

My goals for this lesson were for my student to write a clear, coherent, and unique poem and communicate it effectively in oral and written language. The big idea was for my student to enjoy the writing process to create a "Where I'm From" poem and share it with others in a confident, effective, and collaborative way. He was expected to actively participate in the construction of his poem in a hands-on approach. I also hoped for my student to gain insight about himself as a thinker and writer.

The grade level content expectations addressed in this lesson were: W.GN.04.02 write poetry based on reading a wide variety of grade-appropriate poetry, W.PS.04.01 exhibit personal style and voice to enhance the written message, W.AT.04.01 be enthusiastic about writing and learning to write, and S.CN.04.02 adjust their use of language to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes including community-building, appreciation, invitations, and cross-curricular discussions. The essential questions driving this lesson were: Why is it important to communicate effectively with others? What makes a poem resonate with you? What does it mean to communicate effectively in oral and written language? How does communicating effectively impact our daily life?

My lesson plan utilized the cognitive constructivism theory as the learning that took place was based on my student's prior knowledge and his understanding was constructed from his experiences during this project. I used pedagogical strategies such as hands-on activities, collaboration, discussion, demonstrations, and modeling that promoted very active learning. My student was actively engaged, motivated, and interested in the creation of his poem.

The basic flow of my lesson plan did not change much from the original plans. I introduced the lesson to my 4th grade student, Nicholas, by reading "Who Am I?" by Brain McClure. We discussed the book and made connections to my student's life. Next I asked my student, "Have you ever thought about what makes you the person you are today?" (After "testing" out the lesson beforehand, I know anticipated this question being difficult and had more questions and explanations to help my student through this portion of the lesson). He responded with, "That's a tough question." I gave him wait time and then asked, "What experiences have been important to you have that have impacted your life?" I also gave examples from my life to help him in understanding the question. He responded with, "So you are asking me where I come from?" He used those exact words, which was going to be the title of the poem!! We discussed that idea further and it seemed to make sense to him because he started naming events and people in his life that have made a difference or impacted him in some way. We had an excellent discussion and he wrote down some of the events that he had mentioned. Next, my student drew a self-portrait of himself with the emphasis on details in his portrait that make him the unique individual that he is.

The next portion of the lesson was his brainstorming session using the digital camera. He had the opportunity to take pictures of objects, people, places that have impacted his life. He was given extra time later on to complete his picture taking as well. Then I presented the original "Where I'm From" poem to my student and explained that he was going to write a poem of his own based on where he comes from. We discussed the poem and what we thought the author was trying to communicate with us through his poem. I showed him a few more examples of students' poems as well as my "Where I'm From" poem using VoiceThread. He was extremely absorbed in the way the poems "came to life" when using VoiceThread to communicate with others. He thought the pictures coinciding with the words made a difference in the quality and effectiveness of the poem. I gave him the template for the poem and discussed any immediate questions he had on completing it. Once he completed the template, I demonstrated how to use VoiceThread and had him watch a couple tutorials as well. I explained all the steps on how to create his slideshow of pictures to coincide with his poem. I also gave him the rubric, or checklist; I was using to evaluate his poem. The checklist had clear objectives that he needed to meet based on his writing, speaking, and presenting of the poem. The checklist was designed for him to use as a guide as well as a way for him to evaluate himself along the way. He was expected to check off each objective in either the "excellent, good, or needs work" column of the checklist based on how he thought he did. After the directions and demonstrations, he was given independent time to work. I was amazed at how well he used the

VoiceThread technology. He was truly engaged and motivated to use the technology. He created, recorded, and organized his slideshow all on his own. I checked in with him a few times, but he said that everything was great and he didn't require any help. He was extremely proud of himself and couldn't wait to share it with his family. We emailed it to his parents, aunts, and uncles and he anxiously awaited their responses.

Learning took place through active engagement, connecting it to prior knowledge, using hands on activities, discussions, and demonstrations. I definitely observed constructivism throughout the lesson because of the pedagogical strategies used. The student was actively involved in his learning and he used his prior knowledge to make connections to his life for his ideas for the poem. He was motivated, creative, and independent. He felt confident in his abilities and thrived from the hands on activities and constant engagement expected of him throughout the process.

