

Taking an Interest: Getting to know our school culture and our classmates through a Brief Study in the Genre of Human Interest Stories

Lesson Background: One of the primary goals of our Summer Academy is to build community amongst our students. With this in mind, the focus of our 3-week unit in English class is Human Interest Stories; by the end of the unit, each student will have written and presented a (somewhat) polished human interest story about one of his or her classmates and presented it formally to the class. In preparation for this finale, students spent Monday and Tuesday (the first 2 days of the academy) collecting, recording, and sharing interesting facts about one another through two “classmate scavenger hunts.” During each hunt, students looked for classmates who possessed particular traits or had certain stories to tell (I created the categories for the first scavenger hunt and they— working at times individually and at times collaboratively — came up with the categories for their second one). Meanwhile, I aimed to frame activities, expectations, and questioning in such a way that this classroom would hopefully begin to feel like a “safe academic space.”

Goals for Unit (starred goals especially pertain to today’s lesson):

- * begin to build a learning community based on trust, open-dialogue, respect, admiration, collaboration, cooperation and risk-taking
- * help students find their voice and reasons to use it
- * familiarize students with the human interest story as a genre
- * encourage students to ask questions (when they’re confused, curious, want to more)
- * encourage students to rely on one another and to see themselves as responsible for their own learning and the learning of others
- show students that writing is thinking and that it’s a journey, emphasizing that mistakes are welcome and revision is an opportunity not a punishment
- frame learning about something or someone as an on-going process; one can always “dig deeper” to discover more
- showcase student work in a publication (hopefully motivating them to work a little harder than usual + giving them something tangible to look at pridefully later)

Today’s Activities: We will begin class today by reading/listening to our first human interest story—that of Eric Jones, a man with a bionic hand—which comes from NPR’s StoryCorps. This is the first step in the process of helping students start to understand what a human interest story actually is. Next, I’ll use some visuals to introduce students to the premise of StoryCorps. This is so they can both wrap their minds around how this story came to exist on the radio and begin to understand the interview process which they will soon participate in themselves. Up next, then, students will receive an abbreviated list of questions that StoryCorps participants use to spark conversations to use as a guide when they interview their partner. Interviews will begin after I model a “mini interview session” of a student-teacher and clarify my expectations for the process. Please keep in mind that today’s interviews will likely only scratch the surface of things; follow up questions come tomorrow.

Rounds Focus: *I'd like us to think about the classroom culture in this developing community. What's the mood in the room like and how do students work together?*

1. Record evidence of students being either eager or reluctant to participate.

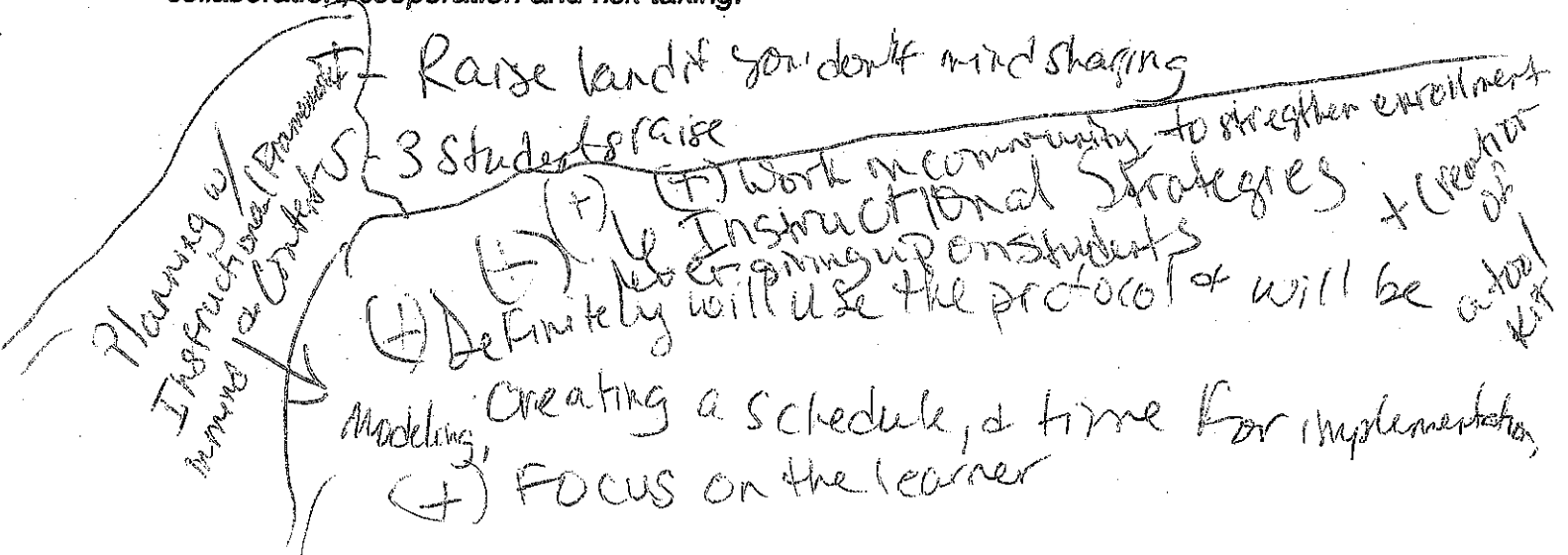
- Every student gluing...
- T- I've only known these guys for 3 days
- S - 3 days
- T- Raise your hand
- S- majority raise hand
- T- ~~Just~~ ^{mathew} you agree
- S- NO I don't
- T- Raise your hand
- T- ^{interesting} ~~many~~ can you tell us something

