

EDUC 345/CRIN L10 Assignment 4: Teaching a Procedure

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Lesson Plans with Classroom Procedures for Group Work

On my first day of student teaching, I introduced the class to a Mystery unit. While I followed many of their normal procedures, (writing all instructions on the board in numbered order so that they knew the order of when to complete the assignments,) I had a new procedure that I wished to introduce to the class that they were not familiar with. This procedure was learning to effectively transition to new groups during instructional time. In my classroom, the desks are clustered into groups of four, five, and six desks, as well as a few groups of twos. Their normal procedure for Language Arts work is to walk into the class quietly, pull out their binders, copy their homework from the homework board, listen to the teacher's instruction, and then copy numbered instruction off of the board and complete individual work at their desks surrounded by the same classmates, but being instructed not to talk to those classmates while working individually.

I had an idea to introduce the mystery unit by giving them a hands-on activity to do collaboratively during the lesson after. My lesson plan began with having students seated at their usual spots at their desks and I asked them what they knew about mysteries and what characterized the "People" "Places" and "Things" in mysteries. Students brainstormed a list on the board and then I passed out a "Detective's Dictionary" with vocabulary words that they needed to know. I then explained that they would be doing an activity that they were not used to in the classroom and that in order for it to work effectively, they needed to pay very close attention to procedure and instructions if this activity would work. I explained that they would be writing mysteries collaboratively in groups, and the students became very excited. In order to do this, I introduced a procedure with which they were unfamiliar with because they had never done group work in language arts that was not specific guided instruction with a teacher present. The lesson took a span of three days to complete, and each day I re-introduced the procedure to the class each day that I taught the lesson. Of note is that Language Arts lengths of lessons are longer than other class periods, being from 10:30-12:15, which is why lesson plans appear long. The detailed steps of my lessons are provided below:

Mystery Lesson Plan (Day 1)

SOL 4.5:

- b) Describe how the choice of language, setting, characters, and information contributes to the author's purpose.
- c) Describe the relationship between text and previously read materials
- d) Identify sensory words
- g) Draw conclusions and make inferences.

SOL 4.7:

- d) Organize writing to convey central idea
- e) Recognize different modes of writing have different patterns of organization.

Objective: Introduce the Mystery genre to students and identify its important vocabulary, characteristics and patterns. Introduce a new classroom procedure for group work and encourage effective collaborative student work.

Introduction:

1) Ask students, "What is a mystery?" Write answers on a section of the board in bullet points under the categories "People," "Places, and "Things." After several good examples have been given, underline important words that have been identified for emphasis (ex. detective, evidence, crime.).

2) Make a smaller, condensed list in a different colored marker of what constitutes a mystery by explaining general patterns and characteristics. Emphasize that mysteries:

- are usually fiction
- usually narrative
- the protagonist is usually an investigator, crime solver, or spy
- the plot revolves around a crime, secret, or puzzling situation
- clues are given throughout the story, but the reader usually has to make inferences
- suspense is created by several possible solutions, with the actual solution not revealed until the end.

3) Pass out a Mystery Vocabulary sheet (with included definitions) and go over spelling and definitions. Included words will be:

alibi
case
conclude
curious
crime
disappearance
detective
evidence
investigation
missing
mysterious
prediction
solve
suspect
suspenseful
victim
witness
red herring
sleuth

2) Read a mystery picture book, The Case of the Missing Monkey by Cynthia Rylant and use a Think Aloud model while reading it. Assess with input from the class who the protagonist (investigator, crime solver, or spy) was, clues, possible solutions, and other identifying characteristics.

3) **Introduce New Classroom Procedure.** Explain that for the remainder of class, student will be following a new classroom procedure for group work, so will need to listen carefully and be responsible fourth graders in order to have the privilege of participating in a very fun activity. Explain that the class will be working in groups to complete an assignment together. Explain that each person is a contributor and should be given equal amount of respect and have equal

opportunity to participation in this project. The project that students will be working on together will be co-authoring their very own mystery, following the mystery pattern that they have learned in class and including their new “mystery” vocabulary words. Each person will pick a role out of a bucket and be in charge of that specific role for their mystery. Remind the students that for group work, it is hard to maintain inside voices but that it is necessary to respect the classrooms surrounding this one. If students become too loud, the teacher will give a hand signal holding two fingers up (similar to a peace sign) and will say “Respect.” This will be a reminder for the students to revert to classroom voices. The students will be given permission to do the same if they hear the class getting too loud. The **explicit procedure** to follow will be in this order.

a) Listen to the teacher carefully as she counts off by 4. Each student will receive a number one through four, and their number will represent the group that they will be in. Each group should have 6 students.

b) Wait for instructions from the teacher for where each group sits. Remain in seats until teacher calls your group and points to the section of the group where your group will meet. State “you have one minute to take your notebook and pencil to your group’s table and begin working.”

c) When the teacher calls your group’s number, quietly stand up with a notebook and pencil and move to your allotted section of the room without talking. Sit down at a desk in your group’s section and wait for the teacher’s signal to start working. Remain in this seating group unless given permission by the teacher to get up to use the restroom, sharpen pencils, or for any other reasons.

d) The teacher will approach your group with the bucket. Take turns and each student will pull an index card from the bucket with the part of the mystery that they are in charge of creating.

e) Check to make sure each member of your group has picked an index card. Check to make sure that there are six index cards total, one for “crime,” “suspect,” “clues,” “detective,” “solution” and “reporter.”

f) Students will look at the board for a list of the vocabulary words that they learned and will earn a bonus point for everyone that they incorporate. (ex. red herring or sleuth)

g) Each student reads his or her responsibilities on the back of the card. They will brainstorm their ideas for their part and write them down individually.

h) When everyone is finished individually brainstorming, students will explain to one another what they wish to incorporate into the story.

i) Students will dictate their ideas to the reporter, who will begin to write the story down.

j) When the teacher gives the hand and voice signal to stop, students will close their notebooks and cease talking.

k) When the teacher calls their specific group, that group will be allowed to clean up and return to their seats.

l) Students will hand their brainstorm work and paper to the teacher.

