Cows in the Kitchen

Date Taught: 16 and 18 March 2010

Grade Level: Kindergarten  
Number of Students: 18

Skills and Concepts Addressed: Literal comprehension, self-to-text connection, predictions about text

Duration: one ten-minute lesson and two 15-minute extension activities

Alaska Standard: English/Language Arts B1, B3

Essential Question: Why do we have rules?

Topic: Down on the Farm

Methodology: Shared Reading with extensions

Objective(s): Students will be able to retell a story, connect the story to existing knowledge, and discuss the function of rules in society.

Student Assessment: Students will participate in whole-group retell activities, successfully retell the story using student-made stick puppets, and work cooperatively to create a list of rules in response to story events.


Activities (Part One):

Introduction

Show students cover of big book version of Cows in the Kitchen. Ask students what they notice about the artwork on the cover. Request predictions about what students expect to find in the story. Discuss where the story might take place, what sorts of events they might expect to see, and whether they think the story is true (non-fiction) or made-up (fiction).

Learning Activities

Read story, pausing at the end of each page to check for understanding. Model prediction and reaction to story events. Discuss whether the illustrations help tell the story. Encourage students to read animal sounds at appropriate points in the story.

Closure
Review the story and student predictions: where was the story set? Who was in it? What happened that was unexpected? Was the story funny? Sad? What would happen if the events in the story happened in real life?

**Activities (Part Two):**

**Introduction**

Show students cover of picture-book version of *Cows in the Kitchen.* Ask students what they recall about the story. Briefly review the major events in the story if students do not supply them.

**Learning Activities**

Provide students with animal cut-outs and crayons. Ask them to color the animals. Assist students in assembling the cut-outs into stick puppets. Guide students through story retell using the stick puppets.

**Closure**

Discuss favorite parts of the story and what liked or disliked about the story. What would they change?

**Activities (Part Three):**

**Introduction**

Show students cover of picture-book version of *Cows in the Kitchen.* Ask students what they recall about the story. Briefly review the major events in the story if students do not supply them.

**Learning Activities**

Ask students if they think the animals in the story followed the rules of the farm. Why or why not? If we were farmers, what rules would we create for our farms? Facilitate discussion to ensure it stays on track. Help students create a poster of Farm Rules to help the animals.

**Closure**

Discuss whether any of the rules created for the farm animals also apply to us. Why or why not?

**Differentiation for special learners:**

Students will be encouraged to explain ideas in their own words, increasing the available explanations for concepts. The lesson takes a multi-sensory approach, incorporating visual, auditory, and kinesthetic approaches.
Support will be provided by allowing students to work in small groups, through adult assistance, and by reviewing information after completion of each activity.

**How is this lesson sensitive to cultural and language issues?**

Students will be encouraged to explain ideas to in their own words, increasing opportunities for successful communication. As most of the discussion surrounding the story is speculative in nature, multiple viewpoints are encouraged in the activities.

**References:**

Evaluation Results

**Author:** Cindy Fitch

**Date Evaluated:** 05/06/2010 10:26:52 AM (ADT)

**DRF template:** Elementary Distance Credential/MAT

**Program:** Distance Elementary Graduate Certificate/MAT

**Evaluation Method:** Using Form

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**Final Score:** Meets Requirement

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**Detailed Results (Form used: Lesson Observation Form)**

- **Response is required**

- **Teacher Candidate Name**
  - Cindy Fitch

- **School**
  - Wonder Park

- **Students**
  - Grade Level: Kindergarten
  - Number of Students: 15

- **Lesson Observed**
  - **Lesson Topic**
    - Reading
  - **Summary of Lesson**
    - Whole Group Reading Instruction

- **Content/Subject Area**
  - Reading

- **Lesson Observation**
  
  Please use this form to observe and give feedback to the teacher candidate. This is a formative assessment, and scoring is used only for feedback and to encourage improvement.

  **Response Legend:**
  
  1 = In progress; needs development
  2 = Meets expectations for a beginning teacher
  3 = Exceeds expectations for a beginning teacher; professional

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<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>N/A</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The lesson plan was complete</td>
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<tr>
<td>The teacher candidate was prepared</td>
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<td>The teacher candidate communicates effectively</td>
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<td>The lesson was developmentally appropriate</td>
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Activities were differentiated for individuals and groups
Content knowledge was accurate and current
The teacher candidate demonstrated understanding of the context of the lesson in the curriculum
The students were interested and engaged in active learning

| The teacher candidate focused on student learning | 1 2 3 N/A |
| Assessment was appropriate for the learning objectives | ✔ |
| The lesson promoted higher order thinking, problem solving, and/or creativity | ✔ |
| Classroom management promoted student engagement | ✔ |
| The students met the learning objectives | ✔ |
| The teacher candidate reflected on student learning, lesson design and other issues | ✔ |

Lesson planning and preparation
Please describe observations of the lesson planning: knowledge of content, structure of lesson, materials, preparation, etc.

