Language Arts Lesson Reflection

Fact and Opinion for “When Esther Morris Headed West”

Today I had the opportunity to teach a Language Arts lesson that focused on reading comprehension and writing. In 5th grade, we have been avidly working on mastery of fact and opinion. Though most people believe that this would be a fairly easy concept for students to grasp, I would argue otherwise. These students (who are very bright) tend to argue the idea that, if I believe it’s the truth, then it must be a fact. It has been a great experience to see their little minds processing information, and with today’s lesson, I felt that I was able to make some headway.

To open today’s lesson, we began by talking about voting, voting rights, and why we should vote. The students voiced their ideas and opinions, and then I responded with general facts by reading a small insert in their Basel reader. From there, we made predictions (based on the cover/picture) and began to read “When Esther Morris Headed West.” This story was laced with various facts and opinions, which the students were instructed to chart (for assessment) as I read the story aloud. After the story/chart were both completed, students were given a writing prompt that guided them to write about a time when THEY stood up for something that they believed in, just like Esther Morris stood up for the female right to vote. Though this was a rather short writing assignment (1 paragraph-8 minutes), their answers were well written and very thoughtful. During this lesson, I was also able to incorporate a small piece of technology by creating a PowerPoint that demonstrated my own fact and opinion chart, in which they were able to compare and reference.

Though I felt as if this lesson was fairly successful, there are a few improvements that could be made for teaching in the future. In this particular setting, I didn’t feel that there was much freedom to really delve into a piece of literature. Under the direction of Mrs. Dunn, I was instructed to do a lesson from their Basel series and to follow the guide outlined in the textbook, which also corresponds to the Knox County curriculum map. In the future, I would attempt to tie this story into the Social Studies curriculum or attempt to choose a stronger piece of literature to work with. Additionally, I find that I really need to work on my classroom management skills. I do have several girls who sit on the front row, and tend to get chatty! This is also something that I hope to better develop with experience.

Overall, I do feel pleased with the lesson. I believe that the students are making progress, and their skills are continuing to develop. I am happy with this experience and continue to learn as I go.