2. What interactions between students and teacher stand out? What stands out about how students interact as peers? Describe dynamics between the partners. What roles do particular students play in their pair?

- T- Called on M students from same table
- T- How many have a few radio experience
- about 5 students raise hand
- T- Raise your hand if you have something
- T- Are you comfortable w/sharing
- S- Agreed to share
- S- Another student shared
- T- I noticed everyone had all eyes on speaker
- T- let's keep making
- S- a pair raise 2 more interesting

all students highlighting

3. For JFF: How do you see the CIF at play in the classroom and to what end?
 3. For MATs: Record evidence that may suggest students are either having success or trouble with any of the following: *trust, open-dialogue, respect, admiration, collaboration, cooperation and risk-taking.*



Round Sheet

Sarah Marcotte

Class 7th Grade Summer Academy

Date: July 23, 2014

Lesson Background: I only met these students 2 days ago and have only had them for two 45 minute classes prior to the one you are observing. This is social studies class for the kids but what we are really doing is getting the kids used to methods we use from the common instructional framework as well as setting up a classroom culture in which the kids feel free to share their thoughts. I want them to realize that their thoughts are important.

To do this we are reading the book Wonder by R.J. Palacios. The first day in class we worked on the class culture as well as starting the book. On the second day of class we used class discussion and questioning. I am using a lot of questioning and writing to learn as I get to know the students. We will then move onto group work.

Lesson Goals and Objectives:

1. The 1st goal is to get a chunk of the book read. It is a great book and we need to finish it in 3 weeks. We have been going slowly thus far as we get used to each other and I try to build a class room culture. Today, ideally we would get pages 15-30 read.
2. The chapters in this book are very short therefore I will use a variety of questioning and perhaps writing to learn activities as we read together or they read in partners. I have a list of different reading or writing to learn activities to choose from and kind of pick the appropriate one as we read along. For this activity I may have them have a written conversation or think, pair, and share. For some chapters I may just use oral questioning for the sake of time.
3. When we reach page 30 the students will use group work for the first time. They will get in groups and draw a picture of August's (the main character) head. They will then put in captions what they think he was thinking as the other students gave him a tour of his new school.
4. My ultimate goal for this lesson is for the kids to be comfortable sharing their thoughts with a partner, small group, and the whole class.

Essential Questions

1. Why is it important to that this is told from August's point of view?
2. Are you able to put yourself in August's shoes and see things from his perspective?

Lesson Activities

1. We will use a variety of strategies to read pages 15-30 so that the students understand what is going on in the book. As we read will use think, pair, and share and have the students have written conversations.
2. The students will be put in groups and draw August's head and in groups write down what they think his thoughts are as he gets a tour of his new school.
3. The students will read pages 31-36 in partners. As they read 1 partner will read several paragraphs and the other partner will comment or ask questions about what the 1st partner read about. Then they will switch roles. When they are done I will give them a GIST sheet which basically helps them find the who, what, when, where, why and how of what they read.
4. The students will read pages 37-40 as a whole class. Then in a group they will do a write around with the question "What if someone like August walked into your classroom?"
5. I will then have the students make a list of 2 things they want everybody to know about them and share out loud. We will then read pages 41+42 which relates to that.
6. In groups they will read pages 45-48 in groups and answer 3 levels of questions about it. The 3 levels are comprehension, inferential, and Universal. They will then share out with the class.

