

19: 7th WorldLanguage Conjugations MaterialsInt

Teacher: [00:00:03] (Instructional Materials interview)

[00:00:07] (What are the instructional materials you are using for this lesson?)

Today, we used whiteboards, erasers, and the markers, just to be able to have all students responding to the prompts, instead of them having to sit and just listen to the teacher cold call one student at a time. I think you also saw a lot of the cold calling, a lot of verbal. I also used, in the middle of each table are baskets, and they're filled with: a green and red poker chip, dice, there's a cue card in there that corresponds to the dice, and some regular playing cards.

Throughout the weeks, I'll always end up putting in new manipulatives. One of the newest editions is the post-it notes; the students have access to those materials, but we also incorporate it into the lesson.

So, today, I used the little baskets to have them arrange their partners so that they have some kind of a choice and a thought to it, as well as they're having to figure it out. That leading them to independence ... in middle school they always still need a lot more structure than just being told, "okay, get into partners, now." They'll freeze, a lot of times. Having the cards and having some kind of loose direction really facilitates the transition.

At the end of the lesson, today, one of the exit slips that I used was just the simple parking lot on the board for them to park their questions that they still had about the lesson: where they were still confused. I did happen to go read the parking lot and I was surprised to see some of their own reflections; they're developing in their ability to reflect on what they don't understand [00:02:00] and what they do understand, and a lot of them really just said, "we need more practice conjugating so that we can be quicker."

And I was like, that's an excellent self-assessment of if they're getting the lesson or not and that's something simple that I try to do, a lot. I'm trying to incorporate post-its in, more often.

[00:02:24] (Why did you choose these materials?)

One of the biggest reasons is that everyone can participate. I'm trying, as I reflect on my own practice, to choose more strategies that allows everyone to speak. So, for today's lesson, the whiteboard are engaging for the students, especially when we're learning a lot of procedural knowledge. They can doodle a little bit on the side, as well as still have the required, on task material.

I think just like in the real world, even when I'm in a lecture or listening to something, I'm usually drawing on the side or ... I'm still listening and participating. It also mimics real life.

I think the whiteboards are very forgiving because you can erase them, immediately, without having to feel like, "oh, I just am totally having to erase my notes." So I like to practice with the whiteboards with the students, a lot, and then we can go to their notebooks, and that's a little bit more permanent.

Of course, they do use pencil and they can erase and make corrections, but their notebooks are a little bit more permanent. So, the whiteboards I really like, because they're interactive, they're very forgiving. Students can erase it quickly, learn from each other.

The whiteboards are important for them to give themselves very quick feedback, especially in learning language as a child: if you said something incorrectly, your parents almost immediately tell you, "no, say it like this" and you don't get your apple until you say, "please, may I have an apple" instead of, "I want apple," right?

I think that that, [00:04:00] when we're learning language, is immediate feedback and also for other content areas, the kids are getting that immediate correction and then they're able to practice it again, well.

[00:04:12] (What do you like about these materials?)

I like how they are not messy. Whiteboards are clean; that's pretty easy cleanup, also. I like how students can correct them very quickly and rewrite, again, the correct answer. I like it that they're engaging. The little baskets on the tables, I can talk to that a little bit, I like how the students are always curious about what's inside, so immediately I know that they always go in ... a lot of the boys, the male students in particular, will sometimes just play with the materials, and as I've gotten older in teaching, instead of just correcting the male students so much, I've learned to just let them go. As long as they're quiet and I can tell that they're on task and listening. I've noticed that males are much more kinesthetic than females and they just need to be doing something, with their hands.

Oftentimes, I've seen males holding the poker chips or playing around with the dice, but then when I do call on them, and they're right on task, or I'll go check their work and I'm like, "Oh, you do have half your assignment completed, okay, let's get the other half."

I think it's a useful tool having those baskets and those kinesthetic manipulatives that they can just use during the lesson to help them maintain their focus and focus their energy on class. The male student and the female student are both very, very different, so I'm working on ways to engage all types of learners.

I do like the baskets because they're colorful ... adding color to the room.

[00:06:00] (How would you describe these materials as meaningful and relevant to student's lives?)

I think that constantly writing is an important tool to develop because at middle school, I've noticed, they're still really learning how to get organized. Being able to use their whiteboards to organize their thoughts before they go and talk, it makes a lot more sense to them: they've seen it, they've tried it, they've heard the correction the correct way and then they can correct it, they see their work, again. Then they'll go and do the partner work. When they're released to do the partner work, I'm not there listening to every student, but they have had enough practice and modeling and self-correction that I've not seen as many mistakes as when we don't do a lot of review and chunking it down, breaking it down, step-by-step.

Even though it was just a simple question-and-answer at the end of the lesson, with their partners, there was actually a lot going into that. They had to review and really think about the subject-pronouns, the verbs, conjugating the verbs.

With that thought of them organizing their thoughts, I think that's an important thing students need to learn and sometimes we just need to write things out.

Your bringing up this question makes me kind of think how they could, or what I could as a teacher to tell them how to get ready for the real world. Honestly, even with emails I've learned, you need to write it first, then you just let it sit. Then you can go back and reflect on it again. Maybe it's not until an hour or two later do I end up actually sending the email, because I thought about it. I would hope they could learn to do that in language class, that they're really thinking about: are they being clear in their communication. Also just organizing their thoughts.