

“When people feel safe they naturally act with trust and cooperation.” (Sinek, 2014).

Professional Development with “Critical Friends”

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Abstract

Professional development for teachers using the Critical Friend Protocol can help teachers grow into the best they can be professionally. This is done through mentorship and relationship based professional learning. Relationship based professional learning is best because, “When people feel safe they naturally act with trust and cooperation.” (Sinek, 2014).

Introduction

It is important to work collaboratively with teachers to improve practice because it:

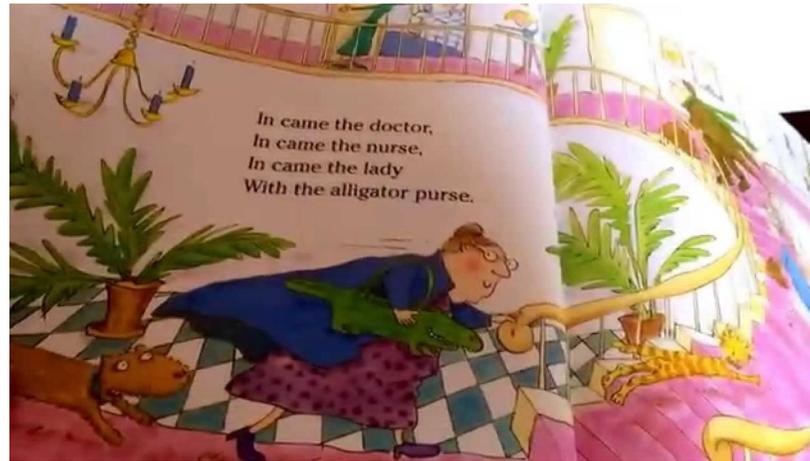
- Helps to solve relevant problems in the work place, college or practicum setting
- Helps teachers to alter strategies to fit the situation
- Offers encouragement and support for teacher development
- Allows teachers to see themselves as serving others (Chu, 2014).

Literature Review

Relationship Based Professional Learning (RBFL): An educational approach using support to encourage observation, critical reflection, multiple perspectives, and new ways of thinking (Chu, 2014). It is important for leaders in the ECE profession to bridge practices from course content to use in daily practice and for professional development.

Critical Friend Protocol: Teachers giving and receiving feedback from one another to work together to improve day to day learning for all students. It is useful for ECE leaders to implement within the context of RBPL because Critical Friends Groups help teachers improve instruction and student learning. (Bambino, 2002)

Shared Storybook Reading: Shared storybook reading is useful for critical friend project because the goals line up with improving instruction through increasing active engagement. Shared Storybook Reading is an important piece of curriculum in ECE settings because it creates positive social interactions centered on books that help develop motivated, engaged, and knowledgeable emergent readers. Characteristics of good shared storybook readings include: comfortable setting, pausing for child input, asking questions, letting the child turn pages and talking about the pictures. (Justice & Kaderavek, 2002).



Methods and Procedures

Step 1 ~CREATE: I created a lesson plan using the book “The Lady With the Alligator Purse”. I used a lesson plan template, this template includes the key components of information needed for others to know what is supposed to take place during the lesson as well as the purpose and intended outcomes. This template includes questions to consider while creating the lesson plan, and is used in the BS program to ensure that students are able to plan developmentally appropriate lessons that address the standards in Early Childhood Education.

Step 2 ~ PRESENT: Once the plan draft was created I posted it online for my Critical Friend to view. She also posted her lesson plan for me to review. I reviewed her lesson plan.

Step 3 ~ CRITIQUE: We offered each other structured feedback about what works, what could be better, and offered a suggestion. We used the following sentence starters: “I like the fact that...”, “I wonder if...”, and “A next step might be...”.

Step 4 ~ CLARIFY: I reflected on the feedback offered. She suggested incorporating technology into the lesson. Then for clarification I asked what kind of technology she would suggest for the age group.

Step 5 ~ REVISE: I revised my lesson plan using a CD player for a song as a way to incorporate technology.

Step 6 ~ TEACH: After revising the lesson plan, I implemented the lesson in my classroom with twelve one year olds.

Step 7 ~ REFLECT: I completed this project by reflecting on the CFP process of giving and receiving feedback as well as using the lesson plan with real children. I reflected on what went well, what went wrong and what I will do differently in the future.



Results

The Final the Lesson Plan: The final lesson plan was a shared story book reading to teach the words in and out. The lesson ended with the children demonstrating in and out by climbing in and out of a box and a tunnel. I added a song about in and out, but decided not to use the CD player because it lacked ease of use during the lesson. The children responded with excitement and enjoyed climbing in and out of the box.

Critical Change: As a result of the protocol I added a song to the lesson plan. After performing the lesson plan with children I will change the introduction to the story to get them more interested before I start reading. Additionally, I was able to assess that the children did understand the concept of in and out. I was able to meet the objectives for large motor control and I will build on these skills through out the year.

Discussion

Self-Reflection: I liked using the protocol to receive feedback that helped me fine tune my lesson plan. In the future I would like to use the CFP to grow myself as a director. I would also like to use the CFP as away to help staff grow.

Limitations: I did wish that my Critical Friend had given more feedback, and that it would have been more age appropriate. In order to compensate for this, I recorded myself presenting the lesson to make sure I could view it through a critical lens.

Further Research: In the future I will you use this protocol as a way to scaffold teachers into learning new methods. In this way it would be teaching teachers they way we want them to teach students.

References

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