

3: 2nd ELA Astronomy PostInt

Screen Question: How were you effective in communicating the purpose of the lesson?

Speaker 2: There has been a build up from prior lessons where students have been working, as a whole group, with sequencing activities. Prior to today's lesson, we had about ... The students had at least three or four opportunities to practice sequencing with partners in a whole group setting. In the beginning, we review our learning targets. Then the students, each group came down, came and met with me at our center table. I reviewed that we would be re-looking through the book that they read together yesterday, and we would work on sequencing the events in the story.

Screen Question: Which parts of your instructional practice were most effective supporting students to meet the learning objectives? Why?

Speaker 2: Having centers and the small-group instruction, I think that is the most effective instructional practice; because students have had quite a few opportunities to work on sequencing in the whole group setting. Once they were working in the smaller group setting, I can clearly see which students are struggling with a concept to who is able to clearly recall all the details in the book, and then put them into sequential order. And which others may have read the day before, but didn't necessarily comprehend what the story was; and therefore would have difficulty with sequencing.

I know where their reading level is at based on multiple assessments. I know whether this would be a group that I am going to work on enriching skills, or enrichment skills; and then some groups where I'm going to have to take it back a little bit [00:02:00] and work more on building the foundational skills.

The first group had ... The first group I worked with, there was one student who was a little bit lower, but yes, the idea is that each group that I work with during teacher center time, it is a homogeneous group so that I'm able to really move the students from the level they're at without having to differentiate within another small group. That differentiation really makes a difference in how I get to see where each student is at.

Screen Question: What role did organization play in this lesson (planning, classroom set-up)?

Speaker 2: The classroom is designed for centers, and so there's a lot of planning that goes ahead of time. What I'll do is I'll take a unit of Wonders, and I'll really look through it to really pull out the most essential information, the activities that are related to the learning targets, and create my learning targets based on the activities and the goals, based on the standards.

What I've done before is I had to plan rotation schedules. Each individual child, in order for there to be homogeneous and heterogeneous groups, I've had to

look at some data and strategically place students in certain groups. Then make sure that I'm having some random selection for the centers where students are working together in the heterogeneous groups.

Screen Question: What role did management play in this lesson (expectations, procedures, routines, behavior management)?

Speaker 2: This is the fourth quarter. During the first quarter, a lot of team-building skills, a lot of communication builds around developing [inaudible 00:03:56] values, and talking about the [point 00:03:58] of values, and really living and breathing [00:04:00] those values as a student. We didn't necessarily start off with the students being able to work in small centers. The goal is to have that individualized time during the teacher center. Each student, they've worked on being able to get along with one another and to be work-focused rather than play-focused. There's a certain level of trust that's been built up.

It's a gentle push-pull. You push the students as far as they naturally are able to go, and then you pull back. Then you work on refining the skills, and then you push forward. With the ultimate goal of the students, like today, being able to work independently; so that my focus can stay on the students that I'm working with. Everybody knows they will get a chance to work with me, so it just is ... and they enjoy working with each other as well.

There is the incentive with the management style, and I think I mentioned to one child today that he didn't need to be in centers if it wasn't going to be for him. If he was having a hard time handling it, he was welcome to come down to the floor, and I can provide an alternative activity. But because the centers are such a motivation for the children, that's usually just what they need to say, "Okay, well I do want to be with my peers, I don't ..." You know, he'll feel ostracized by being down on the carpet, so that's a good check within him. It's a decision that he's made, not a choice that I've imposed on him.

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

Speaker 2: I think with the students that I worked with, they were all engaged. Each of them had a turn. The students that like to talk, and they will easily take over the conversation, but I try to [00:06:00] give opportunities for the quiet students, the ones who maybe need a couple more seconds to formulate their thoughts to have that time. In a group of four, you will be able to elicit comments and thoughts from a student who maybe isn't as comfortable and maybe would never share in a whole group setting.

Usually I engage it by ... I listen to see if there's any type of disruption. Today there really ... There was a few times that I had to help out a student who needed a little re-direction. He wasn't quite sure about one of the prompts on the worksheets, but I try to make it so each center, so that the students are able to complete the work. I look at it as what product have you been able to

produce after that 12 minutes. Minute by minute, students may not always be on task, but by the end of the 12 minutes they have worked together to create a product. I do know by looking at what they produced during that center activity, that I do know that there was work being done. For the online activities, I can go online, check my teacher accounts, and see how they did on their Achieve 3000 or their Wonders activities.

Screen Question: How do you think students found this lesson meaningful and relevant?

Speaker 2: Well, we did a lot of science integration with this lesson with wondering and thinking. At the end, at the debriefing, and students were asking questions. You could see that a lot of them are very curious about space. We may not have time during the reading class to answer all those questions, but the classroom is extending beyond the four walls. If they want to find out more information about Orion's Belt or the constellation Taurus, then they are able to go [00:08:00] home, have a conversation with their families, or go on Google and look, or at another time we can look into that together.

I think the relevance is through making it interesting for the children, contextualizing it in a way that ... bringing in their understanding so I had the globe out and showed them where Hawaii was and that we could see the Big Dipper in the sky and why. Because we are in the Northern Hemisphere. For the Southern Cross, students can see that ... Okay, the kids in Brazil, or the characters in the story in Brazil, they'll see the Southern Cross. Why? Because they're in the Southern Hemisphere. That makes that relevant, creates some curiosity, and makes them think about what they see outside of the classroom. Not just what's happening in the story that they're reading.

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

Speaker 2: My goal was to have each of the children be able to right a sequencing sentence, and I kind of was thinking ... The nice thing about having center activities is that I had three opportunities to teach the same lesson, so I modified it a bit. In the beginning, I had the students primarily writing; or I started writing, and then they took over. The second center activity, I started to take ownership back of the writing. By the third center activity, I was primarily the scribe, because I realized that their writing speed is not as quick as our thinking speed. It would be a lot more valuable and rich to talk about the sequencing in the story, rather than to wait for one of the students to complete a sentence. Those are skills that they can [00:10:00] take during our time together, and they can apply it during independent work.