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Inquiry One: Core Beliefs

One of the core beliefs I strongly believe in is:

Literacy should be integrated, interactive and individualized.

This core value contains three key parts. The first key part, integrated, means literacy should be seen, experienced, or acknowledged in each subject throughout the day. It is imperative for teachers to incorporate some form of literacy into everyday instruction as well as maintain a classroom environment which promotes this. The second part, interactive, means students should be presented with literacy activities which engage and challenge their minds. While it is important for students to learn and practice the foundations such as reading and writing, they should also experience literacy through other outlets like computers, games, or creative activities. The final part is literacy should be individualized. Not one thing is right for every child. Despite age or grade level, each student obtains different skill levels at different times. For example, while a student may excel at reading the words on a page they may not be able to comprehend the book.

Therefore it is important for a teacher to accommodate lessons as well as provide one-on-one instruction to work with the varying skill levels of students. As an intern in a large sized kindergarten classroom this core value is essential. These students are just beginning their school experience and literacy needs to be presented and carried out in a manner which engages, motivates, and assists students in forming a strong literacy foundation.

During the second week of school our classroom read *The Three Little Pigs* and discussed the story. As a follow-up mini-lesson for social studies our class then read *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*. Mrs. Gorbe read the story to the students and asked the students to think back to the first story read. She asked the class which story about the three little pigs they thought was the truth and which was make believe. After taking a tally of which book each student thought told the actual truth, Mrs. Gorbe tied in the social studies objective of why it is important to always tell the truth. During the story and group discussion I made sure students were listening, following carpet procedures, and were attentive to the story. Since it is still the very beginning of the year, instead of writing about the three little pigs, the students colored, cut-out, and glued a pre-made little pig story onto construction paper. Students had to really focus on the correct colors each piece of the story was supposed to be. The students could then use their project to re-tell the story themselves if they ever wanted to.

During the first week I conducted assessments on students, which worked with number, letter, shape, and color recognition. From this we were able to some what evaluate the skill level of the students. Students, who seemed to be at the higher end of the class in terms of having some literacy understanding, were asked to really focus on: using the correct colors, taking their time, and writing their name. Mrs. Gorbe and I really tried to focus extra attention on those students at the lower end. Showing them how to correctly use materials, which colors were which, and how to practice learning and possibly writing the letters in their name.

If this activity was done a little further in the year I believe students would have experienced a more interactive form of literacy. It would have been great if the students

were able to find a buddy and actually re-tell the story; along with possibly writing which story they felt was telling the truth. However, since these kindergarteners entered school with such varying skill levels this lesson needed to accommodate each level. Higher end students were challenged with writing their names and taking pride in their work while the lower end students were assisted in working with colors, using materials such as scissors and learning the letters in their name. This lesson worked especially well because Mrs. Gorbe was able to integrate the basics of literacy, reading and writing, into social studies.

Literacy should be integrated, interactive, and individualized. This core value was chosen because I find it extremely important in teaching young kindergarteners literacy. Kindergarten is the students first real school experience and therefore right from the beginning we need to engrain the importance of literacy in their minds. It is also very important that as a teacher, I enthusiastically portray these three key parts each and every day. It is my job to teach but also show my students the rewards which come with learning and practicing literacy.