

## 9: 4th ELA Fables PreInterview

Speaker 1: I chose to teach this lesson because for 4th grade, one of the foundation pieces for language arts is being able to find the main idea or the theme of a topic. This is something that carries out once you leave 4th grade and into upper education whether it be middle school, high school, college. It's a skill that needs to be developed and honed. It's something that every year I have found to be challenging for my 4th grade students.

The outcome would be for the children to be able to read this fable, come up with the moral or main idea without being given the moral or the main idea. They would have to work collaboratively, take the information from the text and use it to support their reasoning as to why they chose that theme. In the big scheme of things, being able to summarize, being able to narrow down your thoughts.

Being able to provide support is the basis for every research. Anything that they will do in life, this is what they would have to do whether it be a question or an interview like this. They would have to be able to support their thinking and say, "I got this from somewhere else." Because, hey, they are just 4th graders.

I'm using a technique called seminar. It's a student-led discussion based on a piece or a type of material. The entire [00:02:00] time, I'm actually assessing student understanding, because they are having, what we call, collaborative conversation in which students must give an answer and then either invite someone in or someone can respond whether they agree or disagree.

There's a technique behind it. This has been practiced within the class as far as the procedures and the steps that you take to receive this outcome. The kids are actively speaking and I'm assessing at that point. There's another section in the lesson where they will break up into small groups. They will have their own little fable where they will be able to do the same activity in a smaller group and there's a template that I've kind of prepared that will kind of let me see whether or not they understand.

Then the culminating activity is actual, I guess what you call summative per se, assessment where they will create their own fable as the outcome and show that they can create the story with this main idea, this purpose, this moral behind. Therefore, showing me that they understand how to find the main idea.

Seminar, we have a set of norms. At the beginning of the year, I literally wrote them on a chart paper and we listed out what the norms were. There are certain behaviors that are already in place as far as rules within the seminar setting. For example, you cannot speak when someone else is speaking. You must make eye contact with the speaker. You must use respectful language and we always speak like a scholar.

These type of things kind of change the nature. We're not having a friendly conversation, we're having an academic conversation. Within the seminar, there are expectations and [00:04:00] rules. Within the classroom, I have a whole set of ... I have a board of directors in which the students manage their behavior as well. I have someone who's called a CEO and this person is basically like the junior teacher as it were and they can monitor behavior. The students respond to this person because it's a person that was selected by the student as being someone who's responsible. Someone who's a leader.

The students will respond respectfully to them, then each student has a job and we have an overlying ... We only have one classroom rule. Our one classroom rule is respect. At the beginning of the year, we made lists of thousands, hundreds of rules and we tied them all into respect. Treat each other the same way you'd want to be treated. Because this has been modeled throughout since day one, the behaviors are managed within that setting.

Some of the big questions are, "What is the author's purpose? What is the main idea? Why did the author choose this message? What does it mean to you in your life? Do you have any experiences or examples of this happening before? Do you have any connections? Can you make any personal connections to these fables and stories?"

Seminar in its very nature, being a collaborative conversation is it requires their engagement. It requires their active participation. Because this is a skill or a strategy that [00:06:00] we've used throughout the years, they have learned to ... They look forward to these type of discussions. They look forward to being able to prove their understanding and their thinking.

I know that they are engaged, because I've seen it several times before using this method. Not just with this class, but in my previous years of teaching as well. I've always had high engagement, because it requires the kids to create their learning. To create their understanding and to share and prove it to other students.

I chose fables specifically because they teach life lessons. In lower L, this is what our job is. We don't just teach academics, we also want them to leave with skills that will make them better citizens, better humans throughout life. It connects to them personally outside of school. In class, it also connects to my common core standards, where in reading, that's the foundation. Being able to summarize. Being able to provide support for your reasons and being able to prove it by basing it on what someone else has said before you.