Using Self-Regulated Learning to Support Inclusion

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Context

Natasha was a quiet little girl, of Chinese ancestry, in Michelle's grade 1 classroom. In kindergarten, her parents noticed that reading was hard for her. They noted that although she has a great memory, she struggles with speech, concentration, and language processing. She was not very social, and seemed to be in her own world in the classroom.

David, a boy who was in Anna's grade 1 class, was described by his parents as curious, enthusiastic, bright, and a strong leader. However, at the end of kindergarten he was not yet reading, and they felt that he struggled with regulation. David was already receiving additional support in kindergarten, and concerns increased in Grade 1.

Purpose

We examined how teachers used practices associated with the promotion of self-regulated learning (SRL) to meaningfully include students with exceptional learning needs in mainstream classrooms.

Methods

- These cases were a part of a longitudinal study following students' development of SRL from the end of kindergarten through grade 2.

Data Sources

- Teacher ratings of students' achievement and self-regulation, collected at the end of Kindergarten and Grade 1 (different teachers).
- Three in-class observations across the Grade 1 school year
- Student work samples within the Grade 1 classroom observations

Next Steps

- Look at a larger sample of at-risk children to get a broad sense of which practices support their development.
- Examine a larger sample of students with identified exceptionalities to see if we can make correlations between observed changes and classroom contexts

Supporting students with exceptional learning needs

Significance

- Students with exceptional needs can thrive in classrooms where teachers provide choice, accommodation for individual difference, instrumental peer and teacher support, complex tasks, and opportunities for self-assessment.

- SRL promoting practices enable teachers to differentiate instruction and assessment for exceptional learners and all learners in the classroom. These practices can support meaningful inclusion.

Student Improvement

Over one year, Natasha and David both experienced improvement in their self-regulation ratings. Natasha also improved in her achievement scores. David's scores reflect his continued struggles, as noted by his teacher, Anna.

Anna's Classroom Practices

- ***Control of Challenge -*** Children created reading boxes and were able to choose the books for their boxes. Anna noticed "*real change in the more reluctant readers, they are less hesitant and more likely to put in the effort*".
- ***Differentiated instruction & choice*** – Anna used visual, oral and written instruction, and made sure all students understood their task before they began working.
- ***Scaffolding through teacher and peer support*** – Anna provided models, planning tools, and various supports to all students, including whiteboards for spelling, the option of group work, or support from an adult.
- ***Complex Tasks*** – Anna used text sets and inquiry projects to allow students to control their own challenge.
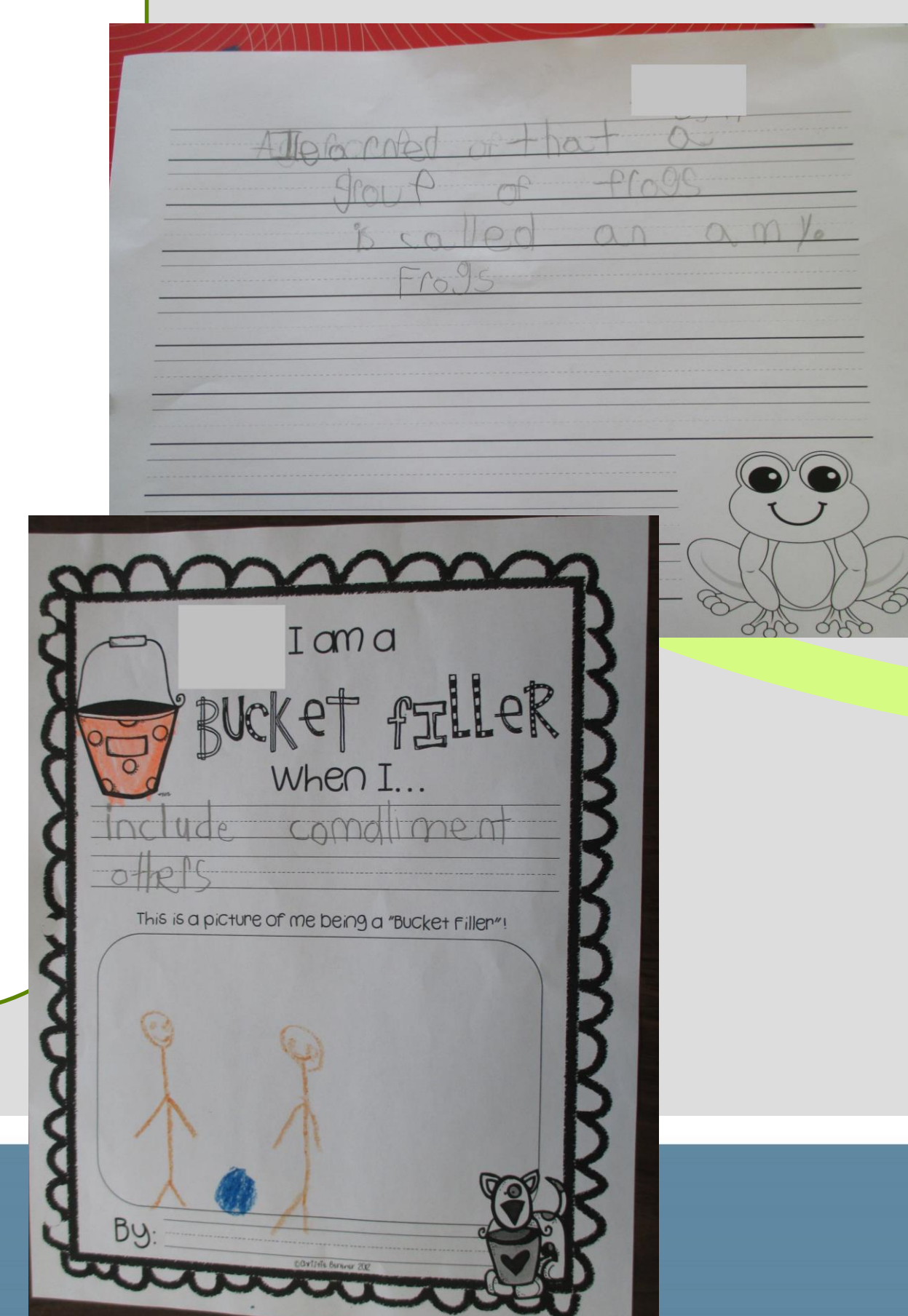
Michelle's Classroom Practices

- ***Self-evaluation*** – Students were often asked to reflect on their own learning, feelings, and actions. During carpet time Michelle asked "*How can you show us that you're ready to start? If you're not ready what can you do by yourself to get yourself ready?*"
- ***Co-constructed rubrics*** – Students had a chance to discuss and provide input into teacher expectations and criteria for evaluation. Students were encouraged to think about this criteria during their group work, or when choosing a partner to work with.
- ***Metacognitive Questioning*** – Students were encouraged to think about their thinking. Michelle`s questions allowed students to reflect on how they learn best and how they will know they have learnt.
- ***Complex Tasks*** – Michelle used group inquiry projects and the Daily 5 literacy program to facilitate student control over their learning.