Exemplary Instruction Commentary: Library Specialist

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1. **Which lesson or lessons are shown in the video clips?** Identify the lesson(s) by lesson plan number.

2. **Promoting a Positive Learning Environment:** In response to the prompt, refer to scenes in the video clips where you provided a positive learning environment. * How did you demonstrate mutual respect for, rapport with, and responsiveness to students with varied needs and backgrounds, and challenge students to engage in learning?

   My students and I benefit from a school culture that promotes respect, collaboration, and support. The school slogan is displayed on the wall above the whiteboard, visible at 6:12 in Clip 3.1. It says “Wolf Pack Pact: We focus on learning. We respect ourselves and others. We take care of our school. We solve problems. We PERSEVERE!” My students show their respect for a calm, collaborative learning environment by responding to my questions and listening attentively to me and each other, throughout the clips. For example, in the first 30 seconds of Clip 3.1 they listen to me, respond to my questions, and listen to each other. Respect among students is also evident at 7:00 in Clip 3.1, where two students at a table help remind a third student of the research project I have asked them to discuss. The first student, who has bangs and long straight dark hair in a pony tail, says, “Remember, before spring break…” The second student, with wavy light brown hair in a pony tail, makes a gesture with her hand that indicates that she remembers, and she says to the third student, “The one where (inaudible) partner, like that research project you did before?” The second student keeps talking with the third student, who has dark wavy hair in a pony tail, until she remembers the project. At 9:29 in Clip 3.1, a student quietly lets another student who is talking know I am signaling for them to wrap up their conversations.

   I demonstrate respect by knowing and using students’ names (Clip 3.1, 0:26, too 0:53, and so on). I also apologize when I inadvertently talk over students’ responses at 2:16 and 2:33 in Clip 3.1. In Clip 3.2, at 8:59, I ask a student for permission to demonstrate something on the iPad he is using.

   I show rapport with students by acknowledging students whose teacher has kept them late and bringing them up to speed (Clip 3.1, 3:26, 4:18, and 5:13). Rapport is evident when I refer to a student’s interest in a genre she has said she likes in an earlier lesson (Clip 3.1, 0:54).

   I show responsiveness to students with varied needs and backgrounds by including all students in the conversation. For example, each student present in the first minute of Clip 3.1 has a chance to speak in that first minute (0:10, 0:23, and 0:28). I use and refer to slides and handouts to assist a student who has ADHD with focus. I challenge students to dig deeper at 7:20 in Clip 3.2. A student wants to try looking up a book title rather than an author in literature-map.com, and I encourage her to explore and then tell her that she has taught me something today, because I didn’t know you could look up book titles as well as authors in the tool.

3. **Engaging Students in Learning:** Refer to examples from the video clips in your responses to the prompts.

   a. Describe your strategies to elicit student expression of their understanding of the learning target(s) and why they are important.
I used the strategies of reflection, activation of prior knowledge, and think/pair/share, and I created a graphic organizer to help students practice the skills needed for the learning target. To elicit student expression of the learning target and why it is important, I asked students to engage in reflection by considering what they might do if there were no teachers or librarians available to help them find a book to read in the library (Clip 3.1, 0:00). We talked about a recent experience with research in the library to activate prior knowledge of the language functions research and select (Clip 3.1, 1:24). I included a think/pair/share activity for students to compare the strategies for the language functions research and select to their experience during the research project (Clip 3.1, 5:28). Starting at 4:22 in Clip 3.2 they are seen using the graphic organizer to link the iPad activity to the learning target. On the iPads, they select one of the three sources of research and show evidence of their personal use of the tool by writing down the book, author, or booklist they found.

b. Explain how your instruction engaged students in developing library literacies, reading, researching, or using information.

