

There is “conscious teaching” happening. The teaching staff looks to the students to develop the activity. When they add something or change something, they do it in response to something observed from the students.

“Conscious Teaching” is teaching that is responsive to how the students react to the teaching. Adjustments are made based on this not based in a preconceived notion of what *should* work. Specifically, they added the “mystery feeling” after the students became able to express the feelings they had practiced and seemed to comprehend. In response to that success they upped the ante to see if the students could be more independent – they added a purple dot where the students could decide what feeling they wanted to talk about randomly.

COMMENTS from the GROUP?

Language is developed through social interactions. The motivation to communicate more or express oneself is directly related to social language experiences.

The freedom of expression that this activity fostered facilitated more language than even this amazing group of teachers could have imagined.

There is a sense of community and safety that enabled these students to let go. The praise and feedback for their personal expression, regardless of what they were feeling was celebrated.

Overall, the improved use of effective language has carried over into the classroom as well as other environments.

COMMENTS from the GROUP?

Connections to the Frameworks for Teaching (FFT)

Component 1a: DEMONSTRATING KNOWLEDGE OF CONTENT AND PEDAGOGY

Teacher displays extensive knowledge of the important concepts in the discipline and how these relate both to one another and to other disciplines. Teacher’s plans and practice reflect understanding of prerequisite relationships among topics and concepts and a link to necessary

cognitive structures by students to ensure understanding. Teacher’s plans and practice reflect familiarity with a wide range of effective pedagogical approaches in the discipline, anticipating student misconceptions.

Component 1e: DESIGNING COHERENT INSTRUCTION

Plans represent the coordination of in depth content knowledge, understanding of different students’ needs and available resources (including technology), resulting in a series of learning activities designed to engage students in high-level cognitive activity. These are differentiated, as appropriate, for Individual learners. Instructional groups are varied as appropriate, with some opportunity for student choice. The lesson’s or unit’s structure is clear and allows for different pathways according to diverse student needs.

- *Activities permit student choice.*
- *Learning experiences connect to other disciplines.*
- *Teacher provides a variety of appropriately challenging resources that are differentiated for students in the class.*
- *Lesson plans differentiate for individual student needs.*

Component 2a: CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT OF RESPECT AND RAPPORT

Classroom interactions among the teacher and individual students are highly respectful, reflecting genuine warmth, caring, and sensitivity to students as individuals. Students exhibit respect for the teacher and contribute to high levels of civility among all members of the class. The net result of interactions is that of connections with students as individuals

- *Teacher demonstrates knowledge and caring about individual students’ lives beyond school.*
- *When necessary, students correct one another respectfully*

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Pocket PD No. 3

ALTERNATIVE WAYS to FACILITATE COMMUNICATION and DEVELOP SOCIAL SKILLS

Teaching students with language delays, regardless of the nature of the delay, requires creative ways to facilitate a desire to communicate.

Eliciting language in real time situations is the most concrete way to foster the motivation to communicate. The motivation to communicate with peers is very powerful. The majority of opportunities to communicate in school is often with adults. Early language skills are primarily developed in social settings.

Creating fun, social opportunities will unleash the students’ desire to express themselves. Structuring the environment without over structuring the expectations or without having specific demands will often result in more spontaneous communication.



In this video, you will see all staff serving to model the idea of having fun and demonstrating how to be in a recreational environment and still behave appropriately.

The staff allows the students to be very expressive using louder, more excitable tones that may fit into a classroom setting. These students are practicing how to be social while exploring their own expressions about themselves.

The staff from P94M does an amazing job collaborating and truly values the expertise each professional brings to the mix. They really take time to absorb and watch each other, so if one staff member is not present the other staff members know what to do.

Listed here are **Target Points** to watch for during the video. Please take a moment to read through the list first, and then mark the items and take notes as you see them occur in the video.

Write notes on a separate sheet.

The Target Points in blue text will be explored further in detail as Teaching Points.

TARGET POINTS to watch for...

- There is tremendous value in being able to practice expressing yourself in social settings
- All staff members respect the expertise of others
- Teachers model how to have fun and how to be social
- The sensory needs are addressed through props that provide physical feedback that most kids find comforting
- There is no right or wrong answers, and individual expression is praised
- The teachers genuinely respond to what the children say, showing them joy for what they express
- There is structure in a non-structured activity, which demonstrates the inherent teaching skills and expertise of all staff

- The students are given the ability to express feelings that they may not normally feel comfortable doing
- There is a "conscious teaching" happening. The teaching staff looks to the students to develop the activity. When staff add or change something, they do it in response to details observed from the students
- There are significant "take away skills" for the students that they can use outside Fun Friday. There are physical cues that support the comprehension of the words that create a "hook" to remember what they practiced and use it in other situations
- Language is developed through social interactions. The motivation to communicate more or to express oneself is directly related to social language experiences

NOW LET'S WATCH the VIMEO!



FUN FRIDAY

<http://vimeo.com/64562919>

TEACHING POINTS!

There is tremendous value in being able to practice expressing yourself in social settings

There are so many social cues the students learn by engaging in play activities with peers. Many students with disabilities do not have the same level of exposure to these social activities because of behaviors or other limitations. Families may shy away from social settings that they feel unable to

manage. This video models a situation where the students are able to engage in these kinds of learning activities with the support of a variety of staff to guide them and rehearse their responses accordingly. Opportunity and practice are key.

COMMENTS from the GROUP?

The sensory needs are addressed through props that provide physical feedback that most kids find comforting

The teaching staff, in collaboration with the PT and OT staff, recognize the need to manage behaviors within a situation that is supposed to provide freedom. This is done through the use of props and by structuring the fun. The props they use have color coding, sensory component (e.g. squishy), AND the activities encourage movement and repetition. The freedom to express yourself physically is also being modeled by the staff, as well as the ability to stop that expression when it is time to transition to something else. The staff serves as an interactive model for how to respond. They set the tone for what is acceptable and what isn't, not with words but with their own behaviors.

COMMENTS from the GROUP?

There is structure in a non-structured activity, which demonstrates the inherent teaching skills and expertise of all staff

There is genius in creating an activity that feels like a loose impromptu gathering but is actually loaded with the necessary supports and models the students need to be successful. The environment they create at Fun Friday enables the kids the freedom to take chances and not feel judged. They have created an opportunity that fosters free expression and motivates communication and interaction with others, while supporting the students sensory needs and providing models for appropriate behavior. The teachers are engaging freely and are genuinely responding to what the students say regardless of what they say. The joy that is created is nurturing and clearly diffuses the behaviors that may otherwise interfere with active participation.

COMMENTS from the GROUP?