

4th Grade Math Lesson Post-Conference

- Morning.

- Morning. Thank you so much for meeting with me today. I have been so excited to sit and talk with you about the lesson and just hear some thoughts around the lesson. I'll always enjoy visiting your boys and girls. It's always a fun experience for me. So I've been looking forward to today. So I just wanna kind of talk a little bit about the process first, and I know we've done this before, but just to remind you that this is about you. This is all about you and growing you as an educator. And so we'll talk a little bit, I wanna hear about what you thought about the lesson and then we'll talk about some strength 'cause there was a lot of strengths in this lesson, Aja. And then we'll talk about maybe an area to tweak or to polish up a little bit. And then some next steps. And then finally we'll share your ratings and it'll take about 30 minutes. Does that sound okay?

- Yeah.

- Okay, great. So you get the ball rolling for us. And I just want you to unpack your thinking and really reflect on what were some of the strengths of this lesson Aja?

- Probably student engagement. They are really good about jumping on board right away. Using their whiteboards, taking notes in their journal, writing down, thinking, and I would say academic feedback. Me giving them feedback directly about their work, individually walking around and providing immediate feedback to individual students and questioning, probably questioning.

- Yeah, so there was a lot of strengths you noted, you talked about the engagement, so much engagement in the lesson. You talked a little bit about the questions and the academic feedback that you could provide individually was something that you're most proud of in this lesson. Yeah and you know, there were so many strengths in the lesson.

- Thank you.

- That we could sit here for quite a while. But I want you to think about why it is so important to model your performance expectations for your students. Talk a little bit about why that's so important. 'Cause it sets the stage.

- If I set the bar high, they will rise to the expectation. I just have to show them exactly what the expectation is. If I model my thinking and exactly what mastery of a specific skill looks like and teach them exactly how to get there, they'll get there. They'll get there.

- So if teachers will just model those things or provide those critical pieces for kids, even the complex thinking that's going on can be achieved by students.

- Oh, absolutely.

- Yeah. In this lesson, Aja, as we continue to reflect, how did you model your performance expectations for students? Go back in time and think about how you did that in this lesson.

- I started off with a discussion, some things that we noticed about numbers, about patterns to get them thinking. And we actually kind of worked through the first ones together, that gave me a good idea of whether they, if I needed to intervene right then on just the number sense part of it. And we just worked through 'em together. They almost guided me to where we needed to go and they helped me establish some criteria or what we like to call the, did I get it list or the I got it if list, which they've grown to love, it's a quick way to self-assess whether they got it or not. They helped me get there. We did it all together.

- So in other words, by providing that strong review in the beginning and working through some of those foundational pieces and then through your modeling with them, some of the examples demonstrating for them that criteria that you guys established together and kind of going back and forth with the criteria really helped them to be able to move towards mastery in this lesson. And as you think about that, that modeling of performance expectations is so critical as you pointed to.

- Oh, absolutely.

- And if that's missing, it's such a problem, right?

- If they don't know where they're going, how are they gonna get there?

- There you go. So, we know it's critical that you had that in there and just as you alluded to, that was prevalent in the lesson and it set the kids up for what you wanted them to be able to accomplish and to move towards that mastery, this target. Some evidence of that is some of the things you've already mentioned that you use the Promethean board to help them visually see the definitions, the things for patterns as you were building up and scaffolding up. Wonderful job scaffolding up because the kids were able to follow you as you also asked questions and engaged them. But you provided that visual and that demonstration for things that they were gonna be doing. You also really spent a lot of time with some examples, some really good examples in which you showed students about the patterns and you illustrated the jumps and the lines. Make sure I got that right. To further explain how to critically analyze those patterns. You spent some time with that going back and forth, making sure that they had that piece before you fully let 'em go to kind of move in that way. And then you brought out the criteria. You guys established that, just like you alluded to. So super powerful when you did that because you had them work with you with the, did I list and even take notes. And you spoke about that in the pre-conference with the journal so that they had that right at their fingertips. So not only did they help kind of create those expectations together, they were able to bring it to their journal and have it written there so that kids were using that throughout. They're looking back and it was so powerful for a lot of the kids because they really were attending to those notes. And even one

student even asked, do we have any more questions? Because she wanted to make sure she had everything she needed to move forward. That explicit use and model of those self questions really assisted your students and being able to do the thinking. It anchored it, that criteria anchored the thinking, which is what you were working on in your refinement area, have fun.

- Thank you.

- So excellent job there. It just was beautiful instruction. So kudos to you on that.

