

6th Math Percent PostInt

Speaker 1: I think the kids got the main idea of the lesson. They seemed very focused and enjoyed the lesson. I did realize I must not have gave the instructions very clearly though. I had, like, two or three kids ask me the same question, so that's why I had to stop the class and make sure everyone knew what I expected of them. When I get two or three of the same questions, I know that it was my fault and I didn't explain it clearly. If it's just one kid, then he wasn't paying attention, but when it's more than one, then that's my fault and I need to redirect them and make sure everybody knows what's going on. That was one thing.

When I had to do it again, I made sure I was more precise with my instructions. It seems like everyone got to finish the activity. They were on task most of the time, so I think it went pretty well. I think when they were able to take those percentages, they were able to apply it. They were able to do it on their own. I didn't get very many, "Well, how did you do this again?" And they had their partner there to help them, too.

I tried to pair them up so that at least there tended to be one stronger person with one that, if they weren't as strong in the math, that I knew their partner would be able to help them out before they both had to ask me, so it seemed like that. At the end, when I had them do the thumbs up, the middle, and the thumbs down, I only had a couple kids that seemed that they were still not real confident in what they had to do, so I would say that was pretty successful.

[00:02:00] I think making the activity relevant to something that they can relate to, that makes the learning the best for them. If they know, "I can use this at another time in the future, even today if I was to go out to dinner with my parents," then they would be able to relate it. Making the lesson relevant is what I found is the most effective strategy. They seemed like today that's what they liked from it. "Asagio's? I'd go there. I know how to do this." That just gets them excited and not realizing, "Oh, I'm doing math." That they can do work, and you're learning in the process.

Having the materials ready ahead of time really helps out a lot. I think even bouncing ideas off of my team, trying to figure out what would work best for our kids. We actually did have an old menu from before that was really old, but the kids actually came up with that idea of Asagio's, and I was thinking, "Hey, that's easy enough. I can just pull that off the internet and get something like that." Our team of teachers, we bounce ideas off of each other, and we work together to make sure we are putting out the best lesson for the kids.

It helps, too, that I have to teach it a couple times in one period and then the next, so sometimes the second period gets the better instruction than the first period does, but that's just part of being a teacher, learning from the mistakes you made in the first class and making it better the second time around. If I was to do it again the following year, I could make it even better and figure out what would make it be more effective for everybody.

Each packet had [00:04:00] four sets of cards. Actually, it was three sets of cards. Each set had a discounted price, a discounted percentage, a tax percentage, and a tip

percentage. They would randomly choose one, and then that's the percent they would have to use for their discount, and then they would pick another one for their tax, and then another one for what their tip would be. That way, it gives them a little variety. It's not just me telling them, "Okay, today your tip is going to be 20%." They actually picked it and made a relationship that way. It just made it a little more fun.

The numbers that we gave were relevant to what a normal tax would be. I didn't just make it up and go, "Oh, I'm going to pay 15% tax today," because that's not the real world. That doesn't really happen. I hope that doesn't happen, anyway. I'm in Hawaii. That's what those were for, so I had those ready ahead of time, and I felt that might have given them ... It would just make the lesson more fun for them, choosing their own cards.

In terms of management, and because the kids were working in pairs, I made sure that, if there was a weaker student, I would have a stronger student with them so that they could go to that student before they come to me, because if I had two lower students together and neither one of them knew how to do it, I would have to spend most of my time working with that group. I want the kids to have some ownership and responsibility to help out their team, help out a classmate. Like we always say, teaching is the best way you can learn. [00:06:00] If you can teach someone how to do it, that means you've mastered the concept. I try to do that way.

That helped with the management some, because I didn't have to bounce around as much helping out all the kids because they had someone to ask first. That's one thing I always ask them. When somebody asked me, I would say, "Did you ask your partner?" I wanted to make sure that they asked a partner first before they come to me so that they can help each other out. Then just making myself visible in the room. They know that I'm there. It seemed like most of them were on-task. Maybe when I watch the video later I might see that they weren't, but it seemed like most of them were, and just being able to walk around the room.

The way that I situated the desks it worked out, because they were already in pairs, and then I even had ... There was a couple groups that finished kind of quick, so I figured, "Hey, we've got time. Let's have them make a group of four, and then they can figure their prices out together as a group of four instead of just two." Some groups even only finished one problem, which is fine, but we want to make sure they understand what's going on before they have to move on to something else.

It seemed like most of them were engaged. Everyone was excited to choose their menu items, and it got them all hungry and ready to go out to dinner. They seemed really on-task. When I was walking around, everybody was working out the numbers. They weren't, "Well, I had this before. When I went to the restaurant, I had this." They didn't seem to be talking about the food, which I was kind of worried about. They didn't start talking, "Well one time, when I went to dinner with my mom," and get all distracted by that, but they were really good about figuring out what they [00:08:00] needed to do, and they did the math. The timing seemed pretty perfect. Most of them got both of

them done, and then class was almost over. I don't know. If we had a longer period of time, they might've got distracted by something else, but they seemed on-task, and most of them got the assignment done in the given amount of time.

It seemed at the end, when I asked them, "Do you think you could do this when you go out to dinner with your parents?" Most of them were like, "Yeah, I got this." Just even knowing that it was from a restaurant that they've been to, they found out the total. They were able to find out what the discount was. They could do the tax. Knowing that, I'm hoping they can take that and apply it to other things, not just going out to eat. Maybe they got to Macy's and they notice, "Oh, there's a 20% off sale. Oh, I know how to figure out how much I'm going to have to pay for this." Those kind of things, I think, just making the math real is what's going to put value in it.

A lot of times you're given a curriculum that you're told to follow with fidelity, and sometime it's just not fun for the kids, and they don't see any relevance. As a teacher, it's your job to take that lesson and expand on it. You still give the good content of the lesson from the book or from the curriculum, but you need to find other lessons that will make it relevant to them. Like, "How does it apply to you in the real world? What are you going to do with this later?" That's what a teacher needs to do. I don't think you can just follow it step by step by step by step. You need to be able to be creative and find your own way to make it effective or the students.

[00:10:00] Go shopping. We can find ads in newspapers, or maybe the Macy's flyer that they send home, like, "Hey, this item costs you this much. How much is it going to cost you with this coupon?" Because it comes with coupons, or it says there's a sale, and then figure out their tax. So it's the same concept, but related to something else that they would do. I'm hoping that it just sits in their head, it doesn't just go in one ear, out the other, they remember how to find it. I think that would be a good way to continue on and make sure it sticks with them.