Observations: Lesson Design
Cindy had the opportunity to plan this lesson integrating the teacher’s manual of a required curriculum, while also adding higher level thinking questions as supplementation.

Interpretation and suggestions
Cindy did a great job executing the lesson while maintaining control of the classroom.

Instruction; how the lesson went
Please take notes on what happened during the lesson: communication, questions and discussion, feedback, flexibility and responsiveness, etc.

Observations: Instruction
Cindy asked thought provoking questions. She kept the pace swift and engaging.

Interpretation and suggestions
She did a great job taking the required text and bringing it to another level. No suggestions.

Classroom Management
Please observe the behavior and engagement of the students, noting in particular what the teacher candidate might not be aware of.

Observations: Management
Cindy complemented the children’s efforts often. She focused on positive reinforcements: “I like it when...”

Interpretation and Suggestions
Keep focusing on the positive behaviors. What you focus on, you get more of.

Reflection
Notes on reflection after the lesson, for example:
How did the lesson go?
Did the students meet the objective? How do you know?
Were there any unexpected events? How did you respond?

Comment on one student who did particularly well and one who did not meet your expectations. Why did this happen? What can you do to follow up with the student who did not do well?

Are there any changes you would make in this lesson if you could do it again? Why?

No answer specified
RULES

1) Not let the animals go in.
2) Animals not go into farm.
3) Not let the cow break the computer.
4) Do not let the cows open your room.
5) Lock all the doors and windows.
6) Don’t let the cows sleep in your bed.
7) Don’t let the cows eat your grass.
8) Do not let the cows wear your clothes.
RULES

1) Don’t let your ducks break the dishes.
2) Don’t let the cow in the house.
3) Don’t let the pig in your house.
4) Don’t let your chicken in your house.
5) You need to lock your door.
6) Don’t let your pigs in the sofa.

7) Don’t let Tom Farmer in the horsey’s food.
8) Don’t let the chickens in the hat closet.
9) Don’t let the chicken in the box.
RULES

1) No farm animals in the barnhouse.
2) No waking up people when they don't want to wake up.
3) Don't be a bad farm animal.
Shared Reading: Cows in the Kitchen

**Preparation**

My host teacher works under a mandate to stick as closely as possible to the scripted curriculum in place at the Title I school where she works. Because she is still being encouraged to teach with absolute fidelity to the program, using a favorite story book for shared reading was less feasible than using district-provided materials. Given this restriction, I prepared a lesson plan with extension activities based on Jane Crebbin’s *Cows in the Kitchen*.

*Cows in the Kitchen* is a short, rhyming book with whimsical illustrations. The repetition of the lines and the cadence suggest that it might just as easily be sung as read. While the plot is thin, there is a storyline which children can follow – and make predictions about. The program materials include big-book and storybook sized versions of this story as part of the “Down on the Farm” unit; I borrowed the storybook-sized version to review and create extension activities from.

One student received pull-out services during the reading block. He was not present for these activities.

**Activities and Student Response**

**Part One: Big Book Shared Reading**
Because shared reading is not the same thing as what I think of as “story-time,” where an adult reads to a group with all discussion saved until the end, I tried to include book preview, prediction, think-aloud modeling, and periodic discussion in my shared reading strategy, despite the brevity of the book. As planned, I encouraged students to examine the cover artwork and formulate predictions about the kind of story (fiction versus non-fiction), setting, and probable events. Some of the predictions were delightfully creative (cows tap-dancing), while others were more accurate.

As we moved through the book, I encouraged students to join in on the repeated motifs – every page included triple-repetition animal sounds for the animal subject of the page and the phrase, “That’s what we do, Tom Farmer!” By the third page of this choral participation, I found that the children were so engaged in the cadence of the story that they were less eager to share their thoughts and predictions than they had been on prior read-aloud occasions when I’d subbed in the room. Even so, we discussed which characters were present on each page, what it looked like they were doing, and what we thought about their actions prior to reading the text; after reading, we discussed our predictions for the next events in the story.

After reading, I facilitated a short discussion about the story and encouraged the students to compare their pre-reading ideas to their opinions immediately after the story. They were eager to share their ideas, with some students choosing to focus more on the sing-songy aspects of the book than the plot.

**Part Two: Stick Puppets and Retell**
For the first extension activity, I worked with small groups during literacy centers to retell *Cows in the Kitchen* using animal-cut-out stick puppets. One student had near-verbatim recall of the book; others required some prompting in the form of leading questions, like “Can you tell me the names of any of the animals in the book? Who else was in the story? What did they do? Do you remember where the [sheep, pig, cow, hen, duck] went?” Most groups worked together to re-tell the story. For the most reluctant group, I took the question-prompt methodology further and asked, “Do you remember which animal we met first? Can you show me what the cow did?” and so on.