My lesson was intended to enhance the learning of objectives that were central to the curriculum. My learner was my nephew, not a student in my classroom, so I gathered the information on what learning was taking place in terms of writing and speaking from his teacher and his mom. I also used the state standards to support my lesson objectives and goals. Poetry is content expectation for 4th grade and he has completed a few poems this year. He viewed poems as difficult and hard to understand. He also shared with me that giving presentations made him nervous because he didn't want to make mistakes. After explaining the use of VoiceThread, he seemed more comfortable with the idea of sharing his poem orally with others.

I only had one learner for my lesson but I think this lesson is designed in a way that makes it accessible for all different learners. The lesson is organized and has specific objectives to meet but at the same time it's interactive and fun. The poem template is a scaffold that can help students who are struggling. Taking pictures makes brainstorming exciting instead of a boring activity that students don't want to complete. Since the poem is supposed to be unique and different, all different learners and skill levels can complete this poem even though the finished projects can be very different from one another. Students that don't have basic computer skills could have difficulty completing this lesson and get more frustrated with the assignment instead of seeing the technology as a useful tool. The video tutorials are very helpful as well as teacher demonstrations and support, so hopefully all students would get the scaffolding they need to be successful.

The knowledge that was assumed for this lesson was that my student would have basic computer skills and know how to use a digital camera. The demands this lesson required included access to computers and Internet as well as having it work properly throughout the project. The teacher would also need to be available often for technology and writing related questions. The affordances this technology brings to the table for students, teachers, parents, and family is the interaction and collaboration on the assignments that students create. The teacher can scan in drawings; students can take pictures, add videos and create stories. It is all web based so you don't have to download any programs and it is free to use. This makes it accessible to everyone with an Internet connection. It is easy to use, and has simple instructions and short video tutorials to follow. The only constraint this technology has, in my opinion, would be how time consuming it can be when students are choosing photos and drawing sketches to go with their writing assignment for the VoiceThread. We also had difficulty with having the photos upload slowly to the site, which added more time to the overall project.

Technology made it possible for this writing assignment to be very interactive and hands-on. It increased excitement and motivated my student to stay focused and energetic about his ideas because he was so active in his learning. The advantage was that technology made writing a very enjoyable process as well as promoting creativity and independence. The unique contribution that VoiceThread had in facilitating learning was the opportunity for my student to practice his speaking skills in a safe environment before sharing it with others and hearing feedback. He was able to organize his ideas, record and re-record his poem, and fix mistakes before anyone had to hear it and comment on it.

I expected excitement as well as frustration when working with the technology with my student. Students seem very impatient when it comes to using computers and when things don't work immediately they raise their hands for help instead of troubleshooting on their own. I have also found that students have a hard time listening to the directions when technology is involved because they are anxious to start using the computer. I was pleasantly surprised with Nicholas'

reaction with the technologies. He was definitely excited but he also was able to follow my directions and be successful with the technology. I had to remind him a few times to listen to me carefully and to take his hands off the computer, but once I reminded him, he took time to listen to the directions and was able to follow through with the instructions. I was impressed with how easily he learned how to use VoiceThread. I modeled how to use the program and then went back and reviewed the steps by asking him questions and he knew exactly what to do. He asked how to stop recording and how to get back to an old slide, but those were really the only questions he had throughout the process. The one frustration that we had was the wait time for pictures to upload to the site. He was getting anxious to proceed and asked why it was taking so long. I decided to use that down time to have a deeper discussion about what it mean to speak effectively when communicating with others. We reviewed important aspects of communicating which prepared him well for the recording session of the lesson.

My student, Nicholas, thoroughly enjoyed the use of technology in this assignment. He told me, "Writing the poem had lots of fun stuff." He didn't seem to view doing the assignment as work or a chore. He couldn't wait to get his hands on the digital camera as well as the keyboard for the computer. He also told me that using VoiceThread made it easier from him to recite his poem because he didn't have to do it in front of a live audience. He thought he would make fewer mistakes and was thrilled that he could fix his mistakes before sharing it with others. From what I observed, Nicholas found using the technology to create his poem, was a great way for him to organize his ideas. It made sense to him to have the opportunity to take pictures of his ideas and then organize them in a way that coincided with his poem. He really enjoyed the writing and learning process, and so did I!