

Creating Mental Representations

**Lesson Study in a
Primary Classroom**

**Reflections
Trial 2**

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Lesson Reflections by Teacher Delivering the Lesson

The introduction remained the same as in the first lesson. Again, it went very well, with children being interested and relating to the discussion on birthdays. We also used the same sound as in the first lesson. As I modelled visualising the sandy beaches, hearing the waves crash onto the beach etc. the pupils listened attentively and with their slight nods and sighs let me know that they too could visualise such pictures.

During the guided visualisation 'the Sea Creature from the Deep' the pupils drew visualisations based on the text that were very descriptive and captured the main characteristics mentioned. The individual visualisation task was slightly altered so that struggling pupils would have more time to work on their task. This proved to be effective as these pupils had ample time to complete the task and also stayed more focused.

In the second lesson a recorded reading was used for the second reading of the story 'Where the Wild Things Are.' This helped to keep the pupils' attention. For the neriage phase we had the pupils' work displayed on the board this time round. This was effective and helped open up the discussion. Pupils could see everyone's work and thus could comment on them. This was a problem in the first lesson as pupils could not clearly see the work of each other and so could not really comment on it. In the second lesson, pupils commented on what they liked, what they preferred and explained why a certain picture captured the essence of text best. Although pupils still needed some prompting, it was an improvement from the first lesson.

The overall feel of the second lesson was more positive than the first, and this came down to the alterations made.

Lesson Debriefing Meeting

During this meeting, we focused our discussion on the effectiveness of the changes made from the 1st lesson.

1. In the second lesson, a recording was used for the second reading of 'Where the Wild Things Are'. The story was read by a male. Both observers felt that this improved the students' attention as it provided a different reading experience for the students.
2. In the second lesson the main worksheet was adapted. This allowed all students to start working on their visualisations together. It also gave the struggling students more time to work on their task
3. To strengthen the *neriage* phase we had the students' work displayed on the board. This was effective in giving the students more accessibility to see the work of others. We felt that when compared to the first lesson, students commented more on the work of others, giving reasons to their choices, and explaining why their preferred work depicts the text best. However, we still feel that the ability to use visualisation when reading needs strengthening.
4. Visualisation isn't a strategy limited to reading. We discussed the importance of incorporating this strategy across the curriculum to make learning more meaningful and further develop this skill in our pupils.

Teacher's Comments

Throughout my teaching experience I have participated in various professional development sessions, most of them being chosen for me. This lesson study was a refreshing experience. It provided hands-on professional development. I had the opportunity to tackle an issue which was relevant to me, and moreover an issue which I had been wanting to tackle for some time in order to provide the most positive learning experience for my pupils. Having the opportunity to collaborate with educators coming from different backgrounds i.e. Art and a member of the SMT also provided different insights. Although we all shared the same aim, that of improving our pupils' reading comprehension, we all had different ideas, which we shared and learnt from. Looking back at when I was a novice teacher, I lacked support and guidance, and had to learn from my own mistakes and experience. Had I been part of such Professional Development sessions like Lesson Studies, I would have gained so much by observing and sharing ideas with my more experienced colleagues. Now that I have 16 years of teaching experience, I can see Lesson Study as freshening up my practices and allowing me to brush up on pedagogical practices through research.

In the future, I hope to encourage my colleagues to incorporate Lesson Study as part of our Professional Development, to improve our practices, and strengthen our sense of collaboration.

Observers' Comments

This lesson study was a new but positive experience for me. It was a great opportunity for professional development. It gave me the chance to work collaboratively with others, something which unfortunately is rare. Sharing ideas and practices with another teacher as well as with a member of the SMT was a very beneficial experience. It provided opportunities to reflect on my own lessons and practices and realise that they may not always reach their full potential with regards to student learning. It was also an opportunity to learn from others through the sharing of ideas and practices.

The in-depth research involved also helped to remind me of the importance of the teacher as a researcher, not just of content but in seeking to continuously find better ways of enhancing student learning. It also reminded me that the focus should be on student learning rather than teacher teaching. My thinking changed with regards to how I think about certain concepts and skills. It helped me see that I should not take anything for granted and, that certain skills need to be taught and supported on a continuous basis. It helped me see the need to break a concept such as reading comprehension, or even comprehension in general, down more to be able to really find ways for students to learn the skill through various strategies. It taught me to delve deeper into concepts, how they are learned and how I can facilitate this process in the best way. It was a very time-consuming endeavour, however a very beneficial one.