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EDU 539
Reflection 2

The part of the book, *Classroom Instruction that Works*, which I recently read provided very interesting ideas and examples of summarizing and note taking. One general strategy used to create a summary involves deleting information which is not necessary. This process makes grasping the main ideas in a text easier to comprehend. This strategy requires a person to “analyze the information at a fairly deep level.” (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2004, p. 31). This strategy also utilizes a component which requires the reader to recognize certain elements of text structure. This part of the summary strategy will aid the reader in making decisions as to what parts of the text are essential to their summary.

My personal preference for summarizing is the summary frame strategy. This strategy utilizes a variety of questions designed by the teacher. These questions “highlight the critical elements for specific types of information” (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2004, p. 35) found in the text you are summarizing. For younger students, the summary frame strategy would most likely be the easiest strategy to comprehend. The questions a teacher composes to summarize the text can be adjusted to meet their students levels of text comprehension. A teacher may wish to vary the difficulty of words used in the questions they compose to summarize the text.

For example, if I were to differentiate a lesson using the summary frame strategy, I would develop several graphic organizers to accompany this lesson. For the struggling student I would utilize a graphic organizer which included visual prompts to go along with some simply worded questions. For the average student I would choose questions which used words designed for their reading and comprehension level, however would still wish to incorporate some graphic to assist them in retaining information. For the gifted student, I would develop questions which

challenge their thinking, and also provide them the opportunity to incorporate drawings which would assist them in retaining what it is they are attempting to summarize. The six types of summary frames described in the text can be adjusted to meet the needs of all students if the teacher takes the time to develop questions targeted at the various learning abilities of the students in the classroom.

I recently read somewhere that note-taking was one of the least monitored skills in a classroom. After a recent experience I had as a substitute teacher, I tend to believe this statement may be true in some classrooms. While substitute teaching in a 7th grade science class, the teacher had left instructions which stated that students were to “take out a piece of paper, takes notes and write 10 interesting facts” about what they observed while watching a video. This was an opportune time for me to introduce this class to at least one note-taking strategy I had learned. On the chalkboard I demonstrated the use a concept web for note-taking. Several students asked if they could use bullets or simply list things; I told them that any of these note-taking styles would be fine. At the end of class, I collected the papers from each student and was elated see that all of the students did a great job taking notes and most had used the concept web. I thanked and commended the class on a job well done! There were various adaptations to the concept web approach I had demonstrated, and also to the bullet and listing styles used by several students. I noticed that some students drew pictures to go along with their “10 interesting facts.” As a substitute teacher I did not have knowledge of each student’s learning ability, yet I was able to obtain a high level of participation from the students in this classroom. My theory is that by taking this just one step further from simply asking these students to “take notes;” the students

were engaged, better understood the assignment, yet still had learned at least “10 interesting facts” from watching the video. The best compliment was when one of the students told me, “I was a nice substitute teacher!” Overall this made my day as a substitute teacher very enjoyable!

The point to this explanation is that if students are simply instructed to “take notes,” some students may not even know where to begin. As mentioned in the text it is important to present students various formats. Formats can range from out-lining, webbing, to combining the use of both of these strategies. Note-taking skills are one of the most important skills needed for understanding and retaining material taught in class. Teachers can support students in improving their note-taking skills by modeling or providing instruction of note-taking strategies.

Our classroom discussion is very helpful for understanding how to actually implement many of the strategies described in the text. The explanation of backward mapping, for example, would have been harder to grasp if I had not seen the “fishing” example shown in class. I also gain a lot from the use of reciprocal teaching in our own classroom setting. An example of reciprocal teaching in our classroom would be when students present their instructional strategies for the class. This enables the students to interact with the classroom instruction through presentation of the strategies we are currently studying for this course.

In conclusion, I feel that I am learning a lot from both the classroom instruction as well as from reading the text. I leave the class each week with a feeling that I know and understand more than when I walked in the door that evening.

Reference:

Marzano, R. J., Pickering, D. J., & Pollock, J. E. (2004). *Classroom instruction that works*.

United States: ASCD.