Lesson Title: Clouds in the Sky
Grade Level: First

Reflection

The most important criteria in determining the strength of my lesson is whether or not my students learned. In order to determine whether my students met the learning goals of this lesson, I will select a base of worksheets which seem representative of the entire group and analyze them in relation to the learning goals. As a reminder, the learning goals for this lesson are:

1. Students will be able to list certain characteristics of each of the three basic cloud types.
2. Students will be able to understand why such knowledge is important and relatable to the work of a meteorologist.
3. Students will be able to make observations about the different cloud shapes and apply them as evidence during assessment.

In terms of learning goal two, I analyzed this knowledge through an informal verbal assessment. Specifically, during the introduction we had a whole-class discussion as to the purpose for studying clouds and their shape. Here, we came to the conclusion that meteorologists study clouds in order to predict and analyze the weather. Later, during the conclusion of the lesson, we revisited this comment by discussing what we did for science and why. Although not all students specifically stated this purpose, they either gave their own reasonable purposes or a purpose related to that formed in the introduction. Therefore, I have concluded that students did achieve learning goal two.

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In terms of learning goals one and three, I analyzed this knowledge through a formal assessment within my worksheet. On the student worksheet, I asked children to make their own observations in the spaces allotted as we skimmed through the projections. This would achieve learning goal one in that students were given the opportunity to list their own characteristics of each of the three basic cloud types. However, they were not given any guidance as to what to look for during these observation periods and therefore most observations were not related to the characteristics of the cloud itself. For example, student one wrote observations such as: there are shapes out of them, light blue, and kind of cloudy. Student two appears to have erased her initial observations and replaced them with those written on the chart paper. She wrote: wispy, puffy, and flat. Student three appears to have made the single observation: I see pictures. Later in the lesson, we had a whole-class discussion about the names and characteristics of each type of cloud. Then, students were expected to record and list these on their worksheets. This would achieve learning goal one in that students were given the opportunity to list characteristics of each of the three basic cloud types. Most students listed the cloud-type and their characteristics together (cirrus-wispy, cumulus-puffy, stratus-flat), which would facilitate the association process. For example, students one and two wrote the name and characteristic together in a format such as: cumulus puffy, cirrus wispy, stratus flat. From this evidence, I would conclude that students have learned that there are, in fact, different types of clouds, but are only in the beginning stages of matching cloud type with their defining characteristics.

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During the conclusion of the main lesson, students were asked to identify the cloud-type depicted in a fourth projection and explain why they reached their particular conclusion. This would achieve learning goal three in that students would apply their learning about cloud types as evidence during a formal assessment. Students were allowed to use the information recorded on their worksheets and resources around the room to reach a conclusion. Students one, two, and three reached the conclusion that a cumulus cloud was shown on the projector, which is correct. However, only student one listed a reason for her answer by writing the word, puffy. So, although many students listed cumulus as their answer, most did not list a reason for their response. From this evidence, I would conclude that students have learned how to apply observations in order to formulate answers, but have not learned how to explain their answers using evidence. Such limited explanations could also be due in part to a lack of emphasis on this task and a limited capacity to put thoughts into words.

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