

4th ELA Fables PostInt

Speaker 1: I initially started the lesson by an identified target. That's actually placed in the board. We review it with the students and that kind of gives us our purpose. That gives us our focus point. The target is based on the standard or standards that I may or may not be addressing ... Sorry. That I may be addressing in the lesson. That kind of is our focus right then and there initially.

In my mind, I had prepared questions to help guide them through their thought process. For example, because we were focusing on main idea and theme or moral where you have to take a large piece of information and shrink it down, I started with questions like, "What's the author's purpose? Why do you think he wrote this? Why would he use ... Actually using active questioning, that was one of my practices. Then having the student share their thoughts.

I find oftentimes, they may have an idea or two and may not have the confidence in their answers until they get the support from their peers. Doing what we ... I guess you would call it share pair or pair discussion and then going from that small individualized conversation to perhaps a large or small group. That was another strategy where then they can really feel validated in their opinions because they have a little bit more people to discuss with.

Then going from that, back to whole group where you have the support of your entire class using certain cues like thumbs up, thumbs down, in the side. That keeps me aware of whether or [00:02:00] not these practices are effective and what the students are thinking. Thumbs up, thumbs down, are one, two, three. In our class, one of our strategies is they give me a number. One means, "I got it Ms." Like, "Seriously, could you stop talking?" Two means, "I need a little bit more practice or I'm not quite sure." Three means, "Are you speaking English? Because I have no idea what you're talking about." Using those type of cues throughout the lesson is very helpful when you're doing something like a seminar type discussion or a collaborative discussion with students.

Organization is like the foundation of everything. I had to know exactly what it was that I wanted them to do. I prepared many of my own templates. I got my own resources and I had them literally or organized and available out, laid out. I wanted certain things to flow a certain way. When we distributed the smaller fables, I had them in a basket, because I wanted it to be passed around.

These are all things that I actually thought about in my planning as far as the type of tools they were using, because they're going to be moving around the classroom. I needed them to be mobile, so I thought about the supplies that they would need to have readily at their disposal. The organization was the key to the entire lesson because without having those structures in place, we wouldn't have been successful. We would have been running around trying to get different things and such like that. That was the foundation of it I would say.

Because it's seminar, there are rules that we have in place for, I guess you would call group norms in place for seminar. [00:04:00] That sets a basic foundation for the actual seminar. Things like making eye contact with the speaker. Having respectful language. Speaking like a scholar. These things focus the type of learning and the type of responses that I want from the students. I want them to give me academic responses, not necessarily how they ... Not a personal or I guess an informal response.

I want it to be academic, so by setting those norms in place, you kind of set the tone for the entire lesson. Certain things like checks, again, give me five. These are five things they have to do, eyes on me, hands and feet are still, body is in a seat, ears are listening, mouths are closed. These five things are kind of like really quick ways to bring them back from their personal discussions to focus back on me. Having these things in place make this type of collaborative discussion possible and functional and helpful and organized. It keeps kind of the chaos and it keeps us moving in the way that we need to.

I thought the students were extremely engaged. They were excited to share their thoughts. They were all participating. Even the students that are shy because I was able to walk over to them, I can hear their responses that they're having in their small groups. They perhaps wouldn't share with a large group, but they were actively engaged. They were bringing up personal stories from their own lives, so I know that they were ... I know I had caught them. I knew that they wanted to participate and they had made those connections.

That was another part of the organization piece actually. I found specific fables that would kind of relate [00:06:00] to things that have happened in our class. In the school, we talked about bullying. I found fables that could be connected to bullying or how to deal with those types of situations or uncomfortable situations. I purposely chose the original fable of the Bad Kangaroo because it's about a kid in school getting in trouble with his parents and for the humor. I chose those specific fables to cater to their needs and what I've learned about them throughout the year.

I would like to get their fables out. That was the part. I want to see that part. I wanted to see their creation at the end. I think I would break this lesson up next up into two separate days. I wouldn't perhaps do it as one continued lesson, because I want that, that conversation that they had was important. You don't want to just sit on something for hours on end for fear of losing engagement or intention. Just to make sure that I was able to maintain their focus. I would have broken the lesson.

Next time, I will break it up into either two separate periods or time periods or days even, so that we can actually spend more time with a discussion before they go to that creation piece instead of connecting it all in one.