Mystery Lesson Plan Day 2.

After independent individualized work, students will be told that they will continue working on their group mysteries. They will be praised for what they did well, and examples will be given such as, “I like how carefully Group 2 listened to instructions, and I liked how Group 4 kept checking the board to make sure that they were following the procedure in order. I liked how Group 3 let each member of the group speak without talking over one another, and I like how Group 1 resolved disagreements by compromising.” The class will also be reminded of things that they could improve on. As a teacher, I will say, “I am impressed by how the class uses inside voices during independent work. I know that it is difficult to speak softly when everyone is trying to make

their voice heard in their group, but today let's make a class goal to use inside voices during group work so that we can continue group work activities in the future.

I will review the procedure from yesterday for moving to group seating and returning to group seating in order to ensure clear and effective transition. The updated version of the procedure for day two will be:

- a) Listen carefully and move only when the teacher calls your group number.
- b) When the teacher calls your group number, quietly stand up and walk over to your group's table. "You have one minute to gather your notebooks and pencils and to divide into your group."
- c) Take turns having each person read his or her responsibilities and ideas for the mystery.
- d) Continue working on writing the story together.
- e) When finished, raise hands and remain in seats until the teacher looks over work.
- f) Remain in group seating until the end of class.
- g) Close notebooks and return to normal seating when the teacher calls your group.

Evaluation Plan:

The main transitions of the procedure were practiced and repeated on Day 2 to reinforce them. On Day 3 of the Mystery Unit, the procedure for dividing into groups will be repeated again without explicit instructions on the board. This will be an evaluation to see if students remember how to behave when transitioning to group work. After the group work has been completed and students return to seats, the teacher will start a discussion about what went well with transitions and what could be improved. She will have a chart on the board with "Mastered" and "Improvements," and will solicit student input. For example, a student might say, "We mastered following directions and waiting for the teacher's directions to switch seats, but we need to improve using our inside voices and staying in our seats at all times." This discussion will be important feedback to see if students mastered the procedure. The repetition of the procedure over three days will also in itself be a formative assessment of how well the procedure was working and being implemented.

While this classroom procedure is extremely detailed and specific to the Mystery unit that I am teaching, its major transitions for switching to new groups and desk seating can be helpful and re-used for group work in the future. When I taught the Mystery Unit and implemented this procedure, many things went well and a few things could be improved for next time. First, this was the first time I had seen students broken up into groups in this way, so they were very excited but also extremely talkative and had difficulty maintaining classroom voices. Things that went extremely well were the collaboration in the groups and students sticking to their roles. Each student felt important and the set-up called for every student's input. While it is natural that certain students were more controlling while others were more passive, the assignment required each student's input, so when I walked around to check student's progress, I saw that each member of the group had contributed to the story. Other positive parts of the procedure were students remaining quiet and transitioning quickly and in an organized way when I told them to break up into groups. They worked with students that they were not used to working with, which I think helped them learn how to collaborate with those who were different than themselves.

There were also things that could be improved. No matter how much I used the signal for students to quiet down, noise level was a huge issue because students were so excited and trying to talk over one another. I also noticed that, even though each member had contributed, that after a while one or two students would focus on the dictation of the actual writing of the story and other

students would get distracted and try to get out of their seats. While the initial transitioning to group work went well, the transitioning back to their seats was more chaotic because it was difficult getting students' attention because their energy levels were so high.

Page 126 – 128 of the textbook helped me with effective management skills for Talking and Movement Procedures as well as Group Attention Signals. I used the peace sign in order to remind students about managing their noise level and added the instruction “You have one minute to collect your notebooks and pencils and move to your group seating.” While I forgot to label group tables to maximize efficient transitions, the book had instructed me to do that, and I will remember to utilize that next time when I do group activities.

When visiting a first grade classroom, there were many similarities and differences in the procedures that I observed in regard to class movement and transitions. First, I noticed procedures from transitioning from their normal seats to classroom circle time. In my fourth grade classroom, they have desks instead of tables, and never do “circle time” for reading. The first graders actually seemed more accustomed to movement transitions than my fourth graders, because the first graders are used to quickly moving to whole group circle time. To create quick transitions to circle time, the fourth grade teacher would say, “When I sit down in my chair, you will quickly come sit “criss-cross applesauce” and when everyone is quiet, I will start. The students usually come to circle time when they are being read a book, so they are excited to make a quick transition to start. I was impressed with their quick and efficient transitions. In the first grade class, students were not allowed to have more than one material on their desk at a time, as they are in my fourth grade classroom. Students were reminded that they were not allowed to receive a new worksheet or new materials for the next activity until the worksheets and materials from the first activity were put away. Students were reminded by the teacher to “flip their paper over when finished and raise their hand when work was completed. The teacher would either collect the materials when they saw the students' raised hand, or the student would be given permission to put things away in the classroom or their own cubby. While my fourth grade teacher likes more independent, written work, and is only in charge of Language Arts in the class, my fourth graders are more accustomed to staying in their seats to complete work. The first grade teacher, on the other hand, had many opportunities for students to transition and get out of their seats, so it was clear that they were accustomed to the procedures and routines where they needed to move around in the classroom.