

Teaching Decisions Examined through the Conditions of Learning

Read Aloud from Chapter 8, Processes That Empower Learning

Text: First Reading of *Dave the Potter: Artist, Poet, Slave* (Hill, 2010)

Teacher: *Maria Nichols*

Lesson	Teaching Decisions	How the Conditions and Processes are Affected by these Teaching Decisions (Specific Conditions and Processes are in bold)
<p>At one point, the conversation slows and Maria, their teacher, notices and acknowledges frustration on the students' faces; she begins to explore the source of this thinking.</p>	<p>Maria understands the importance of attending to the nonverbal cues of student thinking and uses these to begin discussion.</p>	<p>When teachers acknowledge nonverbal cues as indicators of thinking and acknowledge confusion as normal thinking, students make attempts free from the fear of being "wrong," a critical factor for engagement.</p> <p>Through honoring their approximations the teacher has communicated her expectations and beliefs that the learners are capable, helping the students assume responsibility for their own thinking.</p> <p>These interactions allow teachers to assess authentically and to provide appropriate responses and feedback to learners.</p>
<p>Maria: <i>Jaylen, what's going on over there? You're shaking your head.</i></p> <p>Jaylen: <i>Well—I don't get—the words are weird. Why did he put them [the poems] on it?</i></p> <p>Ellie: <i>On the pots?</i></p> <p>Multiple voices: <i>Yeah ... I don't get why ... me, too ...</i></p>	<p>Maria notes the nonverbal cue to the student, supporting students to recognize and appreciate nonverbal cues as evidence of thinking.</p>	<p>Response to students about her recognition and appreciation of their approximations supports them to understand how they are working to make meaning (assume responsibility) and how Maria trusts them to work through their confusions (a factor for engagement).</p> <p>A belief in learners' thinking and their abilities supports engagement. It also strengthens the relationship that is crucial for engagement to occur.</p>
<p>Maria realizes the students are stuck, but rather than adding her thinking to the mix, she honors the approximations of tentative thinking by asking the students to turn and talk with partners.</p>	<p>Maria decides not to include her thinking. She gives students time to grapple with their confusions and to talk with others about their confusions.</p>	<p>Not providing easy answers to students' questions sets up expectations of learners that they can be solvers of their own questions and problems. This kind of response to a learner increases engagement and responsibility. Engagement increases as readers see themselves as capable.</p>

What decisions might you make next time? How will this affect each of the Conditions?

In read aloud and shared reading, the teacher can continue supporting students to notice their own and others' nonverbal cues of thinking. This supports them to assume responsibility for meaning-making and strengthens discussions.

In these lessons, the teacher can also continue withholding teacher thinking when students are confused and provide time for turn and talks when students are grappling with confusions. This strengthens **engagement** by demonstrating belief in students' abilities.