

Classroom Simulation Transcript

Media Introduction

Narrator: As a teacher, it is important to take the time and think of the best way to set up a classroom that is conducive to student learning. Our classrooms must be set up in such a way that we create a positive and comfortable learning environment that supports student achievement. One way to achieve this goal is having walls in your room that engage and support past and current learning, such as having a math wall.

Classroom Set-up Introduction

Narrator: The way you set up your room is critical, because setting up your classroom in an ineffective way can actually hamper student engagement, lessen achievement and lead to classroom management issues. Let's take a closer look and discuss each of the five different classroom layouts.

Layout 1

Narrator: In the first layout, the classroom is set up in the traditional way where desks are lined up in rows. Unfortunately, this model usually leads to a classroom environment where there is less discussion and more teacher-directed learning. This is highly discouraged, especially for classrooms serving ELL students.

Layout 2

Narrator: The second layout is a better option than the first, but it is still not the most effective. In this layout, students are seated next to a partner. This seating arrangement allows students to speak comfortably only with the person directly next to them, but not others. Another disadvantage of this layout is that every student is still facing in one direction. This layout doesn't allow students to access anchor walls throughout the classroom.

Layout 3

Narrator: The third layout is known as the circle table set up. With this set up, it can take up a lot of space because of the size and shape of the table. Another downfall to this set up is that it can be hard for both teachers and students to navigate throughout the classroom. Since the students are sitting in groups of three, not every student has a partner they can speak to. For example, while one student speaks, the other waits their turn and is not consistently engaged in thinking and conversation.

Layout 4

Narrator: The fourth layout is known as the horse shoe set up. There are some positive aspects of this arrangement. It provides students with the opportunity to easily see and hear everyone in the classroom during whole group discussions. Students also have access to use anchor walls throughout the room.

Finally, it provides space on the carpet where students can work together on projects, or the teacher can have whole group lessons on the floor. The downfall to this is that students are limited to speaking with the person directly next to them. It can also be difficult if they are sitting across from another student who might be disruptive.

Layout 5

Narrator: The last layout is the most effective of the five. This set up allows for students to actively engage in conversation with one another. It also provides students with access to different parts of the room. Finally, it allows for the teacher to easily navigate through the room

Lesson Introduction

Background Information (Non-Spoken): The students have been studying how magnets work and how they are used in daily life. The class is midway through the unit and has an understanding of how magnets work. The students understand that magnets are only attracted to some kinds of metal (e.g. steel, iron) and that magnetic power can pull through paper, glass, and thin wood. They understand the idea of permanent and temporary magnets (e.g., if you rub a steel nail with a magnet, it becomes magnetic).

They understand that the Earth is magnetic and that a compass will always point to Earth's North Pole. They have just begun to talk about how magnets were first invented and how they are used in real life.

Lesson Part 1

Teacher: Good morning, Students! To begin, please copy down the objective and write the new vocabulary words in your journals.

Teacher: Good work, everyone! Who remembers our book, Magnet Magic? Excellent! Let's do a quick review.

Narrator: I like the way the teacher posted her objectives on the board and had the students copy them down. When you write your objectives, it is important to make sure they are written in student friendly terms. The teacher also took the time to introduce the academic vocabulary words the students will encounter throughout the lesson. This was a good start, but the lesson would have been more effective to also provide visuals or realia. It would also have been helpful if the students each had their own copy of the book or at least one to share with a partner to follow along with the teacher. The last recommendation I would make is taking the time to scaffold and make connections to student knowledge. Accessing the students' prior knowledge at the beginning of the lesson will help them make a connection and build a bridge between what they know and what they will learn.

Lesson Part 2

Teacher: On page 5, it says that magnets have the power to attract some kinds of metal. What kinds of metals do magnets attract?

Carlos: I know! Magnets are attracted to anything made of iron, like this.

Teacher: Excellent, Carlos! On page 9, the question is “What is the rule of magnetism?” Who can show how magnets attract and repel? Tonya? You may go to the table to demonstrate this. (Tonya demonstrates)

Teacher: Have you ever thought of using magnets to find the amount of iron in your cereal?

Narrator: If teachers expect students to be engaged in lessons, they must give them the opportunity to actively participate and take ownership of their learning experience. This can be achieved by developing higher level thinking questions for students and to provide them with sentence stems to answer. Instead of asking, “What kinds of metals do magnets attract?” show the students two sets of objects and ask, “Compare both objects and explain which is magnetic and why.” The second question requires the students to elaborate on the answer and to use academic vocabulary, which is superior to giving a one-word answer. For students who are used to giving one-word answers or who are at a lower English proficiency level, you can support students by providing sentence frames. An example would be, “This objective is magnetic because (student justification - briefly say what this is).”

Moreover, students should be given the opportunity to discuss the questions with other members of their group. Giving students the time to discuss questions affords everyone the opportunity to be engaged not just one student at a time - it allows them to verify if their answer is correct or talk with peers to come up with an answer.

Lesson Part 3

Teacher: Class, you are going to be looking for iron in your cereal today. Remember that one person in the group should be reading the instructions.

Student: Read the nutrition information on the cereal box to determine how many milligrams of iron is in the cereal. Multiple students find milligrams and write down numbers on worksheets.

Student: Step 3 - Crush the cereal into small pieces, using your hands.

Student: Step 4 - Add water and stir with a spoon.

Teacher: Good job, everyone! Be sure to wait about 15 minutes for the iron to be extracted.

Student: Step 5: Stir the magnet rod to attract the iron particles.

Narrator: It is important to provide students with carefully planned and engaging lessons. Such lessons must be effective and push kids to proficiency through meaningful activities where they make connections and build on to what they know in an effective classroom environment. It is up to us as professional educators to teach the learners of today to be the leaders of tomorrow.