My instruction engaged students in the library literacies of information literacy and digital literacy so that they could learn to find books they can read enthusiastically. Practicing the language functions of research and select, they evaluated digital tools they could use to find a book they might love. Starting at 1:20 in Clip 3.2, they are seen remembering the experience of researching nonfiction topics in the library to the idea of researching fiction books for personal use in the library. At 0:27 in Clip 3.2, they view a demonstration of the readers’ advisory (RA) tool literature-map.com, which helps users find authors who are similar to authors whose work they enjoy. They enthusiastically watch and participate in the demonstration for over 90 seconds. At 4:22 in Clip 3.2, they use iPads to test tools I have demonstrated for them. A student is excited to discover a book on NovelList K-8 at 5:42 in Clip 3.2. Another student attempts to find a book by title rather than author and discovers it works in literature-map.com, at 7:20 in Clip 3.2.

c. Describe how your instruction linked students’ prior academic learning and personal, cultural, and community assets with new learning.

At 0:54 in Clip 3.1, I refer to a previous discussion with a student in which she told me she liked inspirational books, which links to personal assets she has shared with me. Starting at 1:20 in Clip 3.2, I work with students to activate prior knowledge by recalling a recent experience with the language function research in the library. At 5:28 in Clip 3.1, students engage in a think/pair/share activity comparing what they have learned about researching and selecting during this lesson with that previous experience in the library.

4. Deepening Student Learning during Instruction: Refer to examples from the video clips in your explanations.

a. Explain how you elicited and built on student responses to promote literacy.

At 3:08 in Clip 3.1, a student struggles to answer a question. I give her quiet space to think of an answer, and when she does not respond, I support her with guiding questions to help her remember what her research and selection process might have been: “Did you look at the book, maybe read it a little bit?” At 1:43 in Clip 3.2, I ask students in group discussion what they would do after looking up an author in literature-map.com. One student says, “You could click it?” and I ask what would happen then. I follow students’ suggestions for what we should click, and then I suggest that they could look for a book by the new author so they could decide whether it was something they wanted to read. At 6:14 in Clip 3.2, a student has found a book in the library catalog, but she needs to remember to check whether it is in available. I ask her what she needs to do next. I want her to look at the flag in the catalog that indicates whether a book is available for checkout. She says, “Um, I could see?” meaning that she could look on the shelf. I agree and have her look the book up so that we can see what the online catalog says together. At 8:35 in Clip 3.2, a student has identified a book but needs to write the name of the booklist. I ask him, “How did you find it?” When he says, “I went to action,” I give him a thumbs-up to let him know he is on the right track.

b. Explain how you and the students used representations to support students’ understanding and use of mathematical concepts and procedures.
When I introduce the resource literature-map.com at 0:27 in Clip 3.2, students enjoy the visual effects. They call out names of authors for 90 seconds, and I type in and click names that they suggest so they can see how it works. They seem excited to see names they recognize in the mind map. By capturing their attention with this engaging tool, I am able to lead them to reinforce connections with authors whose work they already know and enjoy. They are enthusiastic readers already; we are working together on helping them exercise that enthusiasm independently. When students get to try the tools out on their own at 4:22 in Clip 3.2, they use the tools of library iPads and graphic organizers to frame their searches for books that will interest them and capture the results.

c. Explain how you use tools and strategies to assist in learning.

During the think/pair/share activity, I kept the strategies for the language functions I wanted them to discuss (research and select) posted on the screen. The screen is not visible in the clip, but at 7:34 in Clip 3.1, a student looks up at it to help gather or clarify her thoughts before she responds to her table group. As I hand out the graphic organizer at 3:13 in Clip 3.2, I reinforce the directions by reminding students to choose only one tool to test. I ask them how many tools they should test, encouraging them to find and read the directions for themselves and say them aloud to reinforce their understanding of them. A student is heard off camera demonstrating understanding at 3:30 by responding with a movie quote, “Choose wisely.” When a student is excited about a book he wants to read in NoveList K-8, I refocus him at 8:35 in Clip 3.2 by reminding him that the directions for this task specify that he write the name of the list, not the book.