They thought this was a particularly comical way to revisit a story and were highly engaged during the activity, only stopping their retell-theater to ask if I had extra puppets and if they could take the ones they had in their hands home.

**Part Three: Farm Rules Activity**

The second extension activity centered around the idea of rules. This was also a small-group center activity. I asked the children to think about the story and its events; I asked them what they could remember about the story and about what the characters in the story did. They shared their recollections, prompting one another to be more specific or to make corrections if the retell strayed from the collective memory.

After this brief discussion, I asked the students whether they thought the farm had any rules and whether the animals followed the rules on the farm. We discussed why we have rules and what sorts of things happen when rules are not followed. I then said, “If I
had a farm and asked you to help me create rules for the animals, what sort of rules
would you make? Can you help me make rules for my farm?”

They were eager to help. I asked them to decide how they would like to go about making
the rules. The first group turned decision making over to a very bossy, very bright girl.
This group decided on three rules, which they asked me to write: 1) No farm animals in
the barn-house. 2) No waking up people when they don’t want to wake up. 3) Don’t be a
bad farm animal. As we were reviewing their rules, the group leader caught an error I’d
made in my writing and asked me to correct it. This group had the fewest rules and the
least discussion of the three groups that participated.

The second group was specific in its rules, in part because they wanted to take turns
dictating rules. Before we began, they asked me to “decorate the top.” When I asked
what they meant, one of the boys told me, “It needs a picture.” I asked him if he wanted
to draw the picture; he declined. I complied with his request, drawing a fox, then
immediately adding a 1) to the side of the paper and asking the group if they were ready
to proceed with the rules. In keeping with shared writing practices, I wrote the students’
words as they said them, using proper spelling and punctuation, but failing to correct
grammar as I wrote. Their eight rules were: 1) Not let the animals go in. 2) Animals not
go into farm. 3) Not let the cow break the computer. 4) Do not let the cows open your
room. 5) Lock all the doors and windows. 6) Don’t let the cows sleep in your bed. 7)
Don’t let the cows eat your grass. 8) Do not let the cows wear your clothes.
As I read the rules with them at the end of our time together, they reacted with smiles or exclamations of “that’s mine!” They voted to determine whether they had any more rules to add, then decided they had come up with good rules “that keep the cows out of my bed.”

The final group also chose to take turns dictating rules, but also decided that they should be able to object to one another’s rules before I wrote them down. This led to some rephrasing of rules, as each rule was introduced by its sponsor, discussion of whether the rule was OK ensued, then the sponsor was required to repeat the rule, slowly, so that I could write it accurately. This group was also the only one to recognize the farmer’s wrong-doing in sleeping in his animal’s feed; this action was viewed as “rude” and “probably why they went to the kitchen.” The rules this group came up with largely corresponded to specific events in the story, where prior groups focused on general principles of good or bad behavior. Specific event correspondences are denoted with asterisks (*).

The final group’s rules were: 1) Don’t let your ducks break the dishes*. 2) Don’t let the cow in the house. 3) Don’t let the pig in the house. 4) Don’t let your chicken in your house. 5) You need to lock your door. 6) Don’t let your pigs in the sofa*. 7) Don’t let Tom Farmer in the horsey’s food*. 8) Don’t let the chickens in the hat closet*. 9) Don’t let the chicken in the box.

**Insights/Assessment**
The students in this class are practiced at making predictions about stories and did so enthusiastically and with minimal prompting. They enjoyed making the animal sounds and participating in the initial telling of the story. Mid-story and post-reading discussion was interesting because they seemed eager to continue it beyond our allotted time. During a transition, I noticed several students standing at the book easel, examining the big book, and talking quietly among themselves.

I was surprised by the accuracy of the students’ recall during the stick-puppet activity. They might not have been as successful had I required each student to recall the story events independently, but I don’t believe that is a reasonable expectation for Kindergarten. I was a bit taken aback by the violence with which the animal puppets attacked Tom Farmer to wake him up until we looked at the illustration in the book; students had remembered better than I that the animals leapt onto the farmer to wake him.

The rule-making activity had the most surprising results. I did not expect the level of engagement I found with two of the three groups; the only group not to completely buy into the concept was the one that chose to organize itself into a leader-and-followers rather than the more democratic approach the other groups took. The second and third groups generated nearly equal numbers of rules, but the greatest discussion and defense of each rule came in the final group, one that is typically classed as performing below grade level. The shortest list was generated by the group with both one of the smartest students in the class and the verbatim-recall student; this may be because the bright student tends to be bossy and insisted on creating broad rules, reducing the number
needed to maintain what the students felt was an acceptable level of order or a desire by the other students not to contradict or otherwise annoy the bossy student.

I was also surprised by how successfully the students were able to discuss and make predictions about such a short, simple book. I had great reservations that this normally talkative group would be completely silent or restless and disengaged, given the story in question. I will have to be more cautious in my literary prejudices in the future; there is merit to stories that are not The Very Hungry Caterpillar.
Works Cited
