Teacher: Michelle Stencil

Grade: PK

CCSS Standard: [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.K.2](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RF/K/2/)  
Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).

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| **STAGE 3: ANALYZING/REFLECTING** |
| *What evidence of student learning have you collected?*  After the circle time lesson, I had our students work in small groups to brainstorm words that started with certain letters on three big posters. I wrote down the names of the students by the words they wrote down and collected the posters at the end of the day to review. Being at that small group station myself, I was also able to take informal notes of who was able to independently generate words and who needed more scaffolding with prompting questions.  In addition, I informally tracked participation during circle time, noting which students were on task and participating, which students were participating but struggling to grasp the concept and which students needed reminders to participate.  *How will you analyze this evidence?*  I will create three groups to analyze the posters with. The first group will consist of students who self-generated words that began with the letter on the poster. The second group of students will be those who could contribute a word with scaffolding (i.e. picking the word that began with the focus letter between two words that were provided by a peer or teacher). The last group will include students who still struggled with scaffolding and were not as sure on the letter/sound relationship. I will see if these groups correlated with their participation during circle time.    *What instructional decisions can you make as a result of your analysis of the evidence?*  Based on my analysis of the posters and participation during the circle time activities, I will be able to provide more specific activities for certain groups of students. As we near the kindergarten readiness assessment, I will be able to give more targeted practice to students who need assistance with the basic letter/sound relationships. I can also give more challenging activities to the students in the other two groups or have them work with a peer buddy in the lower group to help close the gap between our student groups. Lastly, I will be able to notice trends in who grasped the concepts and who didn’t. I can specifically look at my ELL students and my students with IEPs to see if they mastered the content or if more assistance or differentiated instruction is needed for them. |

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| **STAGE 4: APPLYING** |
| ***My Personal Reflection:***  *What new information did I get about my students in relation to their learning preferences?*  I learned that my students like to be involved actively in the learning. They like quick activities that keep them stimulated, get them moving and keep them engaged. They do better when they get to talk for most of the lesson and practice the content, rather than just sitting and listening to me talk about the content. It would seem that majority of them are kinesthetic and visual learners, rather than just auditory learners.  I also learned that my student in the referral process likes to be doing the same activity that every one else is doing. For the longest time, we gave him a rocking chair to sit in, because we noticed it was harder for him to sit in a carpet square. However, just in the past few months he has turned down the rocking chair and expressed that he likes the carpet with his friends better. We have him sit by a peer he looks up to, and while he needs one of us to sit with him, he prefers to try to be with his peers as much as possible and is more engaged this way.  For the English language learners, I learned that they also prefer to be doing the same activities as the other students, they just need more scaffolding. My co-teacher or I used to take our older, more advanced students out for a separate closing circle (coincidentally, these were many of our native English speakers). However, both groups of students expressed that they liked doing circle times together and wanted to help each other participate. Every group of students is different; however, this particular group is very close knit and all like to work together at the same activity. Even our lower students want to be doing the more challenging activities, regardless of if they are harder for them. Because of this, I have learned to respect these preferences while making accommodations, like the picture cards, that end up benefitting all of our students and making the lesson more accessible.  *How will I use this information to plan my future instruction?*  I will definitely continue the games when teaching phonics. Our students like letter songs, and making letter soup more than reading poems with words that start with the letter because they can be more involved in these learning activities. I might, however, rearrange their seating so that when we do partner talk, there is one partner who can assist the other partner, which would utilize peer to peer relations and scaffolding rather than just teacher to student.  In addition, this information confirmed the students who still need to review basic phonics instruction, as they struggled even with scaffolding with the small group poster activity. I would consider pulling these students aside so that they can get targeted instruction before we do a large group activity. This way, they can still participate with the large group, but are also getting more assistance to help them catch up with their peers.  *How effective were my practices? What will I keep, what will I improve and what will I discard?*  I think the games are a fun way to apply the standards of understanding syllables and sounds. It definitely allows them to demonstrate mastery of these skills and is helpful practice to solidify or build upon the skills they have acquired throughout the year. However, while all of my students enjoy these activities, for the few who still struggle with letters and sounds of letters or words, I’m not sure how effective these games are in teaching these concepts. These students can easily follow along with their peers during these games through imitation, without actually understanding the content on their own. One day later in the week, for dismissal, I had each student come up and clap their own syllables by themselves before lining up. It was clear that there were a few students who, even though they participate in the syllable game, still could not produce this knowledge on their own. For these students, who are also struggling with the letter/sound relationships, targeted practice in a smaller group would be beneficial. By doing this, I can spend more time going over basic facts with them, that would allow them to participate meaningfully in the circle times, rather than just excitedly imitating peers. I need to research ways to make this practice intentional but still fun for these students.  *What new understanding do I have about my own teaching practices?*  I realized that I need to go out of my way to make my teaching practices accessible to all students. I sometimes feel that I fall into the trap of doing a one-size fits all approach when majority of my students fit that approach. However, through my credentialing classes, I have started to expand my teaching practices to include visuals and more active ways of interreacting with the content. My teaching practices are just developing, so I am constantly looking for new resources, activities or ways of teaching certain concepts to improve them. For example, I learned about making letter soup from a colleague of mine, which is a favored activity now for our students when working on the letter/sound relationships. Overall, I understand that my teaching practices should be malleable to adjust to different groups of students, which requires that I update myself on current practices through research, trainings and collaboration with other teachers.  *What have I learned about myself as a teacher?*  I have learned that I need to be flexible and always up to date on best practices. It is easy to model teaching practices from older teachers at my school, however, I also need to reflect on these teaching practices to determine if they always benefit students and are accessible, culturally responsive and effective for all of my learners. I need to be willing to be a learner, before I can teach my students. I love to find new ideas for everything from classroom management and physical layout of the classroom to how to better teach phonics or counting. Modeling this love of learning and adaptability to my students is something I have grown in this year and something I hope to continue to do as a teacher.  *As a professional learner, where do I need to continue to grow and strive for?*  As a professional learner, I need to grow in finding resources for my ELL students and students with special needs. It is challenging now in preschool, even with two teacher aides, so I can’t imagine the challenge in accommodating all of my learners when I am the only teacher in the room. I would love to build a tool-kit of resources to help these students participate in our class and attain the necessary knowledge to be proficient, like their peers.  I would also love to grow in implementing activities or small group instruction to reteach concepts for the few students who don’t get the concepts through the first method of teaching. I am finding it difficult to go back and reteach some of these concepts to my three or four struggling students. I feel motivated to help these students reach their learning goals, but very unsure as to how to do this. I am committed to striving for all of my learners to reach kinder readiness, emotionally, behaviorally and academically, but will need assistance to do this. As a professional learner, it is my responsibility to help all of my students be proficient and confident, so I am excited to learn how to do this better. |