Task 2: Instructing and Engaging Students in Learning

Instruction Commentary:

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

   The first video segment shows a 10 minute clip from lesson plan one and is titled *Descriptive Paragraph Lesson*. The second video segment shows a 10 minute clip from lesson plan three and is titled *Figurative Language Poem Lesson*.

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?

   I believe in creating a positive and productive learning environment in my classroom and that involves creating a mutually respectful rapport between students and teacher and between the students themselves. This is evidenced during the first video segment as I respond to one of my special needs students. She is on a 504 plan and exhibits some obsessive compulsive behaviors, which have not been addressed in her plan. She is the one student in class videotaped that requested to not be shown on camera. During the beginning of the video segment I ask all the students to remove a simile worksheet from the packet that I put in their mailbox folders. The female student accidentally rips her paper and is distressed. I am seen at the top of the screen trying to reassure her and she seems satisfied because I have quickly, yet kindly addressed her concerns. As I continue teaching and work my way around the classroom, I realize two minutes later that the student is again obsessing over the torn paper and has begun to disrupt the learning of other students near her. I quickly address the student and get her tape to repair the paper and she relaxes. I move to the front of the class and bring the focus back to the learning task. I made this student aware that someone cares about her concerns and students see this caring. It contributes to a positive learning environment. Also in the first video segment it is evident that I try to engage many different students in whole group discussions. There is a small group of students that are willing to answer any question that is posed. I will call on these students, but I also encourage other students to respond by moving around the room and using encouraging language to foster more participation. I am seen using wait time to encourage additional students to raise their hands and participate. When a student responds I use positive praise, something to which they respond very positively. I also have explained the importance of being respectful to the teacher or a student when they are talking or offering a response. I am seen asking for quiet as a student makes her response. This reiterates the mutual respect that I feel is paramount to a positive learning environment.

3. Engaging Students in Learning

   *Refer to examples in the video clips in your responses to the prompts.*

   a. Explain how your instruction engaged students in constructing meaning, interpreting, and responding to a complex text.
a. The central focus of this three-day learning segment is identifying descriptive and figurative language in literature and using this understanding to support original ideas through task specific writing. They are seen in video segment one interpreting an excerpt from Richard Connell’s short story, *The Most Dangerous Game*, from their primary source text. They interacted with the text using smart board technology, which motivates these students to actively engage in this learning task. This type of complex text is unfamiliar to the students in this classroom, so it even more imperative to develop learning tasks that challenge and engage them. Constructing meaning and interpreting the text, as they practice the skills of identifying and interpreting figurative language gives them tools to interpret this type of challenging literature. They are able to use that understanding to support their own original ideas through task specific writing that responds to the complex features of a text.

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

b. Students will have prior knowledge of four types of figurative language: similes, metaphors, personification, and hyperbole. They will have some prior knowledge of descriptive language however they have not had task specific assignments that combine identifying this type of language in a complex text. Because the majority of students in my class are looking at military or career/vocational careers in their futures, it can be difficult to get the students engaged in complex texts that seem outside the realm of what is relevant to their background and future goals. Scaffolding the instruction and working to find connections between these students and the texts becomes a main goal of my instruction, because of the cultural and community assets that they bring into our classroom. An activity that is interactive, such as the smart board learning task assists in increasing student engagement and motivation. This type of hands-on learning task brings variety to the learning segment and appeals greatly to my students.

4. Deepening Student Learning During Instruction

Refer to examples from the clips in your explanations.

a. Explain how you elicited and built on student responses to promote thinking and develop students’ abilities to construct meaning, interpret, and respond to a complex text.

a. During the video segment one, students are responding during a whole group activity where one specific type of figurative language, simile, is concentrated upon during a learning task that was designed to quickly reactiva their prior knowledge of figurative language. This segues into a more challenging learning task, where students in video segment one are interacting through smart board technology with different excerpts from complex texts. Students are seen identifying examples of descriptive and figurative language in the text, and then I prompted them to analyze why authors made these stylistic choices and how they can use this analysis to make meaning of these complex texts.

b. Explain how you supported students in using textual references (or, if a film, visual references or dialogue) to check or justify their constructions of meaning and interpretations of complex text.

b. I supported students during the learning tasks in the video one segment by asking students to look at the examples of figurative language that they identified in the complex text, and to infer what an author means. This type of analysis is a new learning task for this group of
students. It asks them to move beyond identification and begin the process of analyzing an author’s stylistic elements.

