

I. Description

The lesson that I taught involved students identifying that different plant parts can be edible and then taste testing various parts of the plant. The main goal of the lesson was to have students identify edible plant parts and accurately label the edible plant parts brought into the classroom. These were identified as the goals after viewing the first grade science SOL's. They include identifying plant parts as well as identifying edible and non-edible plant parts. After a week of centers focusing on actual plants and the various parts, students were able to explore edible plants and the parts we can eat. It also provided a good connection to students every day life. They were able to identify plants that they ate for either snack or lunch while at school or plants they ate at home. After discussing the lesson idea with my cooperating teacher, we thought it would be a fun activity to do at the end of the plant unit.

By having whole group instruction at the beginning of the lesson, I was able to introduce the activity to the students and informally assess each individuals understanding of the plant parts. Through the use of the pocket chart, I was able to have each student participate to help keep them engaged in the lesson. We use this method often in the classroom because it makes each student feel special and included in whatever we are discussing. I was also able to introduce the students to the food they would be labeling and taste testing while they were on the carpet. Having the students close by allows constant monitoring and assurance that they understand the directions. When they are at their seats and more spread out, it can be more challenging to keep everyone focused. I chose the pumpkin seed to use because we had been doing pumpkin activities all week and the students cut and carved a pumpkin so they knew

where the seeds came from. I chose carrot as the root and celery as the stem because I thought they would be familiar foods to the students; however, ones they had not necessarily thought about in terms of plant parts. I chose lettuce as the leaf because many students order salads each day for lunch so it would provide real-life connections. Finally, I chose an apple as the fruit because we had visited an apple orchard earlier in the year so students had discussed the full life cycle of an apple. These foods seemed to be great choices as the students were able to identify them and make connections to their every day eating habits.

There were a couple of formative assessments going on throughout this lesson. Students performance in identifying his/her part of the plant to place on the pocket chart was monitored. Student participation in the whole group instruction was also monitored. I tried to talk to each child as much as possible to check for understanding. Finally, once the students returned to his/her seat, I was able to formatively assess his/her understanding of the actual activity. I could not only check the labels, but also ask each child individually the name of each part. This is helpful because sometimes students cannot read the words they are working with, depending on his/her ability level. While they are encouraged to ask for help, some students will not. By asking them to identify the parts quickly one at a time before they could eat, I was able to assess each student and record that information after the completion of the lesson.

II. Analysis

Overall, I think the lesson went great. One part that was particularly successful was when the students returned to his/her seat and labeled the plant parts. I was very impressed with most of the students ability to identify the vocabulary words we had worked with all week. Some students did jumble up the words a little bit, but when I asked them to verbally identify each part, they did so with one hundred percent accuracy. It is amazing to me to see how fast

these students learn and how much they absorb each day! I also thought that classroom management went really well. My cooperating teacher had to leave the room during the lesson to attend an RTI meeting for a student so I was left in the room alone for a little while. I was nervous about this since it was the day before Halloween and the lesson was at the very end of the day on a Friday. Also, having the video camera around, I did not know what to expect from some students who enjoy attention. Although the students were chatty at times, I feel that when I implemented the classroom management strategies, students responded well and quieted down some. Examples of these are the clapping patterns, putting a finger on your nose, and saying “one two” with the response “eyes on you.”

The classroom management, to me, was also challenging. The students were slightly chatty because of the time of day, the day of the week, and the impending holiday. This tends to stress me out slightly because I do not want them to get too out of hand. However, I have to keep reminding myself that they are only six and seven years old and it is good to talk about what is going on in the classroom. This is something I am definitely working on daily in my classroom so that I can find a good balance.

Through video taping this lesson, I feel that I was able to really see myself in action so that I can improve upon my daily teaching. I enjoyed watching the students reactions and behavior while I was not actually with them. I am also working on monitoring all students so it is nice to know what is going on when I might not have my eye on them! I also noticed a few little habits that I have developed that I would like to improve upon: saying ‘ok’ a lot, calling the students ‘guys’ generally, and shaking my watch on my arm a lot. Through this lesson, I also gained more confidence in my abilities to teach and lead the class. The students seemed genuinely interested in the lesson and responded well to the instruction. While it is sometimes

easy to gauge this from their faces, it is nice to see that there was not too much fidgeting and gazing during the lesson.

III. Reflection

If I used this lesson again in my classroom I would keep most things the same since it seemed to go well overall. One thing I would change is how the students were assessed. It took a little bit longer than I thought to go around to each student to check if they labeled each plant part correctly. I would try to do a group check by having the students hold up each food as I called out a label, which would still allow me to assess each student formatively. The only downside to doing this would be that students could look at their peers and not truly know the answer. I also would not be able to ask each student to orally label the food as an extra check for accuracy. Hopefully in a team situation with other grade level teachers, we would be able to brainstorm an effective and easy way to complete this assessment. I really enjoyed teaching this lesson and having a little plant fun with my class!