

Intermediate ELA Reading  
Post Interview

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

Teacher: I think today was clearly a continuation of the previous lesson. I think that we were successful in communicating that they needed to do this to advance. Some of them didn't value that, though, because they didn't do that, and they didn't get the peer review. They all clearly know that they need to be talking about a symbol, motif, or a theme.

So they know where this is going. I think they see this as a step; whether they're taking the step when we're asking them to is different. So I think the assignment objectives are clear. Today was a part of that bigger assignment, so I think that the way we communicated it maybe a couple lessons ago: that you're all going to pick a topic, you're all going to write an analysis of that topic, here are your supports to do that, here's your planning document, was clear from the get-go.

And that wasn't necessarily just today.

Interviewer: Which parts of your instruction do you think were most effective in supporting students to meet the objectives?

Teacher: We had three teachers in the room today. One was completely off-camera, but that is not common, and that class would not have been nearly as successful to whatever level that was without at least those two ... Because of the fact that I have those supports, we can adjust on the fly. You come in hoping they all do their work and this will be the lesson, but when they don't, we still need to appeal to those students who need more supports in a way that either: is it that you just didn't do it, or is it that you don't understand? And as one teacher with thirty four kids, I can't have those conversations, right? But we are able to split into two and move ahead with the kids who seem to be there, and have those extra supports, whether it's just time, whether it's more explanation with another adult, and I know that's not common in most classrooms, but that is a huge part of our success in giving kids the supports.

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At the end of class we did ask what they can do, and they do know that they can reach out to us. We have appointments that they can request, so if they're feeling like they don't understand something, we do want them to initiate and reach out and say that they need help or extended time. But we try to every day remind them those things exist so that they e-mail, they seek one of us, they seek out a peer. So a large part of it is because there's another body in the room. That's how I'm able to do it, to be honest. And that class is full inclusion, so we have a range. It's also mix grade level, so I have six through eight all mixed up. That alone creates a range. There's somebody who struggles to write one body paragraph sitting next to someone who has a body paragraph for each one of those pieces of data, and they need different supports to be pushed.

So, again, having the extra adult, today two adults, was helpful. The students who didn't

know how to start could work with another teacher.

Interviewer: What role did organization and planning play in the lesson as far as planning your classroom setup?

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Teacher: So we plan a lot, Brandi and I, the co-teacher, we plan down to who's going to do what, like checking their homework. So we need to do that because while they're doing their do-now, we are taking notes on who has their homework. We coordinate every part of that lesson. It's very tedious at times, but to have two adults running with the same objective, you have to plan out all the steps. So we have a planning doc that we work on, with all the documents linked, all the expectations, all the steps. We touch base quickly before class starts, and we touch base a couple times as we need to readjust.

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But, like today, you saw we didn't know how many students would be ready for peer review, so that we couldn't really prepare for. We had an idea of: we'll move them here, we'll move them here, and it just kind of happened. So there's some planning for the unknown that needs to happen. We've learned that you can't just plan for what we hope will happen, so we do a lot of organizing and planning. Google Classroom allows us to provide the supports as well, so we were able to e-mail students things last night to help with their essays.

Planning is essential, crucial, organization: communicating that between two adults.

Interviewer: I always liked having the roles played out really clearly, personally, when I worked [crosstalk 00:04:51] co-teach.

Teacher: Yeah, I've never co-taught before, so it's very time consuming, it's making me a better teacher, it's making class run better, but it's extremely time consuming to make sure we are on the same page, and that I'm not just leading and she's support. We're co-teaching and that's really so hard.

Interviewer: What role did behavior management play in this lesson with regards to expectations, procedures, routines, discipline?

Teacher: They were very camera shy today. They were pretty quiet, and those who usually are the behavior issues weren't ... I don't think it was really authentic of some of the behavioral issues we deal with today. That being said, we did pull some students out to the library who were kind of disengaged because they didn't have the work - they actually haven't read the book. So to sit there and listen to a discussion that went for a while, when they start feeling like they don't understand what's going on or they're not engaged, they might act up. So we had the option to get them started on their work. They were more quiet than we'd like. Those book walks usually go for twenty minutes. We have to shut them down. So I think they were just kind of on their best behavior today.

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But our movement ... Our constant movement around the room helps with that. We also have, I think I mentioned this morning, we have the tool that we can monitor them if we need. But today I didn't see a lot of off-task or misbehavior. They were pretty much doing what was expected, and that came from clear expectations. Supports were already there in place, things were already posted in Google Classroom, there was a plan, so that helped.

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

Teacher: I would have liked more of them to have their drafts so they could have had peer review, and that would have led to more engagement. Instead, there were twelve or thirteen that were engaging with each other on their same doc, and the other half of the class that was independently working. So that was not ideal, however, there was a document for them to work on that had supports. They were looking back at the book.

There was a document we had done previously. The book doesn't have chapter titles, and so now that we're done with the book and they have to go back and find "Where did they talk about potato?" It's hard for them to flip through.

So the kids worked together to create chapter titles that described the events of that chapter, so they were engaging in that way with one another again. They were pulling up that document and looking at what their peers had done to help support them, to find their evidence. So it wasn't a visible or even a verbal exchange of engagement, but they were engaging with the work each other had done and were kind of collaborating on paper to move ahead.

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

Teacher: How do I think they did? Like the level of it? Or how do I know?

Interviewer: Yeah, how do you know?

Teacher: How meaningful was it? ...

Let's see, we have three classes left, so ... I would like to think the twelve that were peer reviewing found value in that, and that it was meaningful to them to get feedback. Quite a few of them asked me: "Are we supposed to respond to the feedback? Do I accept it?" They're in that zone of, you know, "I'm going to use this to move ahead."

The others that didn't get peer review, we don't want to shame them into: "You don't have it, so you're over here," but it's impossible to move ahead with the peer review without separating, right?

So, that's something I worry about, that it might have a negative effect. That they may feel singled out, and so not want to engage anymore, or move ahead, or find meaning,

or continue. I think that the way it was done, that they were kind of using each other, and there was a large group of them, they hopefully found meaning in having the time to work on it, and that time that I wish we spent on that document, I wish we had another day before asking them to fill it in.

So I guess what I'm saying is, I think the students who were able to move ahead found purpose in the peer review and having it and moving ahead and their paper will be that much better. The students who didn't, I think, see from the book talks how things connect and now find meaning in using that document instead of skipping just to the writing of the body paragraph, which they usually do.

And that was the goal of having those students do the book walks, is to model the data and how it fits the warrant. ... So I don't know, I guess we'll see if they come in with it, that's how we'll know they valued it.

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

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Teacher: More time. They always need help with writing, and this was a new type of writing. Literary analysis, we haven't done before. So, I guess I underestimated how much time they would need, or how much support they would need. That's how I would modify it. I would probably add in two more days to this unit, to spend just on that planning doc, just on the body paragraph. The intro and the conclusion I feel they'll be able to do in a lesson and then their own, but clearly a lot of them didn't have the skill for doing the body paragraph independently.

So I think the one thing is to add more time.