5. Analyze Teaching
Refer to examples from the clips in your responses to the prompts.

a. What changes would you make to your instruction—for the whole class and/or for students who need greater support or challenge—to better support student learning of the central focus (e.g., missed opportunities)?

   a. I believe that the learning segment went well. Students responded well and were actively engaged in the learning tasks, which effectively combines spatial and linguistic learning styles. However, some minor changes may improve increase student engagement even more. Looking at video segment two, I see areas where more supports, in the form of teacher modeling and thinking aloud, would more completely explain the learning task to students. Also, instructional time could be increased with better management of the disbursement of materials for the embellishment portion of the figurative language/emotions poem learning task. Moving around the room to distribute materials kept me on one side of the room too long and off-task students are seen on the video. Another modification would be during the brainstorming of emotions portion of the learning task. Here I am seen asking students to name emotions, which I record on the board. The students respond quickly, talking over one another and things become somewhat chaotic. This could be better managed, and would afford the time for me to elaborate on students’ suggestions, if I restructure how the emotions will be recorded. A student helper or two could act as recorders and write student suggestions on the board, as I call on them one at a time. This would allow me to face the class for most of this portion of the learning segment and to ask for elaboration of ideas and more participation from a variety of students, thus increasing student engagement. Another change that I will make the next time I teach this lesson is taking a couple of minutes at the beginning of the class to activate students’ prior academic knowledge of similes and metaphors and descriptive language. This could be in the form of a bell ringer and then whole group discussion. I would then project onto the smart board definitions and examples of similes, metaphors, and some descriptive language. This brief review would ready students to engage in the next learning task, where they are asked to create their own similes, metaphors, and descriptive language and incorporate these into original poetic text. These students have limited exposure to poetic text and have not been asked to create their own complex poetic text, so the concept of becoming “poets” is intimidating to some of them. Feeling more confident in their prior academic knowledge of figurative language will allow them to concentrate on the poetry aspect of the learning task, because they will not struggle as greatly with the figurative language portion.

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.

   b. I will also utilize the teaching strategy of “thinking aloud” as I model my example simile/metaphor poem worksheet and completed, art embellished poem. According to Keene and Zimmerman, this is one of the first steps when teaching students the strategy of making connections with prior knowledge. This models for students the entire process, not just the end result and gives them the necessary tools to begin making connections with prior knowledge. Students will gain more insight into each step of this learning task and this will increase student engagement.
Task 3: Assessing Student Learning

Assessment Commentary:

In Task 3: Assessing Student Learning, you will write a commentary responding to the prompts below. Your commentary should be no more than 10 single-space pages, including prompts.

1. Analyzing Student Learning

   a. Identify the specific standards/objectives measured by the assessment you chose for analysis.

      a. One of the Ohio Academic Content Standards is Writing Standards 6-12 W.9.3d, Texts and Types and Purposes 3d. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters. Another content standard is Writing Standards 6-12 W.10, Rang of Writing 10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences. The specific learning objectives of this lesson is that students will analyze various texts to identify an author’s stylistic elements, specifically figurative and descriptive language, and use that understanding to support original ideas through task specific writing. This lesson is a continuation of the learning activities from the day before. During lesson plan one the students analyzed complex texts and identified the figurative and descriptive language stylistic choices that three different authors used. This analysis modeled effective usage of descriptive and figurative language and served to inspire students as they began the first learning task in the process of writing their own descriptive paragraph, working cooperatively in small groups to brainstorm descriptive language in response to a photo prompt. Students were then given the learning task of writing their descriptive paragraphs utilizing a short time frame (one day). Writing routinely is one of the learning objects for this unit of study. This learning segment includes two short-time writing exercises.

   b. Provide the evaluation criteria you used to analyze student learning.

