

Intermediate Math Food Drive  
Post Interview

Interviewer: How are you guys effective in communicating the purpose of your lesson?

Teacher: I think one of the main ways that we did that was we started with the essential question of the investigation and ended with the essential question of the investigation and that was the exit ticket. I feel like ... I had some doubt about ending with the exit ticket as them saying something instead of them doing. Like instead of them ...

Teacher: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Teacher: Actually showing us that they understand that if you have 23 heads of lettuce amongst 10 boxes, I have to do 10 divided by 23 and that's because the numerator is divided by the denominator. But, I feel like we got around and did enough small checks for understanding where everyone was pretty clear on that process during the group work. Then when they were doing the exit ticket, I was like yes I feel like they're ready to do this because I feel like they got the skill during the independent practice time.

Teacher: Yeah, it was a productive class which allowed for that exit ticket. Some classes we kind of get towards the end and we look at each other and we're like I don't know if they understood what steps you need to take to solve this problem. But I feel like, we checked in a few times and they had all gone through the steps, the necessary steps, to show that they understood that they needed to be dividing and creating decimals.

Interviewer: Which parts of your instruction do you feel like was most effective in supporting students to meet the learning objectives?

Teacher: I think our purposeful groupings were huge.

Teacher: Yeah.

Teacher: Huge.

Teacher: They saved us a lot of time.

Teacher: Yeah.

Teacher: We knew instinctively which groups could start out on their own and we could check in afterwards to push their thinking. Then we knew which groups would need our guidance at the beginning in organizing their information.

Teacher: We front loaded them with the question so they knew. It wasn't like at the end, surprise answer this question and then scramble to think of what it might be. We ...  
[00:02:00]

Teacher: Drawing connections throughout the lesson.

Teacher: Right, and checking with kids as we went. Does it make sense to put in a decimal? Which one is easier?

Teacher: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yep.

Interviewer: What role did organization and planning play in the lesson as far as classroom set up or whatever?

Teacher: It's hard. I co-teach six classes and [Teacher 00:02:27] and I ... I have different levels of planning with each teacher. Teacher and I tend to meet up on Sundays and plan. It's really difficult. We meet once a week, but only for a half hour and we teach three classes together.

Teacher: Yeah and we usually extend that past the half hour.

Teacher: Yeah.

Teacher: Which is like ...

Teacher: So ...

Teacher: It's so hard to find time.

Teacher: As a special educator, planning is definitely my biggest challenge. Just finding the time to meaningfully plan, especially when we spend a lot of our time together trying to figure out how to meaningfully assess work too.

Teacher: Right.

Teacher: It's definitely something that ... But we planned last night and were able to really ... I feel like our planning made the lesson ... I feel like overall the lesson went well and I feel like our planning really contributed to that.

Teacher: I agree. There's other logistical things too though, especially in a school with such a shared space. Like this classroom needs to be set up. The tables were not set up in this formation when we got here this morning, so it's moving all the tables and chairs, just like 36 chairs and 6 tables. It's doable but that's something to think about and then having to teach ... Have advisory right before class and come in and have to make sure that all the chairs are still ... Like move them back because an advisory meets in here. It's like little logistical things like that really do effect it as well because students are wanting to come in, but if the room isn't set up, the organization ... You know, the class starts a few minutes later and the projector wasn't working. No blame on anyone or anything, it's just ...

[00:04:00]

Teacher: Common occurrence.

Teacher: It's just a common ... It's just the things that happen. Like making copies. We both came to school with a six point long checklist of this is everything that needs to happen in the morning. Then you hit traffic and it's just life gets in the way no matter how much you plan.

Teacher: I definitely think it helps. We have one one to one power professional that helps one individual student with me. But being able to say to her confidently here's the answer key, here's the accommodation for your table, allows that table to function so much more smoothly because we're not trying to communicate with her at the same time. That's something, just a little thing like giving her an answer key or front loading like hey we're going to be doing this lesson next is an important part that doesn't always get done.

Teacher: Also us being on the same page. I unfortunately don't always include Teacher in my last minute ideas of "Oh I wanted to do an exit ticket about this but" and then that's something I'm working on. That's my goal as a co-teacher. We both sat down last night and we both knew how the lesson was going to play out from beginning to end so we could check in with each other and Teacher knew ...

