

5<sup>th</sup> Science Plants  
Materials Interview

Interviewer: Please describe the instructional materials you're using for this lesson.

Teacher: The instructional materials I used for this lesson were mostly the Project [inaudible 00:00:12] materials. The picture chart I used is called a comparative input chart. As you do the chart you're drawing all of the components out with the students and lecturing at the same time. The pictures were picture file cards. I thought about what type of vocabulary would be very abstract to them and they would need pictures for, and I found pictures for those vocabulary words. Then I made the literacy awards, the things students got on the colored paper. It's just different plants and information about them and one simple question. The kids really seemed to like them. They're given out for good behavior.

The only other thing I used were the, not really instructional material, but the Chromebooks. The students were able to type out their essays on the Chromebook, on the Google doc. I find it to be a lot faster than having them write. A lot of them are very averse to writing because it takes so long for them. I don't know if their hands are not developed long enough yet. It seems like a daunting task to them, but as soon as you say, "okay, I want you to do the same thing on the computer and type it out," even if they're the slowest typers ever, they're more than happy to do it for you.

Interviewer: I would definitely call the computers an instructional material like that. That was good. I was going to ask you a follow up on that one. If you... [inaudible 00:01:57] That was perfect. Why did you consider choosing these materials?

[00:02:00]

Teacher: These materials were chosen for a specific reason. The picture file cards, again, were used to help bring the concrete into the abstract realm. If they did not have any prior knowledge of what each of those plants were, the strangler fig and the arctic poppy, being able to see them even if they couldn't see them actually in front of them, the pictures were a nice way to get them to understand what they look like and how they functioned. The Chromebooks were used to facilitate the writing. As before, the kids don't really like writing with their pencils. At this stage they should be learning how to type and should be pretty quick typers because when they go to middle school and high school they're going to be required to type more, so getting them started now was essentially. Especially since we have Chromebooks for every student at our school.

Interviewer: Very fortunate. Just a note, it's totally okay to repeat yourself, as you noted, if the question presents itself.

Teacher: Okay.

Interviewer: Don't feel like you need to come up with all kinds of new stuff. This question might get there. What is it you like about these materials?

Teacher: I really like how engaged they get the students. Having them come up, place the words or point out the picture file card that is associated with that word on the chart. The actual charts, being able to use them, so having all of the vocabulary on the chart and they just have to put it together in a sentence. The Chromebooks are very engaging. They love typing on them. They love having that available to use. Seems to make the work go a lot faster. In the video their writing took about half an hour, but had I had them write it out, it would've drawn out probably the whole day. I probably would not have gotten as much detail in the writing as I did with the Chromebooks. The other thing the Chromebooks are great for is instant internet access. If there was a word they see on the input chart, they're always reminded or told to just Google search it. Get some more picture materials to use and build their schema. Also to practice dictionary skills, because unfortunately we don't have dictionaries. It's kind of like an instant technological dictionary right at their fingertips.

[00:04:00]

Interviewer: Who told you about schema?

Teacher: You.

Interviewer: Did I?

Teacher: Yes.

Interviewer: Are there any changes you would make to these materials?

Teacher: Not necessarily to the materials. I wish that I'd had more space to spread everything out through the lesson. It seemed like all of the charts were kind of congregating with each other and overlapping each other. It was a little bit hard for the students to navigate between this comparative input chart and then the pocket chart that I had all of their writing in. Other than that, it was great. The Chromebooks battery lasts about eight hours, so as soon as they come in in the morning at about 7:00 until they go home at 2:10, their Chromebooks are out. They don't need to be charged. They stay almost to a 60 percent battery for the day. Then they charge them at night. Not having to be tethered to that charger is nice because it gets them free to roam around and use whatever is available for them.

Interviewer: That's awesome. Do you remember when you didn't have them?

Teacher: It was just last year. It was horrible because we had maybe five computers for a class of 20. Now we have one for one and they don't have to share, they don't have to take turns, they don't have to wait-

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Interviewer: You can develop lesson around the Chromebook as opposed to having a ... That's cool. How would you describe these materials as meaningful or relevant to the students lives?

Teacher: The technology especially is relevant to their lives because in this day and age they're going to be required to use this type of technology in high school and college. Possibly after in their careers. Getting them started with it now so they can learn what their limitations are and try and power through them is fantastic. Before our Christmas break in December, we did the Hour of Code. They learned how to write in JavaScript and help some of the Star Wars characters go through different levels using their Chromebooks. Now that they've been exposed to that, they are very curious to go to the next level in middle school and learn how to write their own programs. How to write their open apps. Which is where the job market is going now. The technology component is especially critical for them to learn now and be proficient in the basics now so they can expand their knowledge further.

The other materials, again engaging, because the pictures are in color. They can see it, it's visual. The charts, once you take all the pictures off it's not that busy. It looks like it might be, but it's not. Has a very specific purpose. All of the writing was color coded so anything that had to do with structures was in purple. Anything that had to do with their functions was in black. Anything that had to do with their adaptations was in red. That was just so they could see the different parts of each plant and incorporate that into their writing as well.

Interviewer: Awesome.