



## Pre-Lesson Interview

### Introduction

Well, I have 23 first-graders, and it's a looping situation, so these students will be with me through second grade. So that's exciting for me and exciting for them too.

They really do come ready to learn. This is a wonderful group of kids. I do have some that are - I have two that are identified special education that receive services for reading, writing, math and they have a behavior plan. I have six of them that receive extra help for reading, and I have - with my own diagnosis that I have in my assessments, I have about ten that are reading below grade level, and about seven that are on grade level and about four that are above grade level.

### Objectives

We'll start with a whole group guided reading lesson - a whole shared reading lesson - and that will be with a book called Charlie Anderson. And the whole group will be there, and that's where we'll work on our comprehension with questioning strategies.

And then another group - it's a smaller group - but they're going to be performing for us, and that's A Piece of String. And it's so important to have the performance piece added to any kind of instruction, because it ups their interest in reading, and it gives them a purpose for practicing fluency and also practicing their reading.

Well, I'm looking at four main things. I'm looking at fluency- it's a really big area in first grade that's really tied to comprehension. And in the area of comprehension, I'm looking at two strands: making connections...and the kids have been doing making connections since the beginning of school, and I'm adding a new piece, and that is the next piece of questioning.

And that will be a newer piece this week. And then, looking at the area of phonemic awareness: what I'm really working on this week with them is identifying the strategies that they're using when they come to words that they don't know. Because I think that is the piece that makes the difference. But for them to then internalize those strategies, and if they can tell you, then we're on to a whole another level of learning.

Comprehension - the strategy of questioning - are they able to come up with questions before the reading that we're doing? Can they come up with questions? Because that's where their deep comprehension comes, if they can take that next step of asking those questions.

I look at my whole class and these are things that all of my class needed. (For instance: fluency - they all need to work on fluency). And then I just tailor it with different materials. So I know that they all need to work on fluency, and they don't all have it yet. So, that's why we're going there with fluency.

And comprehension: I've noticed that in the last couple weeks, the students seem to be getting connections. And I'd say that about 80% of my kids can make those connections. And from what I know about teaching the comprehension, I think it's time now to introduce another strategy of comprehension, and so that's why I've decided to ...they're showing me that they have connections. I'm not dropping connections - I'm now layering on top the next strategy of questioning.

### **Classroom Assessment**

Initially, what I'll do is I'll look at them and see how they're reacting with me. Are they able to say things to the whole group? That's the first thing. And some of the things I'll be looking at in the small group, then: are they able to transfer it?

So today, in my whole group lesson, we'll be working on comprehension and then I'll also be checking during one of our smaller groups will they be able to make connections and questioning during those smaller times too? And can they do it with their partners? With each other? With the whole group? And then eventually, we're hoping to do it on our own.

Do they have the fluency? Do they have the comprehension? Do they have those skills, and if not, that's when I move on.

### **Importance of Environment**

It's been a journey that I've moved to the environment that I have. And I think of my environment as an environment of influence. It was Michael Grinder, who taught me, and he works on nonverbal communication with teachers, and he really taught us the difference between being a "power" teacher and being an "influence" teacher. And what we really want to move to is being an influential teacher. And that is the ability for kids to make choices, and for the teacher not always having to put kids on task and have me be responsible for their learning. I want to be an influence teacher, where I teach the kids to be responsible.

So what you see in my room, then, is a lot of ... a place where kids can feel good. They walk in and it hits a lot of different learning styles.

So you walk in and the visual child looks around and goes, "Oh, this is pleasing to the look", because not all the desks are in one spot - there are little corners. And the visual learner can also find a corner or they can find a place where they can sit and see the whole class, which may be very important for them.

Your auditory learners have a chance to be in a special corner if they choose to, if they need it quiet. Or, there are many auditory learners who need to talk, and the areas are conducive to that, because they're off in other areas, and it won't interfere with other

people's learning. And then your kinesthetic learners, they need movement. And so the room allows for movement without being distracting.

And then there's always music playing, and so that is a calming sense for the kids, and then when you look at the olfactory, some kids really need a smell they connect to, and so when you walk in, you have a really purposeful scent or smell that they really walk and go, "Oh, it smells so good."

So when you put all those things together - kids don't really know that - but when you put all that together, they walk into the room and go, "This feels like a place that I can learn. My brain is ready, it's conducive to me, and now I'm ready to sit down and learn."

So it's very purposeful. With lamps, we have no overhead lighting- it's all done with lamp lighting, so they can feel comfortable - they can put their other things aside and say, "This is my spot to learn."

And all the things up in the room are all their things... I try, if I have any posters, to either have them kid-done, or we do it together with the children and put it up, because it's so purposeful. And I think it should be a canvas that's open to them and everything should be a reflection of what they're doing.