Integrated Content Area Literacy Lesson Plan

Type of Lesson (Integrated Content Area Literacy Lesson)
This lesson will use the concept muraling reading strategy to present vocabulary and conceptual ideas about the digestive system to students.

Information about the Class
Grade Level: 3rd grade
Reading Levels: The students were most recently benchmarked at the following reading levels:
- E – 1
- G – 2
- J – 4
- H – 5
- L – 6
- M – 5

Diversity –
- Gender: 12 male, 11 female
- Linguistic Diversity: 2 students speak Spanish as their native language; both receive 15 minutes daily ESL support
- Race/Ethnicity: 21 students are Caucasian, 2 students are Hispanic
- SES: 3 students receive free lunch, 7 students receive reduced-cost lunch
- Ability: 0 students with IEPs
  - 5 students are Title I
  - 1 student receives intensive reading support daily
  - 5 students attend intervention reading programs daily
  - 3 students attend a math enrichment program 3X a week

Background Knowledge
Student Knowledge:
Students’ knowledge about the digestive system is varied. Individually it is based upon what each student has learned from personal experiences. Students may also have had exposure to certain children’s literature and other forms of media about the digestive system. These other forms of media can include television shows (The Magic School Bus) or children’s magazines (Scholastic News).

Your Knowledge:
The most important component to take into consideration for this lesson plan is to recognize the reading levels of the students. Much time is spent in class addressing vocabulary while reading texts. Especially two specific students, who have a lower language understanding, a lack of vocabulary understanding can inhibit their comprehension of texts read aloud and/or individually. With the use of the concept mural, vocabulary will be introduced orally and with visual representation prior to the read aloud of any text.
Rationale (Theory to Practice)

The concept muraling strategy is an instructional approach that takes a broad overview of a topic to be covered and presents the main concepts in a visual representation form. According to Farris & Downey (2004, p. 377), “When used as a scaffolding technique, concept muraling can provide students with the basic concepts needed to comprehend content area text.” This strategy would be beneficial to this particular group of students because many of them struggle with comprehension of text. This lesson plan is designed to act as a ‘pre-read’ of the concepts that will be introduced by the text. The ‘pre-read’ will help the students grasp the new vocabulary before being introduced in a text form. Diverse learners will also benefit from the concept mural strategy because of the various forms of information presentation: audio and visual.


Objectives and Assessment Plans

CC.3.R.I.7 Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

Objective #1: Students will be able to recall the illustrations from the concept mural and their accompanying facts at a mid-check and final-check.

Assessment for Objective #1: A checklist will be used to determine if the students are able to recall all of the orally presented facts or the visually represented symbols at a mid-check and final-check during the lesson.

CC.3.SL.2 Comprehension and Collaboration: Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Objective #2: Students will be able to generate a list of important facts about the digestive system OR recreate the concept mural and accompany it with an oral recitation of the facts.

Assessment for Objective #2: Students work will be compared to a sample key and the original concept mural that will provide a list of facts from the oral presentation and the appropriate illustrations. A formative assessment will be used in the form of a checklist that will notify which areas of the oral presentation/illustrations students most commonly struggled with. The checklist will identify areas of the vocabulary strengths and weaknesses.

Materials - Include the following as appropriate

Book/Text:

Technology: Overhead projector or Elmo machine

Supplies:
- Computer Paper (1 piece per student)
Grouping Techniques

The students will work on the concept mural response individually to test their recall of conceptual information. During the read-aloud, students should be invited to sit as a group on the ground to increase proximity to the text and it’s graphics.

Procedures

Introduction

Announce to the students that they are going to begin a unit lesson on the digestive system.

“To start our unit, I want to show you all an illustration that outlines the digestive system path. Along with the illustration, I’m going to be reading aloud a passage that describes how food travels through the digestive system. There will be much information provided during the reading of the passage. I bet that by the end of the lesson today, you will be able to recall at least 10 facts about the digestive system.”

Provide directions to the students stating that their eyes should focus only on the illustration at all times during the reading of the passage. Ask them to memorize the picture that is set before them, explaining that they are activating their photographic memories to remember the information that is about to be read aloud.

Lesson Steps

1. Place the illustration on the Elmo machine or overhead projector. Remind the students to keep their focus on the illustration and not the speaker.
2. Begin to read, move your finger to the symbol currently being described to keep the students’ attention on the appropriate section of the illustration. Your finger can also move across the illustrations showing a representation of the movement of the food through the system.
3. Continue to read aloud the passage while moving your finger across the illustration on the Elmo.
4. Stop after “The stomach acid works with the stomach’s muscle movements to churn the food into that liquid mush.”
5. Remove the illustration from the Elmo machine or overhead projector.
6. Point on the screen where the first illustration was the aligned with the beginning of the reading passage. Ask the students to recall the illustration and the accompanying facts. Move through the illustration using the following teacher talk and target answers:

“What was the first picture up in the left corner? (Target answer: a mouth). What did the mouth represent in the digestive system? (Target answer: the mouth is where the digestive system starts) What came next? (Target answer: the teeth and tongue) What did the teeth and tongue represent (Target answer: the teeth chew the food and the saliva on the tongue breaks down the food) What happens next? (Target answer: the
esophagus) What happens in the esophagus? (Target answer: the esophagus pushes the food down) Where does the food go after the esophagus? (Target answer: the stomach) What happens in the stomach? (Target answer: the food is turned into mush by muscles and stomach acid)"

7. Feel free to ask additional guiding questions that refer back to the reading passage. Also, if students do not recall specific vocabulary ask them to describe what the illustrations looked like.