- Thank you.

- So as we kind of continue to reflect, I want you to think about what would happen if you didn't have that criteria there and that explicit modeling piece that you put in. What would've happened in this lesson?

- I think some of my kids still would've been able to master the skill, but a large majority of them really depend on that thinking piece. And that's essentially what it is, is teaching them how to think. Self-questioning is huge, huge. And while sometimes I give them the questions in this particular lesson, they helped me come up with the questions.

- Yes.

- They buy into that immediately. They see the value in it.

- Yes.

- And it kind of validates stuff that we've done prior to this lesson regarding just number sense in general, just being able to look at numbers and notice different things about them regardless of the type of problem they're in. But it brings all that back of this is why we were learning this. This is how I can apply this to this situation. It really helps some.

- So without it then, if that wouldn't have been in place and you wouldn't have had them help you generate those questions as you're kind of leading them to own the learning even more, it would've left a lot of students behind.

- Yeah.

- Yeah. And that's why it's such a relevant practice and I urge you to continue that because it's making a huge difference in student achievement for your children. So excellent job there, excellent. So as you continue to kind of go back in time and reflect a little bit more, I want you to think a little bit about if you were to reteach that lesson, if you and I could like time work back, what might you do differently, if anything?

- Possibly group to them a little sooner. The lesson went as expected. It probably went a little quicker, a little better than expected. So I could have been prepared to group them in this particular lesson instead of waiting till the next day. But again, I was depending on the formative assessment to give me a better idea exactly how to group them. But I probably could have grouped them sooner.

- So you're thinking that-

- Differentiated.

- A little more differentiated perhaps could have happened a little bit sooner. And we know that's important to have that grouping piece in there and to group students. But how would that have helped in this lesson, do you think?

- I probably could have spent a little more time on, well, for example, I had two that based on their formative assessments, just didn't get it.

- Yeah.

- I could have spent a little more time with them in a smaller group setting. Some of my lower kids that were struggling to even determine if the numbers were increasing or decreasing. And then they have to add and subtract to figure out by how much. So I could have done a little intervention, a little mini lesson on some additional subtraction strategies while allowing my higher kids to go ahead and work on an enrichment or work on something a little more challenging.

- So you noticed that there were a few kids that really needed a little more scaffolding. Maybe you could have given it to 'em a little bit sooner.

- Because that's something you did do very well in the lesson, was also making sure you were checking for that progress towards mastery. And so you noticed that maybe that would've been beneficial to some of the students. Yeah and you know, some things you notice some things that I also noticed in the lesson because this is a very strong lesson. However, you always think about, well, what could be something that would even push kids a little bit further? So I want you just to think for a few more minutes about this, that why is it important to provide those differentiated instructional methods and content pieces specifically for students who you might anticipate would struggle or for those who might need a little enrichment, why is that important.?

- That way I move every kid, every kid has to move. The expectation is the same. Every kid is expected to master it and they may need a different route getting there. And the sooner that I can identify that need for those specific kids, the sooner I can close that gap and get 'em there.

- Yeah, yeah. So it's kind of like a sense of urgency almost.

- Yeah.

- So that you can move every child towards mastery and even beyond to another level just simply because of the way in which you're kind of doing things. So some evidence that speaks to that, that there could have been that little tweak, in your lesson was that all of the students, even though you mentioned earlier when you were thinking about things to do differently, you mentioned that there were some kids who you knew would get it, who were gonna move to mastery regardless. You knew there were some kids there that were just woo and you got some little woo, our fireballs in there that really do move, but, and then we got some that we're gonna have to work a little bit more with. And so all of the students had the same assignment and they also had the same way in which they were kind of addressing it. And then you were so proficient and strong at giving that feedback to your children to make sure that they moved, you're so on target with that, that it took a little bit of your time at the back of the room to be able to ensure that those students are moving. 'Cause that's just something that's on your heart that you wanna make sure that happens. And some of the other students that left them with a little bit of time to work on homework and some other things that some of the kids were doing add to their journal, some of the kids were doing. And so by providing some differentiation a little bit more, it would have, like you said, I love your words, kind of increased the speed of their progression just a little bit and their pathway a little clearer. So what I'd like to do is to suggest to you just a couple of things to think about that could be helpful.

- Okay.

- As you're thinking about your future lessons, because those children you have, they're getting so much from you and this is just, I think it's gonna push 'em a little bit further. So I wanna just talk about some basic steps in providing just some differentiation that might be helpful. Like, step one, as you're planning, I want you to start thinking about which parts of the lesson may provide for differentiation.