      b. The evaluation criteria used to analyze the descriptive paragraphs takes two forms: The directions for the learning task clearly state what the evaluation criteria is for this assignment. Students are informed that: their Descriptive Paragraph must contain at least one example of figurative language (METAPHOR or SIMILE). You will be assessed on strength of your topic sentence, supporting details, figurative and descriptive language, and unity of the paragraph. Students received written comments with constructive critiques addressing tasks done well and where improvements can be made, as well as suggestions on how to make these improvements. Additionally, students experienced peer evaluations for the first time. This evaluation was based on the same criteria, but students were informed that it would not factor into their grade/assessment. I felt it was important to begin this collaborative learning activity in order to build upon it during future writing assignments. A rubric was used by students to evaluate their peers. It is the first experience most of my students have had with rubrics and is
a good initial exposure to this type of assessment. Future learning tasks will include utilization of rubrics, peer evaluations, assistance with revisions, etc.

c. Provide a graphic (table or chart) or narrative that summarizes student learning for your whole class. Be sure to summarize student learning for all evaluation criteria described above.

c. The class as a whole did fairly well with this learning task. The descriptive paragraph was not weighted heavily, as this learning segment took place five weeks into the new school year, and was a 5 point assignment. Grades varied from a few students receiving 2’s and 3’s, with the majority receiving 4’s and some 5’s. It is the first structured writing that my students were required to accomplish, outside of a few brief extended responses on quizzes. Some students struggled with the basic components of what constitutes a good paragraph, including a strong topic sentence. I did a quick tutorial concerning topic sentences before the writing session commenced, but in hindsight this was not explored with enough depth to enable the majority of the students to write a strong topic sentence. Adding another day to the learning segment would have allowed for the basic breakdown of a paragraph through utilization of graphic organizers and modeling examples, and also emphasizing how to create an effective topic sentence. Students were more effective in their supporting details that helped develop the main idea. They were especially proficient in the usage of figurative language, primarily in the form of similes. This type of figurative language appears to be the one easiest for students to comprehend and utilize in their own task specific writing. Students were able to effectively link this new learning task with prior knowledge of figurative and descriptive language. The element of unity, where all sentences relate to the main idea, was accomplished proficiently by most of the students. They seemed to very much enjoy this learning task and it appeals to a variety of learners. Once their original reservations about thinking critically and creatively were overcome, they let themselves focus on creating effective and entertaining descriptive paragraphs.

d. Use evidence found in the 3 student work samples and the whole class summary to analyze the patterns of learning for the whole class and differences for groups or individual learners relative to

- comprehending and making meaning from complex text
- interpreting and/or responding to complex text

d. Student One struggled with some of the criteria during day two of the learning segment, the writing task. During day one of the learning segment Student One actively participated in the whole class learning task where students identified and analyzed descriptive and figurative language in examples of complex text. She seemed to grasp the concepts of using figurative and descriptive language to identify an author’s stylistic elements. Student One’s IEP is for visual processing issues and modifications for her include: small group for testing, extended time for testing, tests read aloud, and notes provided after attempt is made to take notes on her own. Student One received an assessment of 4 points out of 5 on her descriptive paragraph for her attempts, which primarily followed the directions given. She experienced some struggles linking prior knowledge of effective usage of descriptive language
and figurative language, as she attempted to incorporate these writing techniques into her descriptive paragraph. As evidenced from her descriptive paragraph artifact, Student One needs direct instruction and scaffolding on formation of strong topic sentences and on creating effective paragraphs. Student Two received the lowest assessment in the class. Scoring for his descriptive paragraph was 2 out of 5 points. During day one of the learning segment Student Two appeared to be attentive to the learning task, when students identified and analyzed figurative and descriptive language in excerpts from three complex tasks, but he did not actively participate. This translated into his not being able to effectively link prior knowledge or skills to the new learning task of writing a descriptive paragraph utilizing figurative and descriptive language. Student Two was more successful with the learning task during day three of the learning segment. He shows tendencies towards being a visual learner and responded positively to the figurative language/emotions poem learning task. Being given the opportunity to embellish the completed poem with personal artwork increased Student Two’s engagement in this activity. This learning task provided more scaffolding and the skeleton structure of the worksheet is a modified graphic organizer and it provided the needed scaffolding for the variety of learners in my classes. Student Three was highly engaged in the first day of the learning segment, when the class worked to identify and analyze figurative and descriptive language in three different complex texts. She was able to link this prior academic learning and prerequisite skills into the new learning task on day two of the learning segment; creating a descriptive paragraph that incorporates the use of figurative language. Student Three received a score of 5 out of 5 on the assessment of her descriptive paragraph. The artifact created by the student is evidence of her effective use of descriptive language as she paints a picture with her writing. The paragraph begins with a well-developed topic sentence, has strong supporting details, and displays effective unity. Student Three had a more fully developed three-column organizer and she integrated the nouns, adjectives, and verbs from her organizer effectively into her composition. As a whole the class displayed similar patterns of learning. Large group instruction on identifying and analyzing descriptive and figurative in three different complex texts was well received by most of the class. They were actively engaged in this learning task and thus the majority of the students were able to integrate some descriptive language, and at least one example of figurative language into their writing, with varying degrees of complexity.

