

Case # 536 – Master Ratings

Discussing Word Choice in “Speak” by Laurie Halse Anderson

Literacy & English Language Arts, Grade 9

Dimensions and Observable Expectations	Master Rating	Rationale	Improvement Suggestions
Culture/Climate Dimension			
The teacher:			
1. Fosters an environment that embraces all learners	3	While the focus was academic learning, the comments to learners suggest the teacher is connected with the learners. However, no specific examples were seen of connecting to the learner on a personal level.	Connect with learners by expressing interest and/or concern in their well-being during the activities in the lesson so that embracing all learners is sustained. For example, by asking, "Are you comfortable with sharing your findings out loud with your group or the class?" or initiating with a personal connection, "I know that you like your art class, would this type of situation that happened to the character likely really happen during art class?"
2. Treats each learner equitably	2	Teacher went to each group to monitor where they are in their learning. Teacher had forced participation in group discussions rather than focusing on individual learner needs. Teacher did not demonstrate the ability to change actions or practices based on learners' cues.	Plan ahead for individual learner's needs so that practices are affective to meet the needs of each learner. Provide options for participation and demonstration of understanding.
3. Encourages learners to share their opinions without fear of negative comments from their peers	3	Observers did not see an embedded practice of encouraging learners. She gave everyone a chance to talk but also interrupted learners while they were answering.	"Be ready to talk in your small groups about your findings and remember that everyone's voice is important." Ask questions that put the learner's feelings first. For example, "What problems are you encountering as you are determining the key or important words?"

			Conversational style questions will build relationships and trust.
4. Creates enthusiasm for the learning at hand	3	Learners showed enthusiasm during their group discussions. It appears that most learners are participating in the groups even when the teacher has moved to another group. The whole group discussions had learners remaining engaged in the questions. While the learners appear to be interested in the lesson, the teacher shows less excitement and interest in the lesson.	Make personal connections to the lesson and/or real-world events. Share a personal story that resonates with the learners and the lesson. Take pulse of the group throughout the lesson to find ways to ensure the learners are relating to the lesson.
Learning Dimension			
The teacher:			
1. Communicates clear explanations about the activities or tasks	3	Teacher uses variety of methods to communicate such as writing the objective out and verbally walking the learners through the tasks. Groups were given explanations for tasks, but when teacher got to the groups, the learners were not completing the activity outlined on the board. Learners had roles within the groups but did not appear to be following those roles during discussions.	Ask questions to the groups that bring them back to the task at hand. Ensure lesson objectives are being met through questioning and redirecting learners that are off task.
2. Implements lessons and/or activities that stimulate learners to use higher order thinking skills	2	Questions were comprehension level only. Assignment was to select 20 sentences that were important. While the teacher was walking group to group to stimulate discussions, the questions were surface level only.	Ask why the 20 sentences were important to the learner. Ask learners to provide sentences that aren't important and how they would change them. Ask learners to provide synthesis of their learning.
3. Delivers lessons that are relatable to the learners or aligned to their interests	3	Content provided was relatable to high school learners. Metaphors used were about classes high schoolers take. Lesson of selecting 20 sentences was not relatable to the learners. Teacher did not provide any explanation to the learners about why selecting sentences is relevant to their lives.	Provide examples and ask learners why the lesson is relatable or aligned to their interests. Give learners an opportunity to alter the activity or make suggestions so that their interest level is at its highest.
4. Monitors learners' understanding of the content and/or the acquisition of skills	3	The questions asked were low level. Most of the teacher's attention was focused on a few groups. Although the teacher asked questions to each group and each learner in the group, the questions were low-level questions. She monitored their understanding by using proximity control and visiting with each group.	Ask higher level questions. Ask questions that are personalized for the group and/or individual learner. Examples are, "Why are these sentences the best representation? How do you know for sure?" "What thoughts do you have to change this assignment and why?"