8. After completing the first half of the concept mural, replace the illustration on display for the students to view and continue to read aloud the second half.

9. The final stopping point comes after, “There are very strong muscles in the rectum called sphincters that control when you use the bathroom.”

10. Remove the illustration from the Elmo machine or overhead projector. Point on the screen where the illustration would be that represented where you began reading the second half of the passage.

11. Ask the students to recall the illustration and the accompanying facts. Use the following teacher talk and target answers as a guide to move through the rest of the illustration:

“What was the picture that was here following the stomach? (Target answer: the small intestine) What picture was next that reminded you what the small intestine did? (Target answer: a sponge) What came after the small intestine (Target answer: the large intestine) What picture represented what happened to the food inside of the large intestine? (Target answer: the glass of water/sun) Where did the food go after the large intestine? (Target answer: the rectum) What is the food called when it is in the rectum? (Target answer: waste) Where does the waste go when it leaves the rectum? (Target answer: the toilet)”

12. If needed, ask additional guiding questions that refer back to the reading passage. Also, if students do not recall specific vocabulary ask them to describe what the illustrations looked like.

13. At this point in the lesson, the students should be given a blank sheet of computer paper. The students should be asked to list ten things that they learned about the digestive system from the passage and concept mural. If the students would like to recreate the concept mural and then write the accompanying facts on the illustration, they may do so as well. If students need guidance, always ask questions that refer to the illustration to activate their photographic memories.

14. Allow ten minutes of work time for the students.

15. When time is finished, gather students for a read aloud of an information text, Digestive System by Gretchen Hoffman.

16. Before reading the text aloud, state, “As the text is being read aloud, I want you to think about the information that you have already learned about the digestive system. There may be facts that are in this book that you already have listed on your paper. We will stop at certain points in the book to discuss if we have learned any new information that can be added to our lists of information we learned about the digestive system.”
17. Stop after reading at student designated points to hold a discussion regarding any new information that the students would like to add to their lists of facts about the digestive system.

18. Record the new facts on a piece of chart paper or on the white board so that the students can focus solely on receiving the information from the text. As the students suggest information to be added to the list, write as close to verbatim as possible to incorporate the students’ own language into definitions and explanations.

19. When the read aloud is complete, gather any more information from the students that they deem important to the list of facts.

20. The students should then return to their seats and add as many details to their personal lists/murals as they would like.

**Closure**

When the read aloud is complete, gather any more information from the students that they deem important to the list of facts. The students should then return to their seats and add as many details to their personal lists/murals as they would like. Afterwards, the students should share in small groups of three to five their favorite fact that they learned about the digestive system or show their own concept mural creation. The students’ work should be referenced throughout the digestive system unit. Refer to the original concept mural and reading passage throughout the unit as well. Time permitting, have the students try to recreate the mural at a later day in the unit to practice their photographic memories and their overall knowledge on the path of the digestive system.

*The idea for this lesson plan was derived from the demonstration of a concept mural activity provided in Melanie Koss’s LTRE 311 class by a guest speaker on October, 6th 2011.*


**Reflection**

| Student # | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
An appropriate amount of work was completed in the allotted time

| 10 facts from the passage are included on the illustration or can be orally recited |
| All illustrations are included on the student’s recreation |

Indicate on the chart with a rating of 1-3 (3 being meets all expectations) grading the students’ performance in each category.

Teacher’s notes about overall class performance:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
The story starts in the mouth. The saliva breaks down the food, and enzymes begin to work on it. The food is then swallowed and goes through the esophagus into the stomach. The stomach is where most of the digestion occurs. From there, the food moves into the small intestine, where the final stages of digestion take place. Absorption of nutrients occurs here as well.

Food enters the stomach, and after a while, it moves into the small intestine. Here, the food is broken down further and nutrients are absorbed into the bloodstream. The remaining waste is then passed into the large intestine, where water is absorbed and the waste is formed into feces. Finally, the feces are expelled from the body through the rectum and anus.
Your mouth has acid.

The saliva helps digest food.

The nasus push food down.

The acid turns food into mush.

The stomach acid.

The small intestine is 25 feet long.

It soaks the new yuuts.

The big intestine is 5 feet long.

It dries water.

Push food down.