2. Feedback to Guide Further Learning

Refer to specific evidence of submitted feedback to support your explanations.

a. In what form did you submit your evidence of feedback for the 3 focus students?

   My feedback for the 3 focus students takes the form of comments written directly on the artifacts.

b. Explain how feedback provided to the 3 focus students addresses their individual strengths and needs relative to the standards/objectives measured.

   b. Student One has an IEP for visual processing and has struggled with the few writing learning tasks that have been part of past learning segments. She exhibits signs of low self-esteem and needs positive reinforcement directed towards her efforts on learning tasks. Student One received an assessment of 4 points out of 5 on her descriptive paragraph for her
attempts, which primarily followed the directions given. She experienced some struggles to link prior knowledge of effective usage of descriptive language and figurative language while attempting to incorporate these writing techniques into her descriptive paragraph. As evidenced from her descriptive paragraph artifact, Student One needs direct instruction and scaffolding on formation of strong topic sentences and on creating effective paragraphs. I wrote several comments on her descriptive paragraph artifact: GOOD START!, develop topic sentence, if you add more adjectives to this and have a stronger topic sentence, this can be funny, Let’s work together to re-write this. These comments directly align with the directions given for this learning task: You will be assessed on strength of your topic sentence, supporting details, figurative and descriptive language, and unity of the paragraph. This learning task directly aligns with the activity during day one of the learning segment, when students identified and analyzed descriptive and figurative language in three different complex texts. The prior learning activity gave students the opportunity to further develop the prerequisite skills needed to incorporate descriptive writing and figurative language into task specific writing activities. Student one is in the developmental stages with this type of task. Student One responded positively to the idea of working with me to re-write/revis. The evaluation for his writing was 2 out of 5 points. I wrote several comments on Student Two’s paragraph: needs to develop a topic sentence and use less slang, please include at least one example of figurative language that does not include slang, this has potential to be very fun and descriptive—let’s work together to re-write. This evaluation was challenging because there were so many issues with the writing. I worked to find a balance between corrective evaluation and positive reinforcement. Student Three followed all of the guidelines/requirements for this learning task. She is considered to have higher-level language abilities and this translated into her assessment. She received a score 5 out of 5 on this learning task. Student Three utilized prior knowledge that was activated by the learning activity on day one, when students identified and analyzed descriptive and figurative language from three complex texts. She demonstrated the prerequisite skills needed to develop an effective descriptive paragraph; incorporating figurative language, a strong topic sentence, and strong unity of ideas. Student Three is one of the highest achieving pupils in the class, which is prompting me to begin the process of differentiating her instruction with enrichment activities. Written comments on Student Three’s descriptive paragraph praised the tasks in which this pupil shows mastery: Excellent!, Your use of descriptive language paints a picture for the reader, Love the simile!. A challenging, enrichment activity was proposed as a written comment on Student Three’s paragraph: For extra credit why don’t you write Part II of this dog’s adventures—this time concentrate on different figurative language, such as hyperbole and personification.

c. How will you support students to apply the feedback to guide improvement, either within the learning segment or at a later time?

c. During Day Three of the learning segment students also had the opportunity link their prior knowledge of figurative and descriptive language to a new learning task as they worked
independently to create figurative language/emotions poems. After this additional opportunity to practice utilization and creation of figurative and descriptive language, students will have increased prerequisite skills that they may link with their rewriting learning task.