Teacher: Timing.

Teacher: We need five minutes at the end of class. We need ten minutes to do the exit ticket. It's time. Remind me ... Because she knew that ahead of time and I knew it ahead of time, we both could check in with each other saying hey it's time to ...

Teacher: The time on the slides has been an iteration that Teacher's made in her planning that's made things easier for me, because it's very transparent to both us and the kids that this is supposed to end at this time. It's been super helpful for me because I can help keep her and then she can help kind of ... We can help focus each other or when we make ...  
[00:06:00] When we say, they actually don't get this, let's do a quick mini-lesson on this, it allows us to be like okay we know that we're off track but this time ...

Teacher: We know how much off track.

Teacher: Is also being used productively and we know that we then have to allocate ten minutes to this tomorrow. It's really helped me especially on those days where we haven't planned the whole lesson together and I kind of run in from physical activity sweaty and she is setting up and I'm kind of like okay, great, now it's ten minutes and okay let's move on. It definitely helps in a co-teaching environment.

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

Teacher: The routines, I think you saw a few of them. We saw the silent [shocka 00:06:50] which is meant to give them time to finish their sentence or finish whatever they're writing

and then kind of bring their attention to the front. We used [hey seekers 00:07:00], which is an immediate attention grabbing, just kind of give the ...

Teacher: Clapping.

Teacher: Whole class a reminder. We use clapping. The purposeful groupings which we said was just a preemptive behavior management. Because when the groupings aren't as cohesive and at the same ability level, in a problem like this, oftentimes it is helpful to have different ability levels together but there's the behavior management. It turns into frustration with people moving at different paces or not communicating the same way. Then out of that frustration stems behavior issues.

Teacher: One thing that worked well today was like specifically when they came in we were like you will not need your Chromebooks, put them to the side. That way we have two repeat offenders who are constantly like, "let me just" on the side. It's like that challenge of one to one tech, trusting that they're using their technology in a responsible way. But that was super easy because we have one student who like in the middle of the lesson kind of crept over. I was like, "Do you need your Chromebook right now?" "No." "Okay then why would you be getting it?" "Mm, I'm not sure." "Okay great, let's reconsider that and sit back down at your table and work with your group." There was an easy ... I could obviously see him and that was easier for me because instead of when he already had the Chromebook and had it open, I could catch the behavior beforehand and ask him to cease and desist.

Teacher: One of the things that's challenging about managing behavior when you have all these small groups happening is that, when we're doing whole group teaching, you catch things right away or ideally right away, more so. But in small groups, we're crouched at two different tables but there's four other tables that have no one at them. In this case there was a table off camera who two students were having ... I don't even know what happened, but they walked over, one was clearly upset. Someone had said something not kind to the other student and that's something that I think we would have seen it before if it had been more whole group. But because we were so engrossed with working in the groups, it was something that had to be handled after the fact. In that case, the student just needed some space and separate to the other end of the long table.

Teacher: It's also a student that frequently needs reminders of expectations. They're behavior plan has been calibrated to fit that but it's ... In that case, actually I feel like the expectations definitely played a role because the other kids at the table knew not to get involved. Like no, instead we're going to wait ...

Teacher: Exactly what I was thinking.

Teacher: Until a teacher comes and addresses this and then I'm going to honestly say this is what happened and then that other person ... It could have escalated, but the other student didn't respond, like kind of ignored, and then we were able to deal with the other

student's behavior separately afterwards.

[00:10:00]

Teacher: That's exactly what I was going to say is that the norms we've set up at school and in this classroom, that we've upheld throughout the year, kind of lent itself to other students taking responsibility for their classmates when it's like, "Hey get on track". Or when we're waiting for 100% of shockas and a student is just sitting there not doing it, their classmates will take responsibility and be like, "Hey, you know we're waiting on you."

Teacher: It's like what we talked about in the pre-interview. I think it's like the community expectations that we've set up allow for us not to be the bad guy. I think it's like students are ... Students took responsibility for their own behavior. I think the biggest thing that we have is students off task or kind of like not focusing, just a couple of kids with ADHD who can't and kids who are just middle schoolers, who just, their attention span is just not there.

