

Melissa Pedraza:
1st Grade Inclusion,
Queens, NY

Curriculum: Reading

Focus: Text-to-text
connections and
accountable talk

Reflections: On team
teaching, inclusion, and
teacher mentorship

Resources: Melissa's
materials

Printable PDF of this page

Order DVD

Working on Accountable Talk and Text-to-Text Connections in First Grade Literacy



This site documents the challenges of trying to help a class of students with diverse learning needs make **"text-to-text connections"** and learn how to use **"accountable talk,"** two key aspects of early literacy instruction. The site focuses on the work of Melissa Pedraza, a fourth year teacher, in a team-taught 1st Grade Monolingual Inclusion classroom in Queens, NY, the model school for inclusion with collaborative team teaching in Region 4 of the New York City Public Schools. This site also captures some of Melissa's work with Leslie Richmond, a teacher mentor with the UFT Teacher Center. This site addresses one week near the end of the year, after Melissa and her co-teacher, Nicole McCabe, have implemented most elements of the balanced literacy curriculum used throughout their school and many other schools in the region.

Over the course of the year, students in the class have moved from reading simple picture books to reading chapter books. However, after viewing videotapes of her classroom for National Board Certification, Melissa has grown concerned about the fact that students often directed their comments to her and not to each other. In response, over the week-long period highlighted on this website, Melissa is trying to help her students do three things: use "accountable talk," make "text-to-text connections," between the problems and feelings in one book to those the students have read about in other books, and make connections between books and their own lives.

While Melissa sees some progress, she is not entirely satisfied (see video clip) with how far the students have gotten by the end of this week. Leslie remarks (see video clip) about how the process of teaching accountable talk is a continuum, a goal that is never reached, but always dynamic, a work in progress.

Leslie talks about the
year up until this unit



An example of
accountable talk
and text-to-text
connections
in the classroom



Melissa and Leslie
talk about the need
and importance of
teaching accountable talk



Melissa and Leslie talk
about the challenges of
teaching accountable talk



About this website : This website has been created for the purpose of exploring the practice of teaching. It has grown out of work that Thomas Hatch and colleagues started with the Knowledge Media Lab at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and is being continued at NCREST, The National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools and Teaching, based at Teachers College, Columbia University.