

QUEST 2016

Heidi Siwak & students The impact of integrative thinking

LEAH: Well, me and my friend Jane, we were doing the desk thing, how we could improve our school desks. And, we were just like, we had finished our work so we just had like, not free time but work on other stuff time, and we were working on that and we were drawing out a map on the board and Miss Siwak came over and asked us about it and we were actually planning on building it, we never got around to it but she was like, we'll get the wood and we'll get everything, like she was very enthusiastic about what we were doing. My favourite thing that a teacher's ever said to me is when Miss Siwak asked me to come to the conference because I've never gotten to do anything like that before, it's always just been, here's your work, end of the year, okay bye forever, like, you don't really do anything after but Miss Siwak's like, oh next year you'll come back and we'll do this conference. I was really excited.

KIRA: Something that made me ecstatic last year in her class was when you have like a breakthrough or something, something that nobody else has done, and she doesn't take it as her own, she makes it explicit to everyone, that this was their idea, this was what she did, like, and you can do the same if you do this, and she lets me talk about it and me teach it to the rest of the class. It makes me feel like I have just as much value as the teacher because, since this is like a new teaching that she hasn't like, really done before, that, like, it feels like I know just as much as her, and I am in fact teaching her as much as she's teaching me. I think it'll affect my learning in the future because I have the confidence to go and like talk to teachers and say, you know, I think we should do this this way, I think this is a proper solution. So if, like, I was afraid of go talk to Miss Siwak, then it would probably be the same this year, but this year I can just say, you know last year we learned how to do this, we learned how to do the Ladder of Inference, I think you should teach the rest of the class to do this because it would totally help out the situation at hand. Well, in Miss Siwak's class she has a lot of tools like iPads and lots of computers and stuff, and for kids that generally like, have trouble putting their thoughts onto paper, it actually helps them when they can use, like tools on the computer like making a mind map on different apps and stuff because maybe they have really struggle with handwriting and stuff, but this kind of visual technology, it makes everything go much faster and it helps them out so much that it keeps them up to speed with people who are in fact doing really well with it.

LEAH: Well, as, this year because like technology isn't just, like, digital, it's also Post-It notes and stuff like that, I loved doing the Rapid Idea Generation where we just put down all our ideas that come to our head onto paper and it really helped me with my writing and stuff. And I loved how she had the shirt kit and she would make different shirts and they were just pasted all over the walls and it was fun, 'cause if you ever forgot something you could look at the walls and there was like, the answer to your question.

KIRA: Well, I can see the tools that she's equipped me with going with me like, all the way through my learning career because, in my class that, we don't use this anymore,

my teacher now doesn't really teach it, but automatically I just fall back to I'm just going to make Propos Model or I'm going to do a Causal Model, I'm going to use the Ladder of Inference, I'm just, I fall back to these things and I think that'll actually make a better outcome of how I go through like college and university.

LEAH: Well, my teachers now, they don't really understand Miss Siwak's way of teaching us, but I, like, use it all the time without thinking and like, in my head I'm making a Propos model or like, in my head I'm just like, generating all the ideas without restricting myself like I used to. And I find that, just like Kira said, it will stay with me through my entire education and career.

KIRA: I think my favourite thing that I learned in Miss Siwak's class was either the Ladder of Inference or Integrative Thinking. The Ladder of Inference, because I can use it for anything like, when I'm trying to write an essay in class or just somebody's reaction to something I said, like, it just goes through my head so quickly but, and then Integrative Thinking because it just, again, helps me make the best of a situation, and it helps me make the right decision. Yeah.

LEAH: My favorite thing that Miss Siwak put me with would be either the Ladder of Inference or Rapid Idea Generation because those are the two that I seem to use the most and, the Ladder of Inference I like, Rapid Idea Generation kind of ties into the Ladder of Inference. When I rapid idea generate, I have a bigger data pool that I can then, like analyze the information then conclude and then act and just.

KIRA: My advice for teachers that are going to try and use Miss Siwak's strategies is just go with it, don't try and pull it back, because once you teach these kids like, Mental Modeling and Causal Modeling and Propos Models, all these different things that are so useful, they learn much faster once they have it, so don't think, oh they don't understand, I have to stop, go back to normal teaching, but let it go and, once you get into it, then it goes faster and faster and faster, because they already have these tools and that just helps them understand everything else.

LEAH: Mine would be to get involved but don't get too involved, like, I've had teachers that just like, sit with the students during the whole period and just help them out, which is good but I would like, I would like to have my peers help me more like, be allowed to talk to them about what I'm struggling with on the questions and stuff like that. So, help them if they really need it but like, allow them to figure out the problems by themselves.