The end.
In regards to objective 1, where students were expected to recall the illustrations and facts at both a mid check and a final check during the passage read aloud, I gained insight about which students were visual and auditory learners. It seemed to be about a 3/4 split of the classroom where a majority of students were very good at recalling the illustration that came next in the procedural order, but struggled remembering the fact that accompanied the illustration. However, with prodding and questioning, the majority of students were then able to recall the fact as well. This occurred at both the midpoint and final point in the passage. The other fourth of the class had difficulty remembering which object came next in the illustration, but once the object was named, could easily recall the facts that surrounded that point in the illustration.

This mishmash of learning styles was actually a blessing in disguise when it came time for the students to produce their own version of the concept mural or to list 10 facts from the passage. The students used the different strengths of their memories to conduct peer teaching within their desk groups. This collaboration resulted in a final product from each student that was a hybrid of the illustration with facts included underneath each picture. The students were creating such high quality work that I allowed them to continue to bounce ideas off one another. In the end, the vast majority of the students created products that were far beyond my expectations for the age and ability of the class. As well, their work fully addressed the desired outcome for objective 2.

What went well in the lesson plan was the engagement of the students. I distinctly remember that during the concept muraling demonstration performed in the LTRE 311 class, the students’ attention and engagement in this particular strategy was described as being unremarkable. The students who are normally unable to sit still and remain attentive during any class activity ended up being some of the most focused students throughout the passage reading and individual work time. I attribute the strong engagement of the students towards the idea that this strategy was completely foreign to the class, therefore making it exciting and entertaining. As well, these students ended up showing me how much they truly enjoyed learning about science subject matter, which could have also played into their riveting behavior.

Another aspect of this lesson plan that worked out well was the organization and flow of the lesson. I used this strategy on the very first day of introducing the digestive system to the students. I believe that the lesson did a very good job of enticing the students as well as laying down some very important scientific vocabulary, prior to reading any literature. The illustrations and passage were developmentally appropriate for these students. By waiting to read the literature at the end of the lesson, the two ESL students in the classroom were prepared for a more in-depth look at the language we had just introduced.

A problem that occurred during the lesson was during the read aloud. In the lesson plan I had originally planned for the students to add additional information to their illustrations or facts lists as the book was read aloud. However, due to time constraints, I was unable for the students to work individually. Instead, I paused throughout the story and wrote information that the students deemed important on the whiteboard. The
problem that arose during this process was that the book had a lot of information to share. Students seemed overwhelmed with the process of deciding what information should be pulled out to be added to the whiteboard. It made me realize that the class may need more work in identifying the main ideas and supporting details in informational texts. Within my three full weeks in the classroom I had worked with the students on deciphering main ideas from supporting details in fictional works, but had not focused on nonfictional texts. In the end, I was content with the time constraint allowing me to guide the read aloud instead of the students working individually on adding additional information.

Another problem that I experienced in the lesson revolved around the scientific language that was present in the passage and children’s literature. I was worried that the students would not be able to recall the specific names of the body organs. When it came time for the students to create their own illustrations and record the accompanying facts, I looked closely at their attempts to spell the scientific works. Unexpectedly, the greater part of the class did an amazing job at phonetically spelling the terms. I was satisfied with the students’ attempts at writing the scientific words, but it made me reflect on how much stress I would put on the importance of spelling the words correctly during any other writing activities throughout the week. I came to the conclusion that I would find deep satisfaction if the students walked away with the conceptual knowledge of what the digestive system does and its process, rather than if they could spell the technical words correctly.

As previously mentioned, I gained insights regarding the students learning styles and their weaknesses in deciphering main ideas from informational text. As well, I also was able to experience the drastic behavior modifications from specific students based upon the introduction of new content material and a foreign strategy. Another insight that I acquired from implementing this lesson plan was the realization of the unremarkable artistic talent from many of the students in the class. From working with the students on other writing activities, improving neatness and organization was often a major focus. I noted that during this activity the students worked diligently to mirror their work to the original illustration, thus creating systematic, orderly products. I realized that a connection could be made from the students’ artwork to the students’ writing assignments. The more that the students had an interest and took ownership of the work, the higher quality the work would be.

In regards to the insights I gained about my progress toward becoming an exemplary teacher, I think that I have a better understanding of my levels of flexibility in the classroom. In my every day to day life I am a very organized, type A personality. When I first started working in classrooms I would become frustrated about not completing what needed to be done or straying from the planned lesson. However, in this particular lesson, especially when the students began creating their own murals, I found myself wanting to let go and allow the students to adapt to how they were processing and accomplishing the task at hand. For the first time in my teaching experience I saw complete engagement and passion from every single one of my students. I wanted to allow that experience for the students to linger. Therefore, I provided more time for the students to work, which ultimately cut into the read aloud time. It was absolutely worth it.
I believe that these students helped me with a teachable moment. I experienced and learned that if there is fun, but there is still learning, then let it happen!