**Lesson reflection and evaluation**

Lesson 1 link: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B07oUTSGsBMdREowcTdEalZ2ZTg/view?usp=sharing>

Lesson 2 link: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B07oUTSGsBMdcjVSWVJGU2tiWU0/view?usp=sharing>

After reviewing both of my two 45 minute lessons, I was quite pleased by how the lessons went. I felt like the teacher and I both gave very clear instruction at the beginning of each lesson, which really helped eliminate a lot of unnecessary questions as the kids understood what they were supposed to be doing from the start. I also feel like the teacher and I bounced off each other very well; after I spoke, she would add on to what I would say and vice versa. After we gave group instructions, I did notice that I seemed a little nervous or unsure of myself as I was walking around the room helping the pairs. Sometimes I didn’t know how much I should have been helping each pair or when I should stop assisting them and let them try to figure it out on their own. I also wanted to make sure I had time to get to each kid, so I didn’t want to spend 10 minutes with one pair and then realize I hadn’t spoken with any other students. I also thought that the teacher seemed to have a lot more enthusiasm in her voice when she was talking. I think this was honestly because she knew her audience so much better than I did and she really knew how to connect with them and didn’t really need to think through what she was saying as much;  everything just came naturally for her. I’m sure that will improve with time for me though. I did think I did a good job concluding the first lesson, but due to a lack of time, I didn’t do as well concluding the second lesson.

One of the biggest challenges for me, having never taught a lesson before, was pacing the lesson. About two weeks before I was supposed to do the lesson, I started really thinking of the lesson logistics and I realized there was really no way I could do that lesson in one 45 minute class. Fortunately, the teacher and media specialist were able to fit in a second 45-minute class the following Monday. I’m so glad because we needed every minute of both 45-minute lessons to get the work done. I think it worked really well to have the first lesson devoted to using databases for research and filling out the graphic organizer and the second lesson for reviewing the graphic organizer and completing a digital poster.

If I was to do this lesson again, one of the biggest things I would do differently would have been for the teacher and I to have reviewed each pair’s graphic organizer after the first lesson and make notes on the organizer in areas where they needed to go back and fill in more research. At the beginning of the second lesson, I had the pairs discuss and jot down their answer to the essential question and three reasons to back up their opinion; however, this took way longer than I had planned (15 minutes instead of 5) as a lot of the pairs either couldn’t agree on which animal would win or didn’t have enough information filled out in their graphic organizer to come up with three strong reasons to support their opinion.  The only problem is, even if we had given each pair notes on where more research was needed, I guess I would have had to ask the teacher if those students could have had extra research time in their regular class so that they would be better prepared for the start of the second lesson. Otherwise, they wouldn’t have had time to finish their digital poster in the second lesson and they would have been perpetually behind. I do think that having the teacher pair the students who were more advanced researchers and independent workers with those students who needed extra guidance and motivation really helped level out the playing field and allowed for more student achievement to be made had we not done this. This was the best way we could demonstrate standard 1.1 (knowledge of learners and learning).

After viewing the video, one of the things I did well was make the learning process very dynamic for the students. I only spent a small amount of time standing at the front of the classroom giving instructions and gave plenty of time for independent practice and active learning as the teacher, librarian and I walked around the classroom assisting each student pair. I think between the three of us, at least one of us was able to connect with each student pair at some point during each lesson. A few students were more interested in just scrolling through the text or looking at the pictures than actually completing the graphic organizer. So those students I spent extra time with, which seemed to pay off. I do wish there had been more time to complete the inquiry process. We had plenty of time to connect, wonder, investigate, and construct, but hardly any time to express or reflect like I had planned. There was only a little bit of time at the end of the first lesson for just a couple pairs to share something interesting they had discovered. The beginning of the second lesson had built in reflection time as the pairs had to review their graphic organizer from the previous lesson and think about what they had found out in order to answer the essential question. Unfortunately, at the end of the second lesson, there was no time for anyone to share their digital poster or to reflect on what they learned. Ideally, the teacher could have had time for students to reflect and share in the classroom, but the students were quickly whisked away to a three hour moc EOG practice test, so that was not possible either.

The teacher and I both had a positive experience collaborating and co-teaching together. I was actually pleasantly surprised how well this went considering we did the majority of our planning via Google docs and not face-to-face. We met at the very beginning just to establish that she was fine with me coming up with any lesson that fit the standards that she had just finished covering or was about to cover. Ideally, I would have liked to have planned a lesson that fit a specific learning objective of hers, but it was good that she left it wide open for me to decide so that I could design a lesson I was comfortable teaching since I had only ever taught a lesson one time before. After reviewing the video, I feel like the teacher and I really balanced each other quite well; I would start with instruction and then she would customize what I was saying so that it would resonate with the jargon and procedures that her students were most familiar with her using. For instance, I tried to explain my Popplet poster example and then the teacher went back through and highlighted where my intro, three supporting examples, and conclusion were and then offered some sentence starters for each section so her students could translate their thoughts into words.

I also learned some classroom management and teaching techniques from the classroom teacher and the librarian. For instance, when the students were working independently and I needed to bring them back together as a class for further instruction, to get their attention and to get their hands off the keyboard, the librarian would say, “Put your hands on your head and your eyes on the board to let us know you’re ready to learn.” There were other little details the teacher used to keep the kids focused like saying write the name of the database you’ll be using on the top of your paper before you begin researching so you know what you’re looking for. And I know the teacher took away ideas she could use in her own classroom as well. She told me she had never heard of popplet before and she thought her kids would love using it for other projects in her classroom in the future.

I think all of my assessment tools were effective ways for capturing student learning, which is a strong indication of standard 1.2 (effective and knowledgeable teacher). As mentioned in my reflection of my assessments (part 3), the students had had practice comparing information in a T-chart graphic organizer before, so that kind of assessment tool was not too hard for them. However, the fact that the information that needed to be sought required higher level critical thinking as the graphic organizer progressed was probably why some pairs struggled to complete all of the organizer completely by the end of class. And the checklist for the second lesson was also something they were very familiar with and had no trouble completing; the checklist and my own personal assessment of the checklist revealed that the majority of the students achieved all learning objectives set for this goal; they very much understood the necessary elements in opinion writing, most students were very adept at using digital tools to express themselves and, with a little guidance, most student pairs could formulate three strong reasons supported by research that backed up their opinion. The completed Popplet posters were most impressive at illustrating that they were on their way to mastering these skills. This was a strong example of standard 1.4  (integration of 21st century skills and learning standards).

There was one student pair who struggled greatly with staying focused on the T-chart assignment, but unfortunately, they were both absent the day we completed the Popplet poster so I couldn’t help them improve with that assignment.  The other two pairs who struggled with the T-chart assignment did remarkably well on the Popplet poster; perhaps the next time, we could shuffle the partners around to see if those students who struggled this time would have worked better with a different partner pair.

Overall, I felt this lesson was most effective both in terms of achieving student learning for all learners and in terms of being a positive, successful collaboration experience between the teacher and myself. As mentioned, having better time management skills might have allowed me to get fully through the entire inquiry process for each lesson as planned, but I think that will only improve with the more lessons I practice teaching.