

The grade level that I instructed was 1<sup>st</sup> grade, and I taught 4 groups of about 6 students each. I did my small group lesson plan as one of the centers over two days. I had the luxury of using my first two days as preparation for my final in which I taught my focus child. The objectives of my lesson plan were to get my students to use their imagination, prior knowledge, and personal experience when reading text, in other words to get the students to apply visualization in order to better understand text. They will increase their comprehensive abilities by using an alternative and possibly more challenging piece of work in this activity.

I started the lesson by telling the students about what we will be doing in the lesson and how it helps them as readers and listeners. The theme is to visualize the text that is being read; in this case it will be a poem about a river. Then I read the first poem, ‘The Wind’, but stressed to them the importance of listening carefully and picturing what they hear. I modeled this behavior by telling them what good readers do when they listen to a poem and what to do when visualizing. After I read the poem, I asked the students what they imagined when heard the story. Then I showed them what I imagined by displaying the picture I drew from the poem. I explained to them that drawing a picture is a way to share their thinking and ask them to make their picture in their head before drawing it. Then I read the second poem, ‘Looking-Glass River’, again stressing the importance of listening closely to the poem and picturing what is going on during the

poem. I then had the students draw their pictures that they thought of during the reading. By modeling the assignment, the students got an idea of what they should be doing, but I made a specific choice not to make the poems similar so the students would use their own ideas.

My reason for devising this lesson plan was to give the students a separate and perhaps more difficult activity to a) analyze their literary comprehension skills, particularly my focus student and b) provide a new way of bringing poetry to the students. They typically have a poem that they cut out and paste into a writing journal, then draw pictures from the poem. Some of the poems they have read have pictures that assist their comprehension, but this lesson is the next step in scaffolding and will not have any illustrations to help. The skill that the students learned was visualization. This tool makes it easier for students to relate to text. This activity specifically helped my focus student because he is struggling with textual comprehension. He can identify words on a page and read them, but he lacks the ability to comprehend the words he has read.

The only way I could assess whether the students did well with the lesson or not was whether their drawings even remotely reflected the poem that we read. When looking at the pictures closely, many of the students did a great job with their visualization of the poem. However, my focus student did not do well with it. Instead, he drew a picture of the Holland flag, half submerged in water, because after all, the poem was about a river. In retrospect, I think the poem was a little above their heads and that perhaps since the poem was of a higher level of reading, it may have been far exceeding the level of comprehension for my focus child since he is ESL.

I believe that the finished product that the students handed to me was such that the students knew that their pictures were not based on “correctness” but rather a gauge of how they understood the lesson plan. This encourages a mastery goal orientation for the children because they know that the focus is on improving their abilities to understand text with out pictures. I made this decision because I didn’t want students to simply draw what they think I want them to; I wanted the students to really try and use their own experiences in their work and delve into their own minds in order to produce a visualization that accurately depicts the text from the poem.

The second decision I made was to model the picture that I wanted them to draw, so the students had some semblance of an idea of what I wanted them to do. When I showed them my drawing that was based on the first poem, I made sure to point out which points of the poem were portrayed in my picture, and what I visualized. This method of modeling is the first step towards scaffolding, or gradually releasing the responsibility of learning onto the student. This is one of the most effective methods of teaching because it allows students to see how to correctly perform the activity, then it allows them to perform on their own with an idea of how to do it.

The final important decision I made was to make this lesson a comprehensive lesson plan. I am trying to reduce the amount of extrinsic help that the students receive when reading text; so if I increase their abilities to understand text on their own, with out asking for assistance, than we’ve made the first step in eliminating any kind of extrinsic influence. This decision to implement a comprehensive lesson plan gave the students the first step in the right direction towards becoming self-sufficient readers.