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Teaching Round: *Angel Child, Dragon Child* and Culture  
Reflection  

This lesson was the first in my History Unit on culture. Students were going to learn the meaning of culture and develop cultural empathy. The lesson began with students brainstorming what they believed to be the meaning of culture. There were answers such as, “The inside of your body, smells and your friends.” I explained that we would be doing a read aloud and then go back to our definition of culture. The read aloud was of *Angel Child, Dragon Child* and the focus was on bringing out some cultural elements but ultimately teaching students cultural empathy so that they could embark on this unit accepting of difference and people being unique. We did some turn and talk to discuss the Vietnamese cultural elements portrayed in the book such as the language Vietnamese, the clothing, the different foods and some decorations. We spoke heavily on how her peers should have treated her and how we should treat those who are different than us. Afterwards we went back and defined culture once again and students were able to name elements of culture like music, food, languages and clothing.  

Overall I felt the lesson was successful in students reaching the learning goals and enjoying the activities involved. I like that in the beginning of the lesson students were excited to give their ideas on what they thought culture meant. It was a low stakes discussion where students felt comfortable sharing out loud. The read aloud went well as I noticed students were engaged and focused on my reading. I think reading aloud is one of positive areas as I clarified words or phrases when necessary. I know how to put sophisticated language into words that my students can understand. I thought I read clearly and with inflection in my voice when appropriate. Everyone had an ample amount of time to view illustrations to get meaning from the pictures if there was need for more understanding and context.  

Students were raising their hands and making great observations without me needing to question them. When I did question the students it was with the goal of cultural empathy in mind as well as coming to the understanding of culture. Since the students are accustomed to the idea of differences and treating each other with
kindness they were able to understand what it meant to accept one another and always be nice. Students understanding culture was a difficulty that I expected from such an abstract concept. Another positive from my lesson is that I kept using vocabulary and terms relating to culture throughout the lesson, even if I didn't explicitly instruct on them. I introduced the words during the introduction so students could start becoming familiar with the words. I made sure to point out cultural elements in the book during the Vietnamese festival so students would understand that they were important. In the end I realized that I couldn't give students an exact definition, they needed to understand parts of culture that are concrete with examples, this will help them with future lessons when we focus on traditions.

The part of my lesson that needed a lot of reworking was the organization of turn and talk. In the classroom students have not been assigned partners for Making Meaning or at any other time. Students typically turn and talk to whoever is near them on the carpet. During the lesson turn and talk became very hectic. Students ended up being confused over who their partner was at the exact moment I needed them to talk. They also ended up complaining about who their partner was because they happened to end up with someone as opposed to having a choice, “I don’t want to work with him!” It was complicated because I wanted my more difficult friends to be my partner or to be paired with someone that could help them focus. I also wanted them closer to where I was sitting so I could monitor the conversation but they were all over the carpet. Another issue that arose was students complaining they didn’t get to talk to their partner during turn and talk, one person monopolizes the conversation, “I didn’t get to go!” There wasn’t a system to tell them to switch, I relied on them knowing when to switch and taking turns. It is very important to come up with a system where it is organized and leaves little room for complaints or concerns. This will eliminate time during the lesson that is used elsewhere as well as my energy and that of the students.

After the Rounds Video Presentation I received some great tips and strategies for turn and talk, many of which I implemented the following week. I had my students write down the names of 4 people they wanted to work with but most
importantly someone who would help them focus and learn. I took those names and created partners that I felt would be a good fit. I also decided that I would have them sit in rows on the carpet facing me. Partners would sit behind each other as opposed to next to each other. Rows 1 and 3 would turn around to turn and talk to their partners. I used a poster and chant E.E.K.K. “Eyes to eyes, knees to knees, I’ll listen to you and you’ll listen to me,” to show them and remind them on how to sit and behave during turn and talk. I implemented these strategies the following week and explained to students that as a class we needed to work on our turn and talk. I told them the rules and how it would work and assigned partners and their spots on the carpet. We practiced going from our seats to the carpet a few times as well as turning around to turn and talk. I monitored the talking part of turn and talk so after about 25 seconds I would ring a bell to signal that whoever is talking should switch and let the other person speak. Most importantly, afterwards they filled out a self-evaluation while I did a class evaluation. I put it on the board and will do another one next time we do turn and talk so that they can see their improvement. Students were very honest and know where they need to improve and know how to now that I have given them the tools.