students. These collaborative activities seem to highlight the possibilities of providing many students with the ability to succeed. |
| Effects of Schoolwide Approaches | * Characteristics of 90/90/90 schools (free or reduced lunch, ethnic minorities, and at or above mastery level on standardized achievement tests) included schoolwide focus on achievement, agreed-upon curriculum choices, and an emphasis on writing. * They were also schools that maintained their original plans and didn’t move from fad to fad. | Switching from one fad to another limits teacher knowledge of said fad and student ability to learn the system and work well within it. These ideas seem to be obvious, but most schools are not reaching 90% at or above mastery level on standardized tests. |
| Teaching Strategies That Are Transportable and Transparent | * Literacy strategies need to be flexible enough to be applied to a variety of learning situations. * It is not a program, a set of books, or a box of materials that creates a high-achieving school. It is teachers and what they do. * Reflection is a necessity. | Teachers can have all of the material in the world, but it does matter how they use it on whether or not they will be effective teachers. Reflection is such an important part of teaching. Those who don’t reflect don’t improve their lessons or classroom environment. |
| Reflective Teaching | * Teachers who practice a recursive cycle of self-questioning and self-assessment to improve teaching and learning. * A strong repertoire of strategies for ones instructional tool kit helps to arrive at solutions to reflective questions. | There is always room for improvement, regardless on the number of years a lesson is taught or times it is repeated.  I love the metaphor of a tool kit. It’s a term that has been used in several of my classes, and it is the purpose for attending college to teach. |
| A Professional Invitation | * While teachers spend most of their day promoting learning, they have little time left to learn themselves. | There is always room for growth. Sometimes I feel at a disadvantage because I will only “have time” to improve during summer reading projects. Hopefully, after the first year, I become more proficient in managing time, so I can constantly be on the look out for new material. |
| Conclusion | * These strategies are not just for literacy or English courses. * In order to expect students to learn collaboratively, teachers need to do so as well. | Connections to other subjects are endless with most of the topics discussed in this chapter. It is important that teachers never stop learning. |
| Summary: Chapter two focuses on the peer grouping strategies that can promote a positive learning environment for students, including think-pair-share, learning stations, jigsaw, and reciprocal teaching. The second half of the chapter focuses on the importance of maintaining a strong schoolwide plan for how to continue growth for teachers to ensure growth for students. | | |