

## II. DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE TEACHING

**Core Value of Teaching, Learning and Mentoring:** *The student teacher understands how student this age grow and develop and uses that knowledge to support learning.*

The student teacher:

- ( X ) Gears instruction so that students are not frustrated by the level of the content, skills, or activities by taking into account the cognitive, social, physical and emotional needs of this age group.
- ( X ) Makes an effort to get to know students personally, cultivates interactions that are mutually respectful and takes the students age and culture into consideration.

### Notes:

Watching the collection of teaching videos, there are few teaching behaviors that repeat themselves throughout all the videos and with both sets of students. Students across the board are moving about and acting out different verbs. Not only are they role playing, but I am acting along with them- clapping my hands together to demonstrate “cerrar” (to close) and making binoculars to my eyes to portray “buscar” (to look for/ search). For students that are actively participating when they’re in the minority or for students who are answering particularly challenging questions, they are receiving high-fives and words of encouragement. One student in particular was the only one to act out the first correct command, and his actions were celebrated. These students are being positively recognized for their accomplishments.

As their educator, I am repeatedly asking my students not just what their answers are, but *why* they chose those answers and *how* they arrived to their solutions. Many times during the activity, students would claim that the commands on the board were wrong. When asked, they would just respond with answers such as “it just looks wrong” or “the last two were correct.” Instead of accepting that they had correctly identified an error in the commands, I asked that they defend their reasoning and give me the evidence that backs up their claims. At times, students were conversing with one another about why answers were correct or incorrect. Side conversations can be tough to manage, but I allowed them during this activity because they resulted in productive conversations about the material at hand.

The activity as a whole was chosen as a review for the students before their upcoming exam at the end of the week. A lot of my actions and inactions while carrying out this activity were chosen because I felt they would be developmentally appropriate for the students. These two class sections are the last two periods of the day, and the students often enter the room complaining about the few classes they have left. They are, in a way, tired from the long day of learning new materials and using their brains in different ways to receive and manipulate information. By having my students acting out their vocabulary and opening the room to dialogue, the students are not only engaged in the material, but interested in participating because they have the ability to socialize while learning. I chose to act out a lot of the different vocabulary with the students for a few reasons. I wanted to model how the activity should be done and I wanted to dispel the notion of a hierarchy between the students and the teacher. I desired to be participating *with* the students and not instructing them to do things for me. A lot of success in the classroom stems from the relationships students have with their teacher and with the positive modeling of appropriate behavior and participation.

Students were often given high-fives or verbally congratulated for their efforts because they enjoy and appreciate the encouragement and positive recognition. This recognition was definitely deserved when students went beyond a simple binary answer of yes or no, correct or incorrect. I asked the students to defend their answers because I wanted to cognitively

challenge them and ensure that they knew why an answer was correct. A lot of this student rationale was produced once students conversed with their peers and bounced ideas off of one another. At one point during the lesson, a student had claimed the command on the board to be wrong. When asked why, he said it was missing something. Another student added on that it had the wrong ending for the subject. Once this had been established, I asked for the correct form, and yet another student supplied the answer. In all, three students had worked together to analyze the mistake and make the appropriate correction. These students, along with many of the others, had worked collectively to arrive to an answer. At other times, conversations were had to help repeat or clarify information. Allowing these discussions not only provides social interaction among peers, but it shows that as their teacher, I trust them to stay on task and work productively. Some teachers harp about having any noise in the room other than the one speaking, but I consciously chose to let the students speak to each other because I know them well enough to expect appropriate conversations.

After having watched the videos a few times, it is evident that there is still a lot of improvement potential in my effectiveness as a teacher in terms of teaching in developmentally appropriate ways. Something that is less obvious in the recordings is my personal knowledge of the students and the interactions I have with them. At one point in the video with the 6<sup>th</sup> period class, I had to ask a student for her name so that I could congratulate her for knowing the definition of a word. Not only does she turn to her friend and giggle about my having to ask, but I internally felt bad for not remembering her name. I may not be in the classroom as often as their regular teacher, but this little detail could give the impression that I am not making the effort to connect with the students. I think one way of better getting to know the students is to circulate more in the classroom and weave around the desks more instead of pacing back and forth in the middle of the room. Not moving as diversely around the room can bore students and may prevent me from interacting with a student who I normally don't see in the center of the room. In their adolescence, students really enjoy social interactions, and this isn't excluding conversation with the teacher.

As an overall reflection of my teaching during this activity, I am happy with the way the classes reacted to my instruction. A good majority of both classes was engaged, and many students were participating in the acting-out of verbs and the discussion of mistakes and corrections. There was a lot of discussion about the rationale behind their answers, and I really enjoy having students talk with one another productively during class and expand on their knowledge through interaction with peers.