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ED459q Mindset in the Classroom: Increase Student Achievement

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Assignment #11

Recently I have been working with a student in her reading. My district has adopted a new reading assessment curriculum where they go through a series of tests along with conferring with the teacher in order to decide which reading level (colored level by grade level) is the best fit for them. I really like it because the number one goal is to have students pick a book they are interested in. It doesn’t even matter if the book is too easy or too hard you just want them to develop a love for reading and eventually, overtime, they will develop the skills necessary to realize if it is a good fit book or not.

This one student is a pretty good reader. She has strong comprehension and inferencing skills and her fluency is average. However, as soon as she comes to a hard word she gives up right away. Doesn’t even give it a second though and right away says “I don’t know.” I have showed her how to chunk words into parts we know, how to change the vowel sounds, and how to continue to read the sentence or paragraph to help us figure out the word. Every single time when I ask her to do it on her own she says, “I don’t know.”

It has been extremely frustrating to the point where I had the instructional coach come in and we did a conference together with her because I didn’t know where to go next. She made me want to give up because I was putting in so much effort and nothing was coming out of it. Now, I would never give up on her and from this course I realized that the more I try eventually it will pay off.

I ended up having a conversation with her about potentially dropping her in reading levels because she wasn’t putting forth the effort to try. She wasn’t showing me that she wanted to try and become a better reader which showed me that this level may be too hard and we needed to take a step back and slowly build our way back up to it. She didn’t like that idea and told me she really wanted to try.

So, the instructional coach and I came up with a plan. We gave her a white level book and red level book and showed her the difference between them. We adopted strategies from Jennifer Serravallo’s reading strategies book on how to understand tricky words and myself, the instructional couch, and my push in reading aid worked with her countlessly. Eventually when the red level book (second grade book) became way to easy we found red level books that were a little thicker until the only next step was moving to a white level book. We wanted to show her that when she worked hard enough and put forth the effort then she would be able to build back up to those white level texts that she wanted to be reading so bad.

We also took the analogy of our brain as a network of roads. A few assignments back I wrote about how I loved the visual of how instead of our brain being a bunch of neurons we could think of them as pathways and roads. When construction workers go out and build new roads they work day and night to create it for other’s to use. With reading, the older we get the more words and books we are exposed to. Even adults read words that they have never seen before and have to be able to have the skills to decode them. When we try and try again our roads get bigger, longer, are formed out of the strongest material. When we read different genres shortcuts can be made off of this road that will help us further down the way because we will have already started to branch off. With effort and perseverance and knowing that we will forever be working on this skill our brain will just continue to grow and grow. This visual we drew out on paper and we created goals in reading that she wanted to work on. A road for reading different genres. A road for eventually reading a white level book. A road for decoding words using vowel sounds. Then, every time we did this we would draw on our road and make it a little bit wider. This helped her to see that what she was doing would actually pay off for her.

My hope is that when she is independently reading she is working on these strategies and not just skipping over the word, but at least when she reads with me now she is trying to figure out the word instead of giving up right away. The following is the process of the lesson and examples of lessons used from Jennifer Serravallo.

**Student who struggles to decode:**

1. Conference with the student to understand what goals need to take place
   1. This lesson is designed for students who tend to skip past hard words and guess at trying to solve them instead of taking the time to actually do so
2. Model ways to figure out the word in front of them
   1. Chunking into parts we know
   2. Changing the vowel sounds
   3. Re-reading sentence or finishing the paragraph to see if it gives us any clues as to what the word might mean
   4. Plugging in a different word to see if it doesn’t change the meaning of the sentence
3. Have the child try on the next hard word they come to
4. Jennifer Serravallo Lessons to try:
   1. 3.8 – Think (While you read the words)
   2. 3.18 – Cover the word and slide over
   3. 3.3 - Use a word you know
5. Show picture of brain and talk about how the neurons in our brain are a lot like roads
   1. These roads will only get better when we try
   2. We don’t want roads with a bunch of holes, trees fallen down, or obstacles in the way
   3. But, these obstacles will remain there until we put forth enough effort to remove them and then make them stronger
6. Set reading goals that she wants to accomplish
   1. We don’t want to push students to accomplish goals who are struggling because then that will force them to be pessimistic, or a curmudgeon, about their reading and that is the exact opposite of what we want to accomplish
   2. However, if we give them choices (to guide them in the right direction at this level) then both of us are wining!
7. Draw roads on brain for the news goals
8. Each time student successfully accomplishes goal (first time, second time, every time) draw on road in brain to show it getting stronger.