

12: 6th Science Atoms PostInter

Speaker 1: The students were ... I guess when we started off, we talked about things we had done in the previous weeks. They were able to make connections to what we were going to do today. Then to show them the samples of what was sort of expected of them to get an idea of okay, this is what I have to do. Then, I actually had showed them a sample of a not-effective piece so that they could know what ... I didn't want to show them exactly what it would be so that they could come up with their own way to know what to do. I think sometimes showing them quality work is the way to go and sometimes showing them one that's not as effective product is the way to go. I think giving them those models, the samples ahead of time and then talking about what we had done previously in the week made it relevant to them at that time.

I think that when the kids can work in groups and do hands-on activities, especially in science, it really becomes relevant to them. They're able to touch things and move things around. Then with the questioning, going around and asking them, "Why did you do this and why did you do this?" that's my goal is to get them to be able to ask each other those questions. Not just me coming around saying, "Why?" and "How come it's like this?" I want them to question each other. That's what we've been working on not just in science but in math too. It's always "Why? How come? [00:02:00] Prove it." It was just a real simple task yesterday, but just the questioning was there so that they could start thinking this is why I did it or this is why ... "I'm not really sure. Maybe my partner can help me out."

Because the kids were working in groups and it was "fun," it was something like, "Ooh Play-Doh, I can do this and this." You do have to be a little bit more stricter with your rules. They did need to be reminded that it only has to be used to make the components of the atom, but I think overall they seemed very engaged in the lesson. Of course if I had walked out of the room, who knows what they would have made with the Play-Doh, but I think they did their task and they were able to make all their atoms and make their products. It went really well.

I had everything out on the table ready to go for them. If I had a station where they would need to go and pick up the materials, that wouldn't have given us enough time to finish the lesson. As it already was, there were more things I wanted to cover but I only have 45 minutes. I need to cover what I can in 45 minutes. Just cutting out two minutes here, two minutes here, where they don't have to walk around and go get the materials, if it's already set up for them ready to go ... even not even giving a choice of colors ... This is what you have. Work with it. Or else we would have "Well I want the pink or I want the blue." It would have just taken way more time.

[00:04:00] Management allows the class to flow better. If you set it up from the beginning that this is your expectations, this is what you need to get at the end, showing them the product ahead of time, I think that makes your management so much easier.

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Of course as a teacher making yourself visible and walking around and talking to the groups, and even the way I set up the groups ... I'll make sure that each group has one stronger person in it that can lead the group. My groupings are pretty ... I set them ahead of time and I do it with a purpose to make sure there's always somebody there that I know pretty much knows what's going on. If the kids were to get stuck, they still would have someone to turn to, not just raising their hand asking the teacher all of time.

They seemed really excited about the lesson. Just being able to use their hands to not just write was something good for them. They like to work in groups. Just the age that they are, working in groups is fun for them. It makes the learning more relevant and more fun. They all seemed really excited. I thought that the lesson went well.

Because if you think about it, if studying elements like ... big deal, you're studying elements. That's just my personality. I always try and get humor and sarcasm a lot in my teaching. I find that it works well with my students with this age. When we were first introducing the periodic table, we had talked about symbols and what everything means on the periodic table. It just so happened that potassium has [00:06:00] the chemical symbol of K, which is my first and my last initial, so I always joke that that's my favorite element. They'll make a connection. If they don't know element at the end, they'll know that K is potassium just becomes it's my favorite element. I tend to use humor a lot in my teaching. It makes the learning more fun for them and for me too. Because I don't like to just be stoic. I'm very animated when I teach.

I think they now understand what happens with the atoms. Before it was just numbers on a paper, or I drew a picture and it looks like this. They could actually see this element ... it's getting better and it's way bigger than this element that was at the beginning of the periodic table. They created it themselves so they could see it got bigger, or this one was smaller, or this element wants to react with another element because of where its electrons are. They could actually see that because they made it themselves.

What I want to do now is ... the same groups that they were in, I'm going to give each group one element. They're going to be in charge of being the master of that element. They're going to create the atom again using the plate and the Play-Doh so at least they can still touch the Play-Doh. Then they're going to actually connect it to the plate and use some glue and get it all connected. Then they have to tell the class everything they can about that element. They are the master of that element [00:08:00]. Then what I'm hoping to do after is assign each student an element. I'm going to work with my other teammates on this. If we assign all of our students an element, we can get every single element on the periodic table covered. What we want to do is have them each create their own card that has properties of that element, and then put it all together in a huge periodic table. Then we can display it for them all to ... they're like, "Oh, I had a part in that because that's my element over there." That's what we're hoping to do, continue with the lesson that way.