

Sample 1 - Kindergarten

The lesson instruction was arranged in a generally logical sequence with some inconsistencies in the learning progression and skills needed to advance student learning.

The lesson began with students sitting on the carpet in a whole group while the teacher stated the learning objective and read “The Napping House.” The teacher presented visuals to represent the characters and sequencing of events in the story. When the teacher was reviewing the events in the story, she stopped and placed the animal pictures on top of each other to show who was arriving and taking a nap. Students did not participate in a guided practice before leaving the carpet, nor was there a check for understanding of how to use the strategy (related to 3c) (only why we retell) before they were sent to work with partners to use pictures to “retell the story.” This lesson focused on the use of prompts to retell a story (though the objective did not include the idea of support or prompts to help us), but there was no modeling or thinking aloud occurring while the teacher stacked the pictures, nor did she retell the story at the end before sending them back to their seats.

On their own, students were stacking the same pictures in order, but were not retelling the story. When the observer asked two groups, they could not define “sequence” (3 asked), did not know how sequencing helped someone retell/was related or why retelling was important. (4 asked) The independent part of the learning progression lasted three-four minutes (not allowing each of the partners to share), with the teacher moving the whole class onto a different task before checking in with all groups (3c) or ensuring each partner had time to practice. In the three groups that I checked in with, there was one student completing the majority of the task. Two groups were stacking pictures just calling out the names of the animals. Because the teacher did just this, they were mimicking her actions from the modeling on the carpet.

Students then worked independently to cut out pictures and place them in order based on the sequence of events in the story. There was no reminder when beginning this second task to retell or think about how the sequence helps us do that so they were not retelling or recognizing what they were doing as sequencing, so students did not recognize how or why they were using the pictures. 1 told the observer: “I have to paste pictures.”

The Common Core Standard for Kindergarten is that students can orally retell the character, setting and events in a story with prompting and support. The use of a prompt is effective and suitable for them at this point in their retelling. Take the time during the mini-lesson to model the skill you want them to apply and ensure they understand the new literary terms like “sequence,” “retelling,” “prop.” Then, model with a think-aloud how to use the strategy. Ex. Retell the story after you read it thinking aloud how you are using your animal pictures to help you remember what happened.

Think about how you can build in checks for understanding during your mini-lesson around the use of the new strategy and purpose for good readers so you know they are ready to try to apply on their own. Remember, gradual release starts with I do, (as you worked to include) but don’t forget the “we do” before sending them off to “you do together/you do.”