Angelica Staples

ECED 4100-01

Reflection 2

9/22/13
There are many facets that go into creating a positive classroom climate. One way the teacher can do this is by inspiring student motivation. In my field experience, my cooperating teacher (CT) increases student motivation by teaching students to self-assess their work. This goes hand-in-hand with her providing frequent and specific feedback on students’ performance in a timely manner. For example, the students are working on their first expository piece of writing, which is very important because the fifth graders take the writing test in March. One thing my CT and I do is read over each student’s work and conference with them before they can move on to their next phase of writing. Many of the students are learning how to develop their writing and include details, so that is one of our major focuses when conferencing with them and reviewing their work. We have been working on writing skills since the beginning of the year so students now, for the most part, students are aware of the expectations. They are able to look at their work and self-assess to see if they have answered the question and added supporting examples. But they were only able to get to this point from us showing them, by example, how to do this.

Another way my CT increases student motivation is through relating content to everyday life. I feel that students, including myself, are more receptive to learning when they know that they will be able to use the information in the future. For example, in social studies we are learning about the Civil War. Although this is a hard subject and lesson to relate to students, we did by pulling out certain details and thought of examples that students could understand. For instance, when discussing how the ‘cost of war’ she related to our most recent war, The War on Terrorism. There was a price that we paid, other than financially, when we lost so many lives. Many of the children could relate because they knew of someone that was connected to the war. So these are two ways my CT and I increase student motivation.
Planning with the end in mind seems to be a practical and effective way of planning instruction. In order to do this, we have to know the outcome that we are trying to reach, as far as what we want out students to know. I observed my CT trying to do this the other day. There was a common assessment for math from the county that have everything the students needed to know at the end of the semester. So, my CT wanted to use this to guide her instruction and to give as a pretest. However, so that she would not find herself in a situation where she was ‘teaching to the test’, she changed a lot of the questions around to form a similar pretest. As far as instruction, she stated that she was already going to teach those things, but she will probably focus a little more on the concepts that will be tested. So she, to a certain extent, plans her instruction with the end in mind.

My CT makes assessments that are very close to the coursework that was taught. She knows what standards each assessment targets so that she is able to see if students mastered a concept. She typically gives out a study guide that very closely mirrors the test and that study guide covers the same content that was taught. So she seems to build high-quality assessments that include many different types of questions. She also provides feedback on the assessments in a timely manner.