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**LEARNING ENVIRONMENT REFLECTION**

1. Identify the specific strategies planned and a rationale for the strategy,
2. Explain how the class went (what worked, didn’t work, and why),
3. Describe planned changes or alterations of these learning environment strategies for the future.
4. Warmth and Friendliness: I wanted to let the students know I was making an effort to know their names in the classroom to build a better relationship with my students and let them know they are just another person sitting at a desk. Rather than standing at the door and greeting each one of them, I was returning their papers that I had grades the previous night before. When they would come in and sit at their desk, I would approach them with a smile and ask them how they were doing and if their name was “so-and-so” to hand back their paper to them. This allowed the students to know, I had been making an effort to know their name and also showed that I cared how their day was going. One student, Quinan said to me, “Yeah, I have a weird name, I know”. I responded that it wasn’t weird, it was unique and I liked it. That put a smile on his face as he thanked me. Once more students started piling in and having conversation, as I would pass out papers to their little group, I made little comments to join in conversation if it wasn’t too personal. For example, some of the girls were talking about the internet site, pinterest. I said, “Love that sight! It’s certainly addicting though!” Instantly all the girls smiled and said, “I know!” One stating she has her whole wedding planned out already. Simple conversation with the students like this allowed them to feel more connected and comfortable with me in the classroom. Because class was about to begin, some of the students papers I just handed to them, which showed that I indeed did know their name, however, it didn’t allow any personal connection time. Having this be a daily activity, with time allowing, would allow for a better teacher-student relationship, I believe.
5. HELPS LEARNERS DEVELOP POSITIVE SELF-CONCEPTS: During the Build your DNA and Eat it Too Lab, I made sure to circulate the room effectively trying to ask every group if they needed help. Students did not hesitate to ask me for help or tell me that they were confused with the subject matter. I would ask them where they were getting stuck at and talk them through the steps one by one asking them engaging questions relation the candy and materials they were using to the actual molecule of the DNA and RNA strands. When they would answer a question correctly, I would smile at them and praise them, which you could tell made them feel confident and proud that they were understanding the subject matter. Even if the students did make a mistake and their group was giving them a hard time about it, I would use it as a learning strategy and tell them that this was a perfect example for us to see how mutations happen and how DNA cannot be made into a protein. The students then worked together to see where the base pairing had gone wrong. Even if I wasn’t working with a group personally and I saw a student or group excelling, I would make sure to give them praise and tell them they were doing a good job. If I were to make this better next time, I wouldn’t spend as much time at one single group so I could move around the room in a more efficient manner to make sure everyone was getting the help they needed to keep up to pace.
6. COMMUNICATES PERSONAL ENTHUSIASM: During the DNA building kit, I was personally very enthusiastic about the subject as well as the activity because I had made all the work sheets the students were going to be using to build their DNA as well as answer questions. Plus this was the first time that they could take what they had been learning and apply it in a visibly tangible manner. During this I made sure to go up to every student and ask them how they were doing, making sure to use their names to make it more personal and one-on-one. I made sure to go around quickly to groups and to point out things they were doing correctly and tell them it looks good. I would always make eye to eye contact with whomever I was talking to and stress points I thought were important for them to know, making sure to use voice inflections when I knew later on they would have to answer a question on their sheet about that specific subject matter. For future reference, I was tired that day, and it may have shined through at some points, so even if I am having a tired day, I need to know the students are having one too because it’s the end of the day and just tough it out for one more hour not allowing them to see any tired expressions or mannerisms during my teaching or assisting in their activities.
7. STIMULATES LEARNER INTEREST: The day I taught DNA Replication, I was very excited because I had created the powerpoint and I knew it was a little different then what they were normally used to. I made sure to let my personal enthusiasm shine through, throughout teaching the lesson. I made sure to emphasize important parts and steps in the process of DNA Replication as well as vocabulary they should be familiar with. I made sure to reiterate and intertwine what they had previously learned in other lessons to this lesson to show topics coincide with one another. Students had an outline of the notes with parts missing, so I would make sure to ask engaging questions to see if students knew what should go in their fill-in-the-blank section before I showed it on the screen, making sure to give praise where needed and not put anyone down if they didn’t get the answer right. For example, when talking about the two bonds, most students remembered the covalent bonding, but couldn’t remember the weak bonds between the base pairs. If they answer incorrectly, I would make sure to tell them, yes that’s one of them, but not the one I’m looking for and ask if anyone else knew. I would give them clues to other subject matter they knew, like saying it was the bonding with water molecules. I also related this lesson back the activity they did in class as well as relating the subject matter to things they understood and could relate to. For example, DNA Replication occurs in both directions just like opening a backpack zipper from the middle. In the beginning student’s were a little hesitant to answer questions and the same would answer every time, but since it was my first time I didn’t want to call out students seeing as I didn’t know all of their names yet. Next time I will do random calling or use candy when they get an answer right to encourage more participation.
8. Classroom Environment: To make the classroom more appealing I will soon be hanging posters around the room to make the walls less bare since they were taken down for the walls to be painted. This will make the classroom a little more visually appealing and comfortable. Also, I am going to make new lab station numbers for the back in their school colors with paw prints on them for their mascot. Right now there are only six numbers and I will be making twelve to have more grouping available and allow for easier instruction. I also had been doing a lot of prep-work for the labs that students saw me doing in the back. By making the amino acids laminated and by sorting up the materials they needed to work with, I think the students realized that I was putting in my time and efforts in order to make the lab easier on them. Showing the students I could put in the extra work I think made them take the lab more seriously because they were thankful that I had put in the extra time to help them out. I have noticed in the classroom that not all students have a book under their desk and I planned on asking Mrs. Bozeman if I can make sure each desk has a book so students don’t have to get up and go looking around for one or use a person’s next to them.