We will never get this far in class today but at least you can kind of see where we are headed with the book.

Rounds Focus

Are the kids comfortable sharing their thinking in the whole group, smaller groups and with partners.

Student Learning Questions

1. When we are reading as a class what percentage of the kids were following along? Give examples. *One student didn't have a book*
2. How many groups did you see having a meaningful conversation about the topic? Give examples.
3. When the kids were drawing the August heads how many of the groups were working cooperatively to get the job done? Give examples.

***Many of my writing activities I do with the kids are taken from the book Content Area Writing by Harvey Daniels, Steven Zemelman and Nancy Steinkeke.

*2 people responded to questions
2 were sharing*

Students were looking at the book

when reading aloud

No excuse culture

*Write to learn
Text based questions
Summary
Focused reading*

Alyssa Conti
University Park Campus School
July 23, 2014
Rounds Sheet

Background Information:

Today, you will be observing the third day with our incoming 7th graders. In the past two days, students have solved starter problems (to begin class), investigated extension questions (to challenge and make connections), began to learn routines and procedures (to prepare them for the year), and engaged in explorations (to emphasize that math problems can be solved in a variety of different ways).

I have been working over the course of the past 2 days to begin to get students to understand and practice my classroom expectations by modeling the behaviors with my own interactions and giving them the opportunity to practice (also with necessary "re-dos" if my expectations were not met.) As the students have been practicing, we have also been working with partners to split up some crazy looking cakes in equal pieces. By doing this activity, students begin to see that there are multiple solutions to the same problem along with different pathways to get to the same solution. It also shows students that people think differently and that is a positive thing. It can help us deepen our thinking along with the understanding of a problem in a new way.

Learning Goals:

In today's class, students will be introduced to our Bumper Car Activity, which will have students creating bumper car designs with a variety of parameters. I will hook students with the starter by having them do a quick write about 6 Flags or Amusement Parks followed by a pair, share. Students will have to design and create different bumper car rides using a set amount of square meter tiles and meter long railings. Students will have the opportunity to use manipulatives to help show their thinking and to work simultaneously with their partners to create a design together before putting their work down on paper.

After students have created multiple designs for their set parameters, I will ask students to choose their top 2 favorite designs to display on a poster. Students will then do a carousel walk around the room to see the different designs their classmates have created.

More than just the content, my main focus of this academy is to get students familiar and comfortable with working in groups. I want students to be bouncing and building ideas off of each other and supporting each other in each of their learning. I want students to listen when others are talking, to ask students to repeat something if it is not heard, and be genuinely invested in math class to the best of their ability. My last goal is to get an overall idea of each student's mathematical abilities so that I can begin to think about how to best help each student once the school year starts.

Round Questions:

*1. How are students adjusting to the classroom norms (starting class themselves with the starter, working in groups, engaging in classroom discussions, asking 3 before me...?) Record any evidence of students showing or not showing the routine of these norms.

- Teacher had conversation w/ students before they entered

- T - working, working, working... Congrats!

All S - Taking Folders Out

T - I'm going to give you 5 min... S - has started, good job.

8:09 4/11 Students started ~~at~~ writing a response to # 2

S-45s 8:12 11/11 students had either one sentence to a paragraph
T - went to groups where no conversation was happening and said do you want time to start

2. How are students working together in their groups to create bumper cars of their set parameters?

How are students deciding to split up the work? Which group members are taking the leader roles?

Which students are hanging back? Record evidence.

T - did you know her, pointing
S - same as the can you repeat a little louder

- Poster on board about Good Groupwork skills
→ not referred to

Obs - poster of a SIC me before 3
Sens are explaining 1 out of 4 groups

3. What do you notice about the students' mathematical abilities? Which students are strong, which are weak? What skills are they lacking? What skills have they mastered? Record evidence of any strengths or weaknesses.

is responsible
had to help one group by
pulling files out
T - Down will know how to set
D - shook leads
S - shook leads
no!!