			Allow more time for learners to give feedback. Focus questions on the needs of the learners.
5. Adapts instruction and/or activities that meet individual learner's needs	1	The teacher made no changes to the lesson for any of the groups. The same questions were posed throughout the lesson and not adaptations were provided.	Provide alternative questions for different groups to better understand the concept. Give learners opportunities to use different materials to answer questions (technology rather than paper & pencil, different ways to look up information, etc.).
6. Provides learners with purposeful feedback about their progress and/or needs	1	The teacher gave group feedback rather than individual feedback. When leaving every group, the teacher was generic in her feedback "keep on going;" feedback did not give learners understanding about the objective of the lesson.	Rather than saying, "OK" as a response to a learner's answer, implement feedback strategies that effectively validates learning. For example, using say back to restate what the learner said exactly. "I agree (learner's name) that the title of the chapter is a metaphor, I thought that the character's names might have meaning as well. Good find."
Essentials Dimension			
The teacher:			
1. Delivers and/or facilitates the lesson with knowledge and confidence	3	Teacher was knowledgeable about the content of the novel. Showed confidence in working with the groups and asking them questions. Teacher demonstrated some knowledge about instructional practices.	Utilize differentiated instructional strategies to deliver a lesson that engages and resonates with learners. For example, using roles for each member within the small group circles that allow for learners to find different avenues of learning. Also, the lit circles can differentiate process, and product by exploring multiple avenues of making sense of ideas and information or create an end product suited to their style. Incorporate strategies on collaboration and grouping to enhance learning.
2. Communicates and upholds high expectations for learners' behaviors to maximize their learning and well-being	3	The teacher communicated but did not uphold expectations. Learners in the groups had roles assigned to them, but when the teacher got to the group, the learners did not appear to follow the roles.	Ask learners what they believe are the expectations for an activity. When interacting with each group, have individual learners summarize the group's work. Demonstrate meeting learners needs by differentiating questions for learners.
3. Facilitates use of resources that support learners' needs	2	Learners had the resources they needed, but there were not a variety of resources used during the activity. Since learners have varied learning modalities, expanding the use of	Provide more options for learners to use varying tools. Choose resources with intentionality and give choice for different materials to demonstrate understanding.

		resources increases learner engagement and success.	
4. Implements instructional strategies that actively engage learners	2	Learners were attentive but not all were actively engaged in the learning. All learners were asked to complete the same activity which could be a contributor to learners being compliant during the lesson.	Ask higher level questions to challenge learners to think and have a voice in their own learning progress. Give learners an opportunity to voice their opinions about the activity to promote active engagement.
5. Manages the learning time in an efficient and optimal manner	2	Teacher had some roles assigned within the groups, but they could have been further developed. Teacher spent large amounts of time with some groups and very little time with others so that she was leading the discussion rather than facilitating it.	Break down small group activities into smaller accomplishable goals so that the practice consistently affects all learners and can be embedded into the classroom environment. Stop the class at specific intervals to check whole class understanding.
Agency Dimension			
The teacher:			
1. Empowers learners to be responsible for the learning at hand	2	Teacher allows learners to come to their own conclusions about the text. Teacher assigned the groups and did not give learners choice to be responsible for their own learning.	Allow learners to select their group roles. Provide learners with opportunities to come up with their own methods for accomplishing the lesson's goal.
2. Gives learners choices about the learning activities or tasks	1	Learners are all working on the same activity; there is no choice about what to read or the materials to use to complete the activity.	Let learners group themselves according to their interests, choices, and best learning method instead of assigning them into groups to complete the same activity. Provide a variety of ways for the learners to present their findings.
3. Provides assistance for learners to navigate and monitor their learning progress	1	Teacher monitors their progress by asking questions, but there is no assistance given for learners to navigate their progress. She does not model any ways for learners to monitor their progress.	Make adjustments to practices within the lesson to meet learners needs. Provide learners with a rubric to understand the learning expectations.
4. Encourages learners to persevere with or seek challenging activities or tasks	1	Teacher guides questions and answers rather than allowing learners to come to their own conclusions. Observers could not see strong evidence of encouraging perseverance beyond getting the answer to the assignment.	The teacher can teach perseverance strategies through direct modeling. For example, display anchor charts with list of strategies and others that describe key points that have been taught so that learners can use for guidance on practiced strategies such as: positive self-talk, taking a couple of deep breaths to calm themselves and then returning to work, choosing a different approach, or asking a partner a clarifying question.

5. Builds learners' growth mindset and self-efficacy	1	Teacher did not offer words or actions to help learners to be confident in their work. No higher-level questions were asked to learners.	Ask learners questions like "What can you learn from this?" to give learners opportunities to show growth-mindset in their learning. When learners share their thoughts with the group, provide guiding questions rather than giving answers.
Relationship Dimension			
The teacher:			
1. Promotes respectful and caring interactions toward and between learners	3	Teacher treats most learners with respect as they work through the lesson. She asks questions to have learners participate and interact with each other.	Model giving each learner equitable opportunities to speak in small group discussions and respect others when they are speaking.
2. Cultivates learner cooperation, collaboration, and inclusivity	2	The teacher engages with groups, but it is forced upon the learners. Because of the size of the "small" groups, practices were not in place to meet learners' needs. This format of small group led to limited learner engagement and participation.	When interacting with each group, ask which learner has a specific role in the group and make changes if a learner is not engaged or excluded.
3. Preserves learners' dignity while attending to their individual needs	2	Teacher interfaced with learners without having to redirect behaviors but interrupted learners many times in their discussions. The teacher called directly on learners within the small group who were quiet during the lit circle discussion which can be harmful if a consistent practice and teacher is not familiar with individual learners and needs. Teacher did not pick up on learners' cues.	Provide learners with multiple options for giving answers. Allow learners to complete their conversations and responses before interrupting them to ask additional questions. Show reflective listening skills.