

Evaluation Overview

Sixth Grade – Language Arts Lesson

Evidence Notes	Implementing Instruction	Average Score
<p>The teacher set the stage with the bellwork activity or “jump start” — students were asked to write how they (as individuals) deal with feelings when they are in difficult situations. Guiding questions were “Where do you go? What do you do? What are you thinking about? How do you deal with those strong emotional feelings?” The teacher made it clear after discussion what today’s lesson was about. The learning objective was stated, “Today we are going to use a strategy that we used in the past, but I am going to add to it. We will use our connection chart to help us go from text evidence to connection to an inference.” The teacher indicated that they would focus on making connections and then use the connections to make inferences. She said, “I am going to show you how to do that today.” The sub-objectives were aligned and logically sequenced to the lesson’s major objectives. Learning objectives were connected to what students previously learned and some of their life experiences. For example, the teacher said, “I remember walking around to your groups before, and you said ‘I can’t make a connection,’ so you stopped. I don’t want you to stop. I want you to use questions you can ask yourself to help you find a connection.” She integrated what students learned into writing and their author’s club stories. Overall expectations for students’ performance were clear; however, directions for the grouping activity could have been more specific and modeled. The teacher referenced her objectives throughout the lesson. For example, she said, “You guys are really impressing me. You are making these inferences, and I think these questions are going to help you dig deeper and make connections to places at first we thought we couldn’t make connections to.” Most students demonstrated mastery of the objective by the way they responded to the teacher’s questions in small groups. The teacher collected reflection sheets at the end of the lesson as a form of assessment. Connections to other disciplines were not evident.</p>	<p>Standards and Objectives</p>	<p>4</p>

<p>The teacher worked to organize the content so that it was personally meaningful and relevant to students. For example, at the beginning of the lesson she asked students what they did to better understand their emotions. She then integrated this reflection into the new learning. Throughout the lesson, students were led to make connections to characters which allowed the text to become relevant to their lives. The learning experiences she provided supported student inquiry. Students had to find text evidence, ask questions and make connections from their life to the character and then make an inference based on their analysis. The teacher did reinforce effort and provide rewarding praise for several students. She said, “That’s a great question. That’s an excellent, excellent strategy.” She provided reinforcement of students’ thinking and learning through the continual use of academic feedback.</p>	<p>Motivating Students</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>The teacher used visuals (i.e. board, reflection sheets, notebook pages) to establish the purpose of the lesson, preview the organization of the lesson and provide internal summaries within the lesson. The teacher read aloud to prepare the students and enhance understanding. She modeled her thinking using the connection chart and gave examples of text evidence and her connections. She consistently gave examples and illustrations throughout the lesson. For example, she said, “I can make connections right away, being afraid of the dark when you are a kid and when it’s dark you see shadows. I made that connection early, closed door, shadows, demons, afraid of the dark. I don’t have to ask</p>	<p>Presenting Instructional Content</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>The lesson started promptly and had a clear beginning and middle. As students shared reflections at the end, the teacher’s questions and feedback provided a summary of the strategy students had applied to make inferences. The teacher kept students aware of the time throughout the lesson. The teacher provided students with a reflection activity at the beginning and end of the lesson. The closing reflection was, “When reading a story and the character surprises you and acts differently than you would, how do you use questions to help you make a connection to that character even though the character did something differently than you would do? Think about it and share with the whole group.” Although the pacing was the same for all students, the teacher circulated and worked with groups and individual students to make sure they understood the thinking process. Routines for distributing materials were efficient, but the first transition from the introductory part of the lesson to the blue text (p.142) took 3 minutes. The pacing of the lesson appeared to be appropriate as most students were able to complete the assignment.</p>	<p>Lesson Structure and Pacing</p>	<p>4</p>