I will give direct instruction to each of the students who struggled with the Day Two learning task, the descriptive paragraphs. In order to ensure that students apply the feedback that they received on their descriptive paragraph assessments to their next learning tasks, I will offer additional supports in the form of teacher modeling and graphic organizers. They will rewrite their descriptive paragraphs utilizing this scaffolding, which gives them the opportunity to improve upon their work and to utilize newly acquired skills.

3. Evidence of Language Understanding and Use

When responding to the prompt below, use concrete examples from the clips and/or student work samples as evidence. Evidence from the clips may focus on one or more students.

Explain and provide evidence for the extent to which your students were able to use or struggled to use language (selected function, vocabulary, and additional identified demands from Task 1) to develop content understandings.

The essential language function for my students during this learning segment is learning to analyze descriptive and figurative language in complex texts and to use this analysis to interpret an author’s stylistic elements. They must bring this skill to the progressively more complex learning tasks on days two and three of the learning segment, as they are asked to compose descriptive paragraphs and poetic text, using figurative and descriptive language. Students must understand the following vocabulary/figurative language terms: simile, metaphor, personification, and hyperbole. They must also understand the vocabulary phrase “descriptive language.” Evidence of their usage of language is seen in the video during the Segment One video clip, from 8:44-9:30. Evidence as seen in the student work samples: Student One has an IEP for visual processing and actively participated in the learning task during the Day One learning segment, when students identified and analyzed descriptive and figurative language in complex texts. Student One was able to integrate this understanding of the language function and specific vocabulary into her task specific written assignment. Her simile, “...he was sitting down on my red vespa like some type of model” shows her understanding of this figurative language essential vocabulary. Language supports are demonstrated during the Segment One video clip (1:37-5:15) as I activate the students’ prior knowledge of figurative language, specifically similes, during direct instruction/review with whole class participation.

4. Using Assessment to Inform Instruction

a. Based on your analysis of student learning presented in prompts 1c-d, describe next steps for instruction.

   for the whole class
   for the three focus students and other individuals/groups with specific needs

   a. After analysis of the whole class’ progress with this learning segment it became clear that some aspects of the three day segment need to be revisited with additional supports. I plan to re-engage students with complex texts so that they will continue to increase their understanding of the central focus of the learning segment. Several students struggled with topic sentence and paragraph composition, so supports will be put into place that scaffold these
basic skills and give the class the opportunity to practice and hone the prerequisite skills that are necessary for effective writing learning tasks. These planned supports will take the form of graphic organizers, outlining, teacher modeling, and revision techniques. This will provide students with other forms of re-engagement with the targeted learning goals and increase opportunities to link prior knowledge with new skills. Continued use of peer evaluations and rubrics will provide guidance and structure to the students as they receive increased feedback to guide them during a variety of learning tasks. This will also give students the opportunity to move into higher levels of learning, specifically evaluation. Students will practice their assessment skills during evaluation of peer works and their own compositions. Students One and Two responded positively to visual learning, so the supports will be modified to appeal to the spatial learning style of these students. Photo prompts and integrated learning tasks will be explored to help integrate the variety of learning styles in this classroom. Student Three will be offered enrichment activities, such as composition of more complex writing tasks that integrate prior knowledge with new knowledge. This will work to move Student Three outside her Zone of Proximal Development and scaffolding supports will be removed as she masters increasingly complex learning tasks. All of the students will continue to interact, interpret, and analyze complex texts and work to link these skills with task specific writing that responds to the complex features of a text.

b. Explain how these next steps follow from your analysis of student learning. Support your explanation with principles from research and/or theory.

