

Lesson Plan: Observation 1

Demographics

Student Teacher: Sydney Redigan

Date: September 30, 2014

Grade: 7

Subject: Language Arts

School: Bryant Middle School

Physical Setting: Classroom

School District: Dearborn Public Schools District

Lesson Plan Title: Tabletop Twitter

Rationale

The Dearborn Public Schools District's (DPSD) pacing guide for 7th grade Language Arts contains four essential questions that must be addressed during the first card marking. Three of the questions deal with narrative literature and the fourth deals with informative text. So far this semester, we have focused on narrative literature and have addressed the three narrative literature questions. We are spending the last two weeks of the card marking addressing the fourth question, "What are the text features in a piece of informative text?"

The Tabletop Twitter lesson is intended to begin to address this question by introducing students to informative texts in a fun and interactive way. My cooperating teacher and I attended a professional development seminar on the "Reading Apprenticeship" program that DPSD is beginning to implement in its middle schools. At the seminar, we partook in a similar activity to Tabletop Twitter and found it to be an engaging way to interact with informative texts. I thought our students would also benefit from this type of activity and decided to develop a lesson for it.

The informational text that is used in this lesson plan comes directly from the DPSD pacing guide. One of the required linking texts of the pacing guide is Kelly Gallagher's Article of the Week. Kelly Gallagher is a teacher, author and literacy education consultant who chooses an article each week for his students to read and publishes copies of the article on his website for other educators to use with their students. My cooperating teacher and I together selected the particular article used for this lesson, "More Innocent People on Death Row Than Estimated: Study" by David Don Drehle, from Time.com. We agreed that this article would be appropriate for this activity as it is thought-provoking and students are likely to have opinions on the topic.

Tabletop Twitter addresses several of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for 7th grade Language Arts, particularly the Reading: Informational Text strand and Speaking and Listening strand. The DPSD pacing guide also requires these standards. These standards are:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.2: Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.6: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author distinguished his or her position from that of others.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.1.C: Pose questions that elicit elaboration and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant observations and ideas that bring the discussion back on topic as needed.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.1.D: Acknowledge new information expressed by others and, when warranted, modify their own views.

Outcomes

The outcomes of the Tabletop Twitter are:

- Students will work collaboratively and cooperatively in small groups to read and analyze their quote from the informative text and locate their quote in the informative text.
- Students will work collaboratively and cooperatively in small groups to identify three main ideas about their quote and write them down on a piece of poster paper.
- In groups, students will walk around the room and write a thoughtful comment or question on the other group's posters.
- As a whole group, students will share their thoughts on the quote, reflecting on how their thinking has changed about the quotations.

Performance will be measured by the following criteria:

- How well the groups are able to work collaboratively and cooperatively.
- The quality of questions and comments on the quotations, reflecting how well students were able to apply strategies for comprehension.
- The quality of whole group reflection on both the content of the informative text and the collaborative activity.

Assessment/Evaluation

Formative Assessment:

- The teacher will circulate the room as the small groups work to determine how well they are working together, as well as the quality of their discussions.
- The teacher will lead the whole group discussion and assess the quality of student reflection on both content of the informative text and the collaborative activity.

Summative Assessment:

- The teacher will collect the posters from each group and assess the quality of comments and questions from each group, noting how well students were able to apply strategies for comprehension.

The final posters and the teacher's own observations of student discussion and reflection will be evidence that documents students' progress and learning of how to interpret and respond to informative texts.

Materials Needed

- Copies of the informative text "More Innocent People on Death Row Than Estimated: Study" by David Von Drehle [Figure 1]
- Five thought-provoking quotations from the informative text [highlighted text in Figure 1]
- Five pieces of poster or chart paper

- Five colored markers
- Computer with timer and overhead projector
- A screenshot or image of a Twitter conversation

Teacher Procedure/Development

A. Introduction

Students spend 10-15 minutes at the beginning of each class doing “bell work” to focus their attention and prepare them for class. Students will have read the informational text used in this lesson the day before, so their bell work for this day will be to respond to the text by answering the following question: “Recalling what you read yesterday in the article, “More Innocent People on Death Row Than Estimated: Study,” do you believe that the death penalty is a good policy? Why? Why not?”