<p>The activities and materials supported the lesson’s objectives. The teacher began the lesson with a “jump start” activity where students reflected on their own emotions to solve a problem, which she later integrated with the connection chart activity. The teacher modeled the new learning (using the connection chart) from a passage in a book they had been reading. She then asked students to read the next selection in the book in small groups and apply the connection chart to the reading passage. Students were asked to develop questions to enable them to draw conclusions about how the character in the story was feeling. She asked students to draw from their own life experiences in order to complete the activity. Students were provided time to reflect and be involved in student-to-student interaction. There was limited evidence of the incorporation of technology, as well as limited evidence of the use of resources beyond the school curriculum. The text and task were appropriately complex.</p>	<p>Activities and Materials</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>The teacher’s questions were varied and high-quality. These questions were embedded in conversation with students for a natural flow in interaction. The questions were targeted to volunteers, non-volunteers and the whole class. The questions were consistently related to the lesson’s objectives. For example, she asked students, “What do you do with your emotions? So what is your inference, Shakira? When I look into your eyes, sometimes I see a reflection, so what do you think that means? That thinking seems pretty deep, how did you figure that out? Do you ask yourself questions like I did on the board?” Students were asked to develop questions that would help them determine the character’s true feelings in the story. The teacher modeled self-inquiry as she circulated among the groups and individual students. This model led students to ask themselves and their peers the same types of questions “What would I do in this situation? Have I been in this situation before? Will I ever be? Why or why not? Why was I scared? Why was she? What does it mean to her?” At the end of the lesson the teacher said, “Raise your hand if this chart helped you make connections with your group?” All students raised their hands. There was limited evidence for the use of wait time.</p>	<p>Questioning</p>	<p>4</p>

<p>As the teacher consistently circulated throughout the room, she was able to monitor engagement and guide what the students were doing and thinking. She was also able to provide feedback on both their learning and behavior. Academic feedback was focused, frequent, high-quality and consistently made students aware of performance criteria through the use of a criterion chart. The teacher asked, “Did you ask yourself questions like I did on the board? Did it help you figure it out?” The student responded by saying that characters can have emotions just like we do. The teacher responded by saying, “It’s our job as readers to figure out these emotions.” The student said, “If the emotions are different, we have to search and figure out the reasons why.” The teacher responded by saying, “You summed it up better than me. Retelling. Let me remember what happened to La. I’m pretending to be that character like these events happened to me, and then I say, I might have acted that way!” As the teacher circulated, she was able to prompt student thinking and assess students’ progress. She provided individual and group feedback through the use of statements and scaffolded questions. The teacher asked students to work in groups, analyze the story using the chart and ask each other questions. However, students were responding to each other’s thoughts and asking questions, but not providing feedback.</p>	<p>Academic Feedback</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>The teacher used a combination of whole class and small group arrangements throughout the lesson. When working in small groups some students were having difficulties making the connections as to how to use the chart strategy. She said, “I should have put my feelings (title) on the chart.” Perhaps she might have clarified this idea with the entire class. It was not evident that students fully understood their roles and responsibilities; this was especially less evident during the teacher’s model. With students raising their hands to contribute ideas, this is evidence that students did not understand that the expectation for them was to take notes and generate ideas and questions internally. There was limited evidence that students participating in groups were held accountable for group and individual work. The group composition was varied in such a way that seemed to accomplish the goals of the lesson. At one point, 47 min., the teacher pulls 1 student to meet with individually away from the group he had been in. The teacher tells the student she understands that the group is comprised of all girls, and that he has missed previous information. The teacher did encourage and support student-to-student interaction within the group. Some students were able to share out positive learning from the group work when asked.</p>	<p>Grouping</p>	<p>3</p>

The teacher displayed extensive content knowledge of the subject taught. She implemented a variety of subject-specific strategies to enhance student content knowledge (retelling, inferencing connection chart, questioning, think-alouds). She regularly enhanced students' content knowledge by highlighting key concepts and ideas and connecting them to powerful ideas. The teacher clearly limited the content covered in order to allow for development of understanding.	Teacher Content Knowledge	5
The teacher displayed an understanding of some students' anticipated learning difficulties. She developed her lesson based on students' needs. For example, at the beginning of the lesson she stated, "I remember walking around to your groups before and you said 'I can't make a connection' so you stopped. I don't want you to stop. I want you to try to use questions to help you find a connection." The teacher consistently asked students to think about their own life experiences to see if they could relate those to the character in the story. The teacher circulated, interacted and questioned students to enhance learning. She worked individually with a student who needed additional assistance and made an appropriate change in a group once the lesson got started and issues developed within the group. Although the teacher did adjust the grouping and have one student leave the group and talk with her, this was not anticipated by the teacher.	Teacher Knowledge of Students	4
<p>Analytical - Students analyzed the text in order to make inferences. They explained their thinking and justified their inferences with text evidence and personal connections.</p> <p>Creative – Students imagined how they would feel if they had been in the same situations as characters in the text. Analyzed problems from multiple perspectives and viewpoints – Students analyzed situations</p>	Thinking	4
<p>Abstraction – Students used text evidence and personal connections to make inferences.</p> <p>Drawing Conclusions/Justifying Solutions – Students justified their inferences within their groups through the use of text evidence and personal connections.</p> <p>Generating Ideas – Students generated ideas for characters' motives.</p>	Problem Solving	3