b. My class contains a variety of learners, and many responded positively to the more visual learning tasks that combined spatial and linguistic learning styles. Garner’s theory of multiple intelligences stresses that learning tasks must be varied and appeal to the type of learners in your student population. This increases student engagement in learning tasks and creates an effective learning environment. These learning tasks will consist of planned supports to re-teach or re-engage students with skills with which they struggled or did not master during this learning segment. We will continue to increase knowledge of analysis of complex texts but want to move towards more complex learning and engage students in synthesis of ideas as they compose increasingly more challenging task specific writing assignments, such as personal narratives. Also by continuing to develop student peer evaluation strategies and self-evaluation skills, pupils will gain necessary prerequisite skills to allow them to expand their learning objectives into the highest classification of Bloom’s Taxonomy, evaluation. Students will work towards effective assessing of peer writing, utilizing an assessment rubric effectively, describing their assessment, and defending this assessment through thorough understanding of the rubric and by providing justification with the use of textual evidence.
My day is so silly. Every time I go to look at him he is just doing something random. This time he was sitting down on my red respa like some type of model. He had his paws on the handles and everything. It was kinda like he was trying to steal it, with his tallness it looked like he was too big for it. My pets are so funny.

If you add more adjectives to this and have a stronger topic sentence, this can be funny. Let's work together to re-write this.
Peer Paragraph Evaluation

**Topic Sentence**
The writer states or implies the main idea of the paragraph, and avoids using language such as "The main idea of this paragraph," or "I am writing about..."

Supporting Details
The supporting details develop the main idea found in the topic sentence.

**Figurative Language**
The writer uses figurative language—metaphor, simile, hyperbole, or personification.

**Unity**
All sentences relate to the main idea.

**On the back write something that you liked about the paragraph (use specific examples), and something you think the writer could improve (give an idea how they can improve).**
Her paragraph was very animated and she used her imagination. How was her use of figurative language?

To improve your writing you should try to relate more to your main topic.

- good comment = relates directly to rubric
Nouns
- dog
- bike
- house
- window
- person
- tools

Adjectives
- brown
- swagg
- turnt
- live
- intelligent

Verbs
- riding
- onna move
- flexxin'

This brown dog is onna move. He is riding high on his bike. He is too turnt on the bike. He is flexxin' on his whip. He is fly like a plane. He's house is live. He stays with the tools. There are mass people at his spot. The dog is very intelligent.

Needs to develop a topic. Sentence 1 used slang. Please include at least one example of figurative language or metaphor that does not include slang. This has the potential to be very descriptive. Let's work together to re-write.
Peer Paragraph Evaluation

**Topic Sentence**
The writer states or implies the main idea of the paragraph, and avoids using language such as "The main idea of this paragraph," or "I am writing about..."

**Supporting Details**
The supporting details develop the main idea found in the topic sentence.

**Figurative Language**
The writer uses figurative language—metaphor, simile, hyperbole, or personification.

**Unity**
All sentences relate to the main idea.

**On the back write something that you liked about the paragraph (use specific examples), and something you think the writer could improve (give an idea how they can improve).**
I like the way he writes.

- Please use specific examples that explain why you like how he writes.
- Give an example of what you believe he can improve.
Excellent!

Descriptive paragraph

The enthusiastic dog looks content as he stares off into the distance while sitting on a vespa as shiny as a diamond and as red as a candy apple. His escape from his owner was successful. He sits back ecstatic as the vespa's engine roars to life like the sound of a lion's cry in the jungle. The great, tall trees whizzing by him every second as he speeds along the uneven road. Confidence is in every mile he goes farther as he knows he will never return home to the controlling monster back at his dingy, dilapidated yellow house.

Your use of descriptive language paints a picture for the reader.

Love the Simile!

For extra credit why don't you write part II of the dog's adventures - this time Geronimo in different figurative language such as hyperbole or personification!
Peer Paragraph Evaluation

**Topic Sentence**
The writer states or implies the main idea of the paragraph, and avoids using language such as “The main idea of this paragraph,” or “I am writing about...”

**Supporting Details**
The supporting details develop the main idea found in the topic sentence.

**Figurative Language**
The writer uses figurative language—metaphor, simile, hyperbole, or personification.

**Unity**
All sentences relate to the main idea.

**On the back write something that you liked about the paragraph (use specific examples), and something you think the writer could improve (give an idea how they can improve).**
- Your similes & metaphors helped me imagine the dog racing mopeds.

- Your exaggerations helped to visualize the story.

- Your usage of figurative language was really good.

Good evaluating!

*Where do you see the paragraph could be improved?*