With this bell work activity, students will recall what they read they day before and will be asked to state a preliminary opinion before they engage in a thorough discussion of the topic during the lesson. This bell work activity will also allow any students who were absent the day before time to read the article.

B. Methods/Procedures

1. Ask students if anyone has used Twitter before. If possible, have a student explain to the class what it is.
2. Put the image of a Twitter conversation up on the projector or smart board and further explain to the class that on Twitter, a person writes a comment or poses a question and other people respond to the original comment or question as well as other response comments or questions, creating a big thread of comments and questions.
3. Explain to the class that we will be conducting a Tabletop Twitter today, doing something similar to actual Twitter. Set ground rules (such as, no rude or inappropriate comments).
4. Pass out piece of poster or chart paper with a quotation taped to it to each group (students are already seated in groups) and ask each group to read the quotation and discuss it.
5. Next, ask each group to locate the quotation in the informational text and read the paragraph that the quotation is in and discuss the quotation in its context.
6. Ask students to identify three main ideas about their quotation as a group and to write their three main ideas on the paper.
7. Explain to students that, as a group, they will go to each poster, read the quotation and original comments and decide on a response comment or question to add to the poster. Students are to write the response with their marker.
8. Set the timer so that students will spend 3-5 minutes at each poster. Have students rotate from poster to poster in one direction so that each group has a turn at each poster.
9. Once each group has rotated to each poster, have the groups return to their original poster and read the comments and questions. Have each small group discuss what they read together.

C. Closure

As a whole group, ask students the following questions:

- Did your thoughts on the topic change after reading the other posters or the responses to your poster?
- Do you still have questions about what you read?
- What did you learn from this activity?
- How did this activity help you comprehend the informational text

Technology Use

Technology was used to develop this lesson in that I found the informative text online and sought out examples of Twitter conversations online.

This lesson plan is quite low-tech, but a computer and our Promethean smart board will be utilized to display the bell work writing prompt, image of a Twitter conversation, and the timer during the lesson. While we typically use our smart board often during class, I think it is important to also include lessons like this that provide kinesthetic (students are moving around the room) and tactile (students are writing and posting with their hands) learning experiences.

Accommodations/Adaptations

The only potential safety issues that may arise in this lesson would be that students are moving around the room in groups. With roughly 30 students in a small classroom it often feels crowded, so my cooperating teacher and I emphasize the need to walk slowly and to be careful of other people, desks, and other objects in the room.

The informational text that is used in this lesson is grade-level appropriate for 7th graders, yet many of our students do not read at grade level. Because DPSD implements the Reading Apprenticeship program, we do not differentiate reading instruction or use lower lexile level texts for the majority of the students (there are a few exceptions with English Language Learner students). Instead, as Reading Apprenticeship advises, we scaffold the grade level texts by having students “Talk to the Text” or annotate (this was done the day before with this text) to work through complex ideas, sentence structure, and unfamiliar vocabulary. Our students who read at the lowest grade levels are also in our Language Arts Lab class, so we work additionally with them to aid comprehension of the texts we use in Language Arts class.

Our students are grouped heterogeneously, so lessons such as this one allow students with different strengths and needs to work together and help each other. I have found that this type of grouping is one of the best ways to accommodate students’ individual strengths and needs, as everyone in the group has something unique to contribute.

None of the students in our classes have any physical impairment, such as mobility, sight, or hearing. However, if there were, many aspects of this lesson would be accommodated, such as rearranging the classroom to make more open spaces and room for a student who uses a wheelchair or other mobility aid, and finding alternative ways to respond to the text and the posters for students with vision or hearing impairment.

Teacher Reflection

TBD