

Kindergarten Opening Pre-Interview

Interviewer: Why did you choose to teach this lesson?

Teacher: I chose to teach this because I think routines and procedures in kindergarten are very important. I wanted to show those morning routines and how we got things done in the morning. Without your routines and procedures in kindergarten, can't do much learning. If you have twenty five five year olds, they have to be self directed. They have to be independent, so I can take role and do my morning that way. Then we start the morning with our morning circle so that, I feel, is an important way to build our classroom community and to have them be really invested and take pride in their classroom and in their school.

Interviewer: What are the learning outcomes for this and how are they related to the larger learning sequence?

Teacher: One of the major outcomes of our morning routine and our morning circle is being self directed, so that's one of the GLOs, the general learner outcomes. Can they independently start their day, remember the routine, and get to work independently? Another one is the listening and speaking. Are they able to share and participate in grade level conversation? Are they listening to their peers and then sharing and reflecting back on that through raising their hand and participating in the conversation?

Interviewer: How would you describe this lesson as meaningful, useful, or relevant to the students' lives?

Teacher: I think communication skills are very important for future grade levels, not only first grade, but all the way through college. They're learning to listen and communicate and participate in collaborative conversation. They have to listen to each other and then reflect on that and share back and answering the questions. A lot of the times I'll prompt them and help them and guide and them and model appropriate conversation skills and listening and speaking skills. I think those are very important skills for everyday life and to be an active member of society.

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Interviewer: You mentioned self director learner as well.

Teacher: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: How would you see that as relevant?

Teacher: It's very relevant. In kindergarten, our goal is to build them as self directed learners. For me, it's a big one, because there's one of me and twenty five of them, so I need them to be self directed learners and I also say be complex thinkers. If you have a problem, can you solve that problem on your own? Not only for their future in school, but in life to be self directed and self monitoring is an important skill.

Interviewer: What are the big questions you're using to drive student discussion?

Teacher: We use our mandated curriculum, which is Wonders. They have essential questions and a focus for that week. This morning to drive our conversation, it comes from Wonders. It comes from the state mandated curriculum. Then as the conversation builds, the kids might ask their own questions. They come up with their own. To get those critical thinking skills, they might come up with their own wonderings and build off of that core content of the Wonders curriculum.

Right now it's science and it's going to be weather. We'll start talking about weather and start with this question from Wonders and then it might build and change depending on their input.

Interviewer: How are you planning to check for understanding or assess student outcomes?

Teacher: It's mostly through teacher observation. I have a little clipboard and I'll mark down who's sharing. I'll do a lot of prompting. Then we'll ... They'll self assess themselves, so they'll use their thumbs. Thumbs up, "I participated today." Sideways thumb, "I could've participated more." I'll use that. It's important for them to reflect on their sharing. We'll also look at ourselves as a whole. "How did we do sharing today? How did we do at listening?" because a big part of it being intellectually safe and them having that feeling of "My friends care what I say." is listening. Listening is just as important as speaking.

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Sometimes we'll write it down if we have time or I'll have them draw pictures to answer the questions. Then they can bring their paper to the circle and share for those that aren't raising their hand to share. That's a way to include those different types of learners that might not be comfortable sharing in the circle.

Interviewer: How would you describe this as engaging for students?

Teacher: For kindergarten, engagement is, I wouldn't say easy, but they all are willing to share. If it relates back to their own lives, they're very much me centered. If they can make those connections of what we're learning about and we go like this, "I made a connection." If they can relate it to their own lives, then they're more than happy to share what they've experienced. "One time I did this, one time I did this." We're working on examples as well, so I'd like them to share examples. We use the sentence frame "One time ... " They're getting really good at it and they like to relate it back to them. It's meaningful and it's engaging to them because they can share stories from their own life.

Interviewer: How do you plan on managing student behavior throughout the lesson, starting with expectations?

Teacher: We have our safe circle rules. We have rules, eyes and ears on the speaker, share the ball, we sit in a circle so we can see everybody. There'll be two parts. It'll be the morning routine and then our morning circle. For the morning routine, the expectations we're

practice and practice and practice. We practice our morning routine and then "Okay, tomorrow we're going to do it for real." It takes a lot of practice.

[00:06:00] I like to tell them that I have a job to do and you have a job to do and that they're very much active community members in our classroom. They know what their job is in the morning and expressing those expectations, then they know and understand what they're supposed to be doing. They kind of feel it. They want to make our classroom better. That sense of community, I think is very strong in my classroom. I am hoping that will come through.

It's hard to explain how you get that, but I think just giving them ownership and giving them the opportunity to be independent and to be community contributors and help make our classroom better, they kind of step up to that. We practice a lot and during the circle time, we have our safe circle rules. They'll refer back to those.

Another way we manage behaviors is we have our Ohana ball. We have a ball that we pass around and the only person that can speak is the person that has the ball. That really helps manage behaviors. I'll do little things, like I'll sit by the kids that I know need that help and things like that.

Interviewer: Perfect. All right.

Teacher: That's it.