But making sure that our group instruction is only 10 minutes really helps with that. Then they're able to focus a lot more and be reminded by their classmates instead of by us. We use a lot of nonverbal reminders. You know, where should your eyes be, let's turn your chair, things like that hopefully that we're seeing throughout the entire lesson that helps them realize I don't have to be called out publicly for my behavior but I'm getting the reminders that I need to follow expectations consistently.

Interviewer: How do you think the lesson went with regards to student engagement?

Teacher: I was excited. I was excited for every single group for how far they got. This is honestly one of the, I think, one of the farthest they've ... I think the most focused I've seen out of the most amount of people in a while. Just because there's inevitably always some students who are like oh I get it, I'm just going to like slide through or I'm going to do the whole thing and then not really do it well. But these groupings really I think helped them to stay on task and do it purposefully and have really cool discussions.

[00:12:00]

Teacher: Yeah definitely. I was also happy with it. I thought they were pretty engaged during the entire thing and it was a relevant concept which allowed them to engage with it appropriately.

Interviewer: How do you think students found the lesson meaningful and relevant?

Teacher: They talked about their experiences with drives, food drives beforehand. Hopefully they ... We didn't revisit that, but hopefully they made that connection a little bit. I didn't hear any discussions about, can we split up peanut butter into point whatever ounces.

Teacher: I didn't either.

Teacher: Which is kind of a good thing because that probably means they were focused on or I'd like to think that it means that they just wanted to figure out the math.

Teacher: I didn't hear them get to that point where they were kind of like, "well what if they only sell cheese in 8 ounce packages and what's an ounce as compared to a kilogram." I didn't hear a lot of those discussions around measurement, but that's okay because we heard a lot of the mathematical language occurring around parts of a whole, which is actually the objective of the lesson. Overall they didn't impress me with their meta thinking, but I don't think this lesson was for that and we still have, what, five months left in the school year to improve on the meta thinking.

Teacher: [inaudible 00:13:41]

Interviewer: Yeah a Cessna or a jet.

Teacher: I know right.

[00:14:00]

Interviewer: I forget how many times [inaudible 00:13:57] talking about it. It's like [inaudible 00:14:05] seven times a day or something like that.

Teacher: Oh my God.

Interviewer: How would you like to develop this lesson in the future?

Teacher: Use the water bottle. We forgot to.

Teacher: Oh yeah. We spent so much time trying to figure out what's the best, like how do we show them what a kilogram is.

Teacher: Yeah, and we brought in a 1.5 ... A liter of water is a kilogram, apparently weighs a kilogram. It depends on the temperature, but you know. We brought in a 1.5 liter bottle that was mostly filled and because it was sitting on the back table and not on the projector cart, I just entirely forgot about it. It's something so little that it slipped my mind. But also the fact that we didn't bring it up means that the students ... That wasn't necessarily a question that came up particularly. Maybe it's just because they weren't thinking critically enough about what measurement they were using but ...

Teacher: There's definitely some overall gaps in understanding about measurement, but I don't know if this was the ... Because they were so engaged in the actual objective of the lesson, I don't know necessarily that it was too much of a big deal that they didn't question or need clarification around what a kilogram was.

Teacher: We had also discussed telling the students that when there was a decimal that needed to be rounded to round to the nearest thousandth, because a thousand grams equals one kilogram and that just makes the most logical sense. If you have part of a kilogram, you want to represent it in a gram so that you could say ...

Teacher: We often have so much that we'd love to front load and so many little tidbits that we'd love to give, but it's the balance between you're going to lose half the class anyway if you're talking for 15-20 minutes and the balance between just let them go and let them figure those things out on their own and clarify when needed.

[00:16:00]

Teacher: Right. I'm glad that we had had that pre-discussion because then when that corner table over there asked me or was kind of having this moment of, we don't know what to do with this giant decimal, it was in my mind to say "Oh this is why we round." When, if we hadn't co-planned so smoothly, I don't know if I would have had that answer ready to go.

Teacher: Or if that answer had asked us, that answer may have been different. Now we know that no matter who they asked, the answer would have been consistent which is good for students.

Interviewer: Pretty good.