

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

Interviewer: How do you think you were effective in communicating the purpose of the lesson?

Teacher: I think the purpose of the lesson was for them to being their writing. I think having the learning target in the very beginning and going over what the essential question was, reviewing the vocabulary, was purposeful. By the time they were ready to start writing, 99 percent of them knew what they needed to write about.

That small group that I pulled, usually they are the ones who struggle with writing for one reason or another. I kind of let them have the first couple of minutes to themselves to get their thoughts together. Then I pulled them and realized they kind of had very fragmented sentences when it came to contrasting the plants. I made them practice with me, how to use higher level academic vocabulary. They didn't have short, chopping sentences. That was purposeful because two of them, especially right now, are being tested for [inaudible 00:01:14]. We want them to move out of the ELL services and start to be monitored. This is one way to help them with that.

Interviewer: Which parts of your instructional practice do you think were most effective in supporting students to meet the objective?

Teacher: Definitely the charts. They were the most effective thing because all of the answers were right there in front of them. It wasn't explicitly stated. It wasn't like sentence one, they had to write. Sentence two, they had to write. It was components of sentence one then components of sentence two and then they just had to add the flowery language to make it acceptable for the fifth grade standards and the picture file cards too. Just pull those out and have them looking at it without any words. They could definitely tell comparison and contrast details between them.

[00:02:00]

Interviewer: What role did organization and planning play in the lesson, as far as setting anything up?

Teacher: There was a lot of things that I did before this lesson. This particular lesson, it only took me about 10 minutes to set everything up. But, creating all of those charts, that did take a lot of intentional planning. We used backwards design and looked at what was the actual science standard. How was it going to play into their final project? What type of background knowledge information are they going to need in order to complete the final project?

Knowing that they have to design a plant that could survive in the Arctic, I knew I had to have a chart that compared a plant in the Arctic to a plant in a completely different environment. Then I realized that we probably are going to need to review structures and functions of plants in general. It led me to doing a basic structure and function chart on a potato plant first, before we even did this comparative chart. They had the language to pick out the structures and functions of the Strangler Fig and the Arctic Poppy. All I had to work on was building the background of the adaptations. All that

[00:04:00] planning took me about four days of my Christmas break. It's well worth it because I'm noticing that their academic language ... Their use of the academic language is more frequent. They're not giving me simple sentences anymore. They're attempting to use complete sentences. Even when they do give me fragmented things, at least there's a few academic words in there that they weren't using before.

Interviewer: I definitely noticed that.

Teacher: Yeah.

Interviewer: What role did behavior management play in this lesson, as far as expectations, procedures, routines, discipline?

Teacher: The routines were established from the very beginning of school, but then they've kind of been added on to, since we're already in January of this school year. The expectations have gone up. The role of the scouts was crucial because it made those two students accountable for watching for behavior. It allowed them to pick out good behavior rather than just always harping on the bad. It kind of gives kids some validation that, you know, "My peers think that I'm doing well, so I must be doing well. I hear I'm doing well from the teacher many, many times, but to hear it from my peers is a lot more validating than just hearing it from me."

Doing the scouts has been great. I just make sure we go over what it is we're supposed to be looking for. The first couple weeks we tried it, they weren't very specific with their feedback of why they got good behavior. They were kind of picking their friends. Now that they've seen how it works, and I've modeled it several times for them. What scouts should be looking for and how they should be giving feedback. They've gotten a lot, lot better.

Interviewer: Pretty good articulation. How do you think the lesson ... With regards to student engagement?

Teacher: Students were completely engaged. You can see that because there weren't very many behavior problems. I had to remind a student not to shout out when he was sitting at his desk, maybe twice. That was pretty much it. The rest of the time, they were focused on what they were working on. Everybody was able to turn in a paragraph with at least a couple of added details. I think I had a few who just ... They're slow typers, so they didn't make it in the 30 minutes, but that's fine. I had everybody talking with their partner or in the group setting. They weren't afraid to share what they said. I feel like we've kind of created this classroom where it's okay to fail, as long as we learn from our mistakes and as long as we're trying in the beginning. I think that's totally changed the culture of how they're learning. They're a lot more ambitious with different projects that I've given them. They're kind of the most advanced class when it comes to using the Chromebooks, just because we took a whole entire week, every single day, of playing around with them and showing them that doing things on it is not going to break them. Now they're able to use all different kinds of apps. We use the Google classroom, we

use all these things.

I can see it now kind of permeating into the rest of the subjects. When even my ELLs who afraid of talking before, now they're just ... Hands shoot up in the air, free to say anything. Their sentences are still choppy, but they're not as afraid anymore. Even that one boy who didn't want to read his paper in the very beginning, his classmates encouraged him and they know they're not going to get made fun of afterwards. I think, had the camera not been here, he probably would have just started reading, hands down. I think more than any ... You guys made him nervous. He's a little bit ...

Interviewer: Is ... I think the last [inaudible 00:07:45] is too ... How do you think the students found this meaningful or relevant?

Teacher: I said in my pre-interview that I was really hoping to tie it into current events.  
[00:08:00] Unfortunately time just kind of got away from us. They were asking great questions and was trying to think of answers and trying to help build up their knowledge from things that they had forgotten. Probably tomorrow, we'll talk about the current events issue. I think the relevancy of it is specifically that. How plants play a huge role in our lives. I think one of the boys did touch on it. He said, "These are producers and we get our energy from plants." Probably something we'll talk about tomorrow, is what would happen if all of the plants in our ecosystem died. What would that kind of catastrophic event look like? How do you think we would function without these things? I noticed they're remembering things from last year. If they're remembering things from last year, then obviously this topic is very relevant to them.

Interviewer: The last one, is there any ... How would you like to develop this lesson in the future?

Teacher: In the future, I'm hoping that, especially tomorrow, we can talk about the current events issue with the plants and the seeds. Possibly pose some hypotheticals. One of the ... Or the final project they're going to have to do is design a plant that can live in an Arctic environment and how will it function? What will it need to adapt? Or possibly taking a plant that we have now and changing it so that it can adapt into the Arctic. That will show them how scientists are using, even though it's a hot button issue, how scientists are using genetic modifications to make plants more conducive to living in different environments so that they can yield more crops, yield more, whatever you need. Hopefully that will help play into their final assessment of writing an essay on how plants have adapted and how their only real needs are air and water and anything else can kind of be modified for them. What we've wrote today will probably be a paragraph in their essay.  
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