Reflection 3: Chapters 2, 5, 7

Building the foundation for classroom success.

The notion of the classroom being a community is something new and foreign to me. I have never thought of the classroom in that way. But the more I reflect on it as a community I begin to see the foundation, the rules, and the guidelines which presented right shape into a positive atmosphere in which to reside. Over the past couple of weeks we have talked about the importance of having a positive learning environment, especially after the workshop with Joe Poulsen. He reiterated it multiple times. This chapter brings into light more understanding of why it is necessary.

The concept of taking risks in order to learn. How? Never even crossed my mind while in school to take risks, see how far you could go. I was a straight cut student who need the clear cut direction and never strayed from them. It never crossed my mind to question the directions or the examples of the instructor. However risks allow us to stretch our mind and way of thinking. It allows us to reach further into our own goals. By allowing them to take chances in their work allows them to see the material in a way they can comprehend and accomplish tasks in a way that excites and motivates them. Then they are learning.

However, if we put the stigma of the assessment, grade and rubric in front of them on what we want to see, will students take risks? Does the grade put on hold the learning process for some students? How can we let them know it’s okay to take risks with their assessments?

I also found it interesting to learn of the triangle affect this community needs. The balance between teacher, student and parents helps the outcome of the school community. While some parents may be unmotivated in their children’s life or school requirements it is important to involve them as much as possible in the learning process. They know their child best. They know the best ways they learn and preform, therefore they will be able to guide the student better in making year to year academic goals. They will also be their motivator outside of the classroom as they have the power to extend the positive learning atmosphere into their own home. For parents who themselves are unmotivated or have no interest in the students’ academic life, How do we include them into the process? How do we encourage them to encourage their children?

Chapter 5, 7

Evidence of Learning, Using assessment to guide instruction

I am not sure I completely understood all the aspects of this chapter. I understand there are three principles, Observation, Product, and Conversations. How I understood it, was observe the students when they are undergoing a task, collect product samples to give a students an idea of what we think success is and allow them time to self-assess. But it brings out the point of knowing what success looks like. How is that possible when all students are completely different? When you finally catch on you could get a brand new slate of children with either higher or lower expectations academically. Can success be determined individually? Can rubrics be changed to stretch the individual instead of the class? So be very individually programmed. I think it would be a lot of work to individually make rubrics for that reason I appreciate the assessment aspect so much more than the Evaluation. I believe assessment will allow the child to shine in their own success and continue to stretch as they are receiving peer feedback, self-feedback and descriptive feedback as well. How do we then teach students to give positive and constructive feedback to themselves and peers? I believe they will first need a model of correct ways to give feedback, the sandwich or two stars and a wish are both ways of teaching young children to begin the process of feedback. I think it is also important to add into the process the learning of how to accept feedback without being offended or hurt. At many times I am discouraged because of feedback because I feel it is not helpful or it touched on a part that I am scared to change. Sometimes I don’t even know what kind of feedback to give because if I wouldn’t like hearing it why would they, even if it is true. So if I’m scared to give it how can I help them be comfortable?