***Internship Summary > Grade 6 Activities***

During my internship in Grade 6 at Rundlett Middle School in Concord, NH, I was privileged to work with the 6-1 Cluster team which consisted of three wonderful teachers. All three taught Mathematics to leveled classes with each teacher providing instruction to heterogeneous classes in one of three subject areas (Social Studies, Language Arts, Science). This class used the “canned curriculum” of Everyday Mathematics. I had the chance to experience teaching the same mathematics units to three different levels and found that the curriculum itself was easy to use with lots of supports for enhancing the learning and activities for reteaching.

**Science**

I began my internship with the Science teacher and helped present the unit on “Winter Survival” that Rundlett offered every year to their 6th grade classes. This unit included animal track identification, winter survival skills, and culminated with a snowshoe trip in a local wildlife area. I enhanced the lessons provided with an animal track identification testing activity (which also provided assessment of learning) and created an edible fire activity that enhanced the snowshoe trip. This whole unit took about one month to complete.

The creation of the edible fire activity was very fulfilling for me and provided a safe practical experience to prepare the students for creating a real fire on which to cook their lunch at the conclusion of the snowshoe trip. This was an activity that I had seen as part of my experiences as a Brownie Girl Scout leader. I thoroughly enjoyed creating the analogies of items to create the fire. Here is the analogy list I generated:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Actual Item | Food Substitute |
| Large logs of wood | Pretzel rods |
| Sticks of wood | Pretzel sticks |
| Tinder | Shredded coconut |
| Small rocks | Chocolate covered raisins |
| Large rocks | Peanuts in shell |
| Sand | Granola |
| Water | Kool-Aid |
| Bucket | Paper cup |

This activity was presented to three different classes. The biggest problem was that the class right before snack tended to eat the pieces rather than build. In hindsight, I should have provided snacks before beginning the activity so they could better focus on the task and not the materials. My proudest moment with this activity was when one of the coded students who tends to barely squeak by and hardly participates in class was the only student to be able to create a “teepee” out of the pretzel rods. I commented on his success and used his work as an example for the rest of the class. His one-on-one aide came to me after class and thanked me for first recognizing his achievement and second for sharing that success with his classmates thereby improving his self-esteem among his peers.

**Language Arts**

My next internship experience was with the Language Arts teacher. We decided that I would work with a Literature Circle format with each of the three classes. I wanted to incorporate their other learning experiences into my lessons, so I began our unit with a book of ancient Chinese stories to play off the ancient China civilization unit they had just finished in Social Studies.

The text I used was “The Chi-Lin Purse: A Collection of Ancient Chinese Stories” by Linda Fang. I used a *table of literature responses* for their assignments and began by modeling appropriate and exceptional examples of the responses expected with one of the stories. Then all the students provided responses to a second story and as a class we evaluated the quality of some of the responses to solidify what was expected for literature responses. The students were then split into small groups and each group responded to a different story and shared their responses within their group.

Following the small group discussion, all the groups participated in a jigsaw activity in which new groups were formed consisting of 1 member from each of the small groups. The jigsaw groups then discussed the similarities and differences of all the stories. We then came back together as a whole group and discussed reactions to the stories and to the processes: literature responses, small groups, jigsaw process. This laid the foundation for a literature circle activity that utilized 5 small groups reading and discussing 5 different texts:

Accelerated Lexile

Title Author Reader Level Score

Tracks in the Snow Lucy Jane Bledsoe 630

Julie of the Wolves Jean Craighead George 5.8 860

My Side of the Mountain Jean Craighead George 5.2 810

Water Sky Jean Craighead George 4.7 730

Secret of the Andes Ann Nolan Clark 4.7 710

These stories all focus on wilderness survival and several deal with winter survival expanding on the Winter Survival Unit that was taught in the Science class the month before. I split the texts into homework reading assignments. In addition to the reading, students were required to complete a literature response for homework. Class time consisted of a small group discussion of the texts and sharing of individual literature responses followed by whole class discussion of process and any really interesting observations or responses. This continued until the texts were completed with each type of literature response only being used once per text. We culminated the unit with a jigsaw activity where each text/small group was represented in a jigsaw group and, in that way, all students had a basic understanding of all five texts while only reading one. During these classes, I would monitor the class as a whole and would check in with each small group guiding them through any rough patches they had. This cluster was fortunate to have one class period each day devoted to silent reading which allowed those who hadn’t completed their reading to do so before class. This also provided an opportunity for ambitious students to get a jump on their reading assignment.

**Social Studies**

The last month of my internship was spent with the Social Studies teacher. Rundlett Middle School used a canned curriculum at that time and the topic ongoing at that point was “Ancient Greece”. I taught from the text with few modifications. I did create a more extensive unit test that allowed for more flexibility in which essay questions were answered and in types of questions. Also, some of the special education students were given modified versions of the test after consulting with the special education supervisor. The contribution I am most proud of for this unit is the test review format I employed. The students were assigned to Greek city-states throughout the unit and I used those assignments to create “teams” for a Trivial Pursuit-type review game. I painted a giant Trivial Pursuit board on a king-size white sheet which I taped to the floor with the desks surrounding it. Pawns were created by using flower pots filled with clay and having colored, labeled flags on them. I picked up a set of large, soft dice at the local teacher store. Questions were in six categories related to Ancient Greece and each time a student got the correct answer, his/her city-state received a piece of the pie. We spent two days “playing” and when I reminded one class that the final test was tomorrow, one student said it wasn’t fair because we hadn’t had a review. When I pointed out that the Trivial Pursuit game **was** the review, he visibly relaxed and even remarked that he thought we were just playing for fun. By monitoring how students did when answering questions during the game, I was able to get a good sense of their preparedness for the final and felt confident that all the students were ready to pass the test.

Note: The Trivial Pursuit “board” was gifted to the Social Studies teacher and I used it as a transitional activity with the lowest math group while waiting to assemble for bus-boarding for the end-of-year field trip. I assigned each color to an operation or topic (add, subtract, multiply, divide, decimals, word problems) and came up with questions on the fly based on the abilities of the students. This kept them interested and on-task while allowing them to release or use energies building for the field trip.