

Classroom Observation Report

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During my thirty minute observation in Mrs. Laura Eding's first grade classroom I was able to get a good feel for her teaching style. She manages the classroom quite well for having twenty-one students, all of whom need individual attention. There are two students who are being tested for gifted classes, one student who has language barriers during instruction and three students that have been medically diagnosed with ADD/ADHD. I knew going in that observing this class would allow me to see many good things with management and planning, but I was surprised to find so many small issues with the delivery of instruction.

Following the pre-observation discussion I chose three components within two of the domains in Danielson's (2007) framework. In focusing on Domain 2, I chose creating an environment of respect and rapport (2a). The elements that were observed were: teacher interaction with students and student interaction with other students (p.3). The teacher and student relationship within the room was amazing. When papers were being passed out the students were responding with thank you and they were asking with a firm please. During the instruction, answers that were correct were praised in a specific way and the teacher often asked for a round of applause for the students. In addition, the teacher led with statements like "I like the way \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_" or "Good Reading!". When it came to students working and respecting each other the students were respectful when waiting their turn and gave thumbs up or down when they were asked if they agreed. This made answering safe and free of arguments. The students gave each other a pat on the back and they shared their answers with each other in a positive way.

The domain that I focused most of my time on was Domain 3. Within Domain 3 I looked at the use of questioning and discussion techniques (3b) and engaging students in the learning (3c). Danielson (2007) says that when teachers use questions skillfully, they engage students in an exploration of content (p. 79). This was especially true with Mrs. Edings' class. She led many of her questions with "Do you remember and did we read about this?" types of questions. This was effective in helping students to develop critical thinking as well as build background knowledge before the lesson. These previewing questions were a good informal assessment for the lesson. When it came to getting further into the different groups and what animals would be in those groups, Mrs. Eding asked student to use their words in explaining why the animals fit into certain categories.

The second element from this component involves discussions within the classroom and their effectiveness. The main part of the discussion took place on the carpet in the center of the room, led by the teacher. The students were active and the teacher involved relationships to real life and examples from the students' homes. The kids were raising their hands and if there was an error the teacher took the time to identify the reasoning behind the error, a good use of error analysis. The last phase of discussion came with the discussion of the worksheet that they kids had to complete. This was a group activity that required the groups of four to five to discuss at their groups.

Finally, this component assesses the level of student participation and engagement. Through the use of questioning and discussion the students always had a chance to interact and become engaged. The teacher did a great job in prompting

students that were off task or uninterested to help move them into the lesson. Mrs. Eding bounced between asking for volunteers and cold calling which kept the kids on their toes. She also asked the students to repeat back instructions so all of the students could hear them or to check that they understood them.

The last component to this domain was the engagement of the students in the lesson through activities, student groups, materials and resource usage, and pacing. During the lesson I noticed that Mrs. Eding used a variety of activities. She read to the students, questioned them, involved them in a matching game, and had them work on an activity sheet. She was able to use oral, tactile and movement activities which reach all students in the room. The matching activity involved five students holding a category card and then the rest of the class being given animal cards. They then had to walk around the room and choose the category. The kids then voted with their thumbs to agree or disagree. Mrs. Edings groups were four to five kids in size and were the basic table groups that were used in the room. Her use of the materials and resources was good, but included an area of improvement. During the introduction, Mrs. Eding used a laptop that was on a stool in the front of the room. This limited the view for students and could have been hooked to the AverKey that would display the images on the TV, providing a wider view. She did use the overhead to color code and show directions for the graphing activity; and she provided a sheet to each student to help them focus. The cards and pictures for the matching activity were all real pictures and that made it more interesting for the kids.

The final element in this section was pacing which was done really well. Mrs. Eding had an agenda on the board that listed the activity and how many minutes it should take to complete. This was a good check for the kids and a good management tool for the teacher. The teacher provided ample think time as well as time to reflect on their learning. The group activity was preceded by a good group practice session and they were given plenty of time to conduct their learning. Overall, the pacing and flow of the lesson was on par for a first grade classroom.

In addition to those things observed in the lesson, I noticed a very print-rich environment with sight word cards and great illustrations. There are posters discussing each subject and student work posted in the room. This provides a great deal of ownership for the students. Also, there was a lot of movement on the part of the teacher. She was always moving and was never in one place too long. This allowed her to check all of the students work and to manage behavior. The teacher checked for understanding by asking the kids to report back what they learned in a sharing closure activity. I was able to peek in on a group and ask them what they were learning. I compared their answers to the objective that was posted on the board and determined that they were learning the grouping of animals and their traits.

There was not much within the lesson that could have been improved, which is one of the things that make a short observation so difficult. I mentioned before the need to change the use of the laptop and have it hooked to the AverKey as one way to improve the use of resources. Mrs. Eding could move the groups around a bit and make the table grouping different from those groups the kids work in. If the groups are not fluid or

changing based on activities, students may begin to get bored or cliques may begin to form. A final improvement that could be made would be to make the feedback to students even more specific. Instead of praising students, let them know what they did and how that helps the rest of the class. As statement of “Good Job” could become “Good job Jake with repeating the instructions. Listening to directions helps us understand what we need to do”. This also increases student pride and make others want to participate.

### References

Danielson, C. (2007). *Enhancing professional practice*. Alexandria, VA.: ASCD