5. Analyzing Teaching: Refer to examples from the video clips in your responses to the prompts.

a. What changes would you make to your instruction better support student learning of the central focus?

Students at the beginning of Clip 3.1, which is near the beginning of the lesson, look a little disengaged. All of them are looking at me and listening, but the student in the middle is moving a lot in his chair, and the student closest to the camera is eager to see who is coming in the door at 0:40. I think that part of the problem was that the other students were not able to come to the library until a few minutes after this class started, but it’s important to know how to keep students engaged even if their friends are absent but expected soon. After seeing the way they responded to the iPad activities in Lesson 3 and during the Kahoot quiz in Lesson 2, I think it would have been a good idea to start with another Kahoot quiz or other engaging iPad activity.

I give students more time to think and spend more time supporting them to find answers on their own rather than providing answers. I notice that both of the times above (3:08 in Clip 3.1, and 1:43 in Clip 3.2) when a student is having trouble answering, I could have listened longer and done more to support students’ discovery of the answer through their own thinking. I was nervous and eager to get them back to class on time, but that just tells me that I need to scope my lessons to better fit in the amount of time I have with students. That’s definitely a skill I will need as a teacher librarian.

I also noticed that I did not call on Student 3, wearing a dark grey hoodie and sitting directly to my left, visible at 6:12 in Clip 3.1, or Student 1, at my far right, wearing a pink shirt, visible at 0:12 in Clip 3.1. Both have been engaged participants in previous lessons, and I feel I have good rapport with them when I see them in class and around the school. I thought that with such a small class I would have no trouble including everyone, but evidence shows that I did not. I wonder whether I need to pay attention to whether seating influences who I call on; both students were seated at the outside edges of the class this time. I will need to implement a strategy like popsicle sticks with names, a checklist of student names, or a random-name picker online to ensure that I give every student time to talk and share in group discussion. I think that the student in the pink shirt may also have felt isolated being the only girl at a table with three boys while the three other girls sat together. In Clip 3.1 at 8:37, the three boys talk to each other during the think/pair/share instead of in the pairs I set up, which I did not notice until I watched the video. Though I knew I didn’t want a table of boys and a table of girls, I don’t think that the seating arrangement worked very well for the girl in the pink shirt this time. The seating ended up being a little random because four students came in late. It might have been better to assign seats.
b. Why do you think these changes would improve student learning? Support your explanation with evidence of student learning and principles from theory and/or research.

When I included iPad activities in the lesson, students were clearly more engaged. At 0:27 in Clip 3.2, students say “wow!” when they see the results on literature-map.com. As soon as students start working on their individual iPad activities, they are engaged and on task, looking up books and booklists and sharing information with other students at 4:22 in Clip 3.2. I could also introduce tools such as visualthesaurus.com, which our district subscribes to, when introducing language functions or vocabulary. Seeing their reactions to the mind map of literature-map.com makes me think they will love the interactive word-mapping in visualthesaurus.com. Thoughtful, aligned use of technology has been shown to increase student engagement and build confidence (Jessica Sanders, “5 Research-Based Benefits of Technology in the Classroom,” on WhooosReading.org, 2014). Providing students with guided access to technology in school can also address the inequities created by the digital divide, or the vast differences in the amount, quality, and types of technology students have access to (Jie Huang and Susan Russell. "The Digital Divide and Academic Achievement," in The Electronic Library, 2006).

Calling on every student serves at least three purposes: it gives students the opportunity to elaborate on and deepen knowledge by engaging directly with it; it gives me a chance to listen and provide specific, supportive, actionable feedback; and it helps build rapport between teacher and student. John Medina writes in Brain Rules (2014) that repetition and repeated encounters with new knowledge help us move information from short-term memory to long-term memory. Specific, supportive, actionable feedback and rapport are central components of culturally responsive pedagogy, which focuses on providing all students with equitable access to learning and growth (Zaretta Hammond, Culturally Responsive Teaching & the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students, 2015).

Assigned seating might have given every student more opportunities to talk during small-group discussion as well.