- Okay.

- Like as you're thinking through it, just think about like what and where in my lesson that I'm planning would some differentiation really fit in in terms of the content and where the gaps are and where students might have some varying knowledge.

- Okay.

- So just thinking of that ahead of time and bookmarking that place in your brain, like the what and the where kind of piece. And then as you're continuing to plan, I want you to think about assessing their knowledge. Like you were doing so well in this lesson, but maybe even thinking about, hmm, what do I have in the student work that's already kind of showing me a little bit of where I might see some kids that have some trouble with some of those basic pieces of the

foundational pieces that you spoke a little bit about where that struggle might happen. 'Cause we'll identify the who that way.

- Okay.

- And if you had a do now or something right at the beginning, if you needed a little more information, like you spoke about a do now or something right at the start before you started the instruction, just to get a quick check for where they are. So you could look really fast and make some adjustments 'cause you've bookmarked that place in the lesson where there might be an opportunity for you to be able to differentiate a little bit either by process or content. So step one, the what and the where. And step two who, which of the kids, with a little assessment of their knowledge. And then step three to consider would be the how, because you could do it a couple of ways. You can differentiate by process or method or by content or by both. And so as you think about that, as you're thinking about, okay, so what would work best? Well if the gap, like you talked about, there's a gap between some of the kids, a few of them and a larger majority of the kids, but there is a little gap there. What you can think about is the process piece, okay? So maybe the process I go after might be different. Here's an example. I could provide some grouping, some different grouping such as something like a rally coach with the kids where they had the self-check questions. They had those, oh my gosh. And were they using them, but really structure some paired groupings with a rally coach where I would do one and you coach me through it as my partner, you would do one and I coach you through it. A quick model of that. And that would take a little bit of just the process of what that would look like. And then that would allow you to do what you wanted to do, pull your group that you saw that really needed a little bit more and that would add that little extra push that you were thinking about that you wanted to happen, spoke about. So this model, three simple steps, deciding which part of the lessons and bookmarking that part of the lesson that might present a little bit of a struggle for students. The what and the where. Step two, assessing that knowledge. Yeah, the who. And then step three, the how, you know, the process or content there. So as you think about this little model, can you talk to me about how you might use it in a lesson you're gonna teach in the future or even your next lesson, how might you use this model?

- I could give a pre-assessment that looks very similar, if not the same to the formative assessment to check to see who's already got it. And if they don't already have it, do they have some of it? Is there a very common mistake that I see that I can pay special attention to in my lesson that would be helping me decide who I know that's out of order, but-

- No, that's fine.

- In planning, just kind of look at it and think, where do I think my kids may struggle with this? And then the how would be having an intervention or an alternative strategy ready to go initially in the planning process?

- So just a couple of tweaks to the great work you're already doing is just to kind of think and

bookmark that place in the lesson. Maybe a little pre-assessment, like you said, some quick little even matching something that you're going to use already in the lesson. Just as a quick check to see, so you can already start thinking about who might need a little bit more and where kids might need to be enriched a little bit more even and pushed a little bit more. And then thinking about, okay, so method and content. How am I gonna make this happen in this lesson? Can I group a different way? Could I ramp up the content for some? And all of those pieces become really, they really begin to stick out and make it a little easier. Okay, and so as we kind of close this part out, I want you to think about which areas of the rubric by making this tweak right here in terms of providing that differentiated piece, what areas of the rubric might be enhanced a little bit more?

- What the grouping piece and I think the academic, the peer to peer feedback for, if I use your example of partnering them, that gives an opportunity for additional feedback between students.

- Yeah, yeah. So you already see the grouping being ramped up for sure.

- Oh yeah.

- And even at your thing that you're continuing to push yourself on, that student to student, given that little structure piece in there that'll ensure even though they're doing it, it'll ensure even more will happen. So the best of all worlds, hopefully. Okay, and so as we kind of close this out, Aja, I want you to think about what were some of the good things you heard today in our conversation?

- That what I'm doing is working, we are moving kids and how I can take something that I'm already doing, but make it better to move kids quicker.

- Yeah, yeah.

- More efficiently.

- And continue on with those strong models, that criteria, oh my goodness, off the chain. Excellent work. Continue those things you're already doing so well because you truly are making a difference for kids.

- Thank you.

- And we appreciate you and your work. And so as we kind of round this out, we'll talk about next steps in terms of, when I can come in and make sure that this model maybe help you a little bit with it. And then also, we will share your ratings. Does that sound okay? All right, good.