Teacher Work Sample
Seventh-Grade Science

Middle School
New Jersey

Kean University
EMSE 4900

Cooperating Teacher:
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APPENDIX A: Assessments

APPENDIX B: Samples of Student Work
Introduction

This is the Teacher Work Sample (TWS) that has been prepared as documentation of my time spent as a student teacher at [school name].

It focuses on a seventh-grade Science class which consists of 28 students: 17 males and 11 females. Two of these students are Special Needs Learners (SNL) meaning they have been formally classified with either a physical or learning disability.

The unit of study that this TWS will focus on is a Biology unit focusing on Populations and Ecosystems. Students will have the opportunity to learn about biotic (living) organisms and abiotic (non-living) factors, and the essential roles they play in the ecosystems. Students will also construct ecosystems in class of the aquatic and terrestrial type, and participate in direct care for the organisms that live in these ecosystems. The students will be assessed in various ways from oral exams to written test, and will use multiple methods of technology from Internet/computer use to multi-media via TV/DVD technology. The span of this unit is 10 days with a total of 5 lessons.

In addition to student factors, community factors will be discussed pertaining to Linden, NJ, and how these contextual factors may influence learning or lack of learning.

The TWS is divided into sections: Table of Contents, Introduction, Philosophy Statement, Contextual Factors, Learning Goals, Assessment Plan, and Design for Instruction, Instructional Decision-Making, Analysis of Student Learning, and Reflection and Self-Evaluation.
My Philosophy of Teaching

I started off as a Nursing student but after two years in the program I decided my heart was not fully into it. I knew it was time to change my major and so I did. I officially declared Elementary Education (K-5 & 5-8) as my major and began my course to becoming a certified teacher.

From the age of sixteen I have worked with children. Children always held a special place in my heart. I feel the need to not only protect them but to give them every chance to become successful members in society. My way of doing this is through teaching.

As a student, I was fortunate to have an abundance of wonderful teachers share their knowledge and experience with me. They always encouraged me to follow my dreams at any cost and it is because of their advice I had no hesitations when deciding to change careers. Their continual praise and support affected me so deeply I feel it is my duty to inspire the generations of children that I will come to enjoy in my own classroom someday.

My goal as a teacher is not only to inspire students to dream big but also to be effective, in the sense that, I want my students to become knowledgeable and learned individuals. An education is vital to success as an adult and I want my students to be exposed to best, well rounded, and efficient education I can provide them.
A good teacher must be timely, organized, knowledgeable, patient, dedicated, eager, and caring. The teacher I hope to be will encompass all of these traits as well as being accommodating, flexible, open to change, reflective, and motivated. I want the students to learn from me but I always will take every opportunity to learn from them.

My classroom will be inviting and exciting to promote growth and learning but will also be highly organized in the sense that things will be arranged to make teaching almost “natural” to me. Organization, I feel, will help the day go smoothly. It is also important that discipline be enforced so all students have a fair and non-distractive place to learn and work. It is because of these views that I would say the essentialist view of teaching is what I would follow as a guide in my classroom.

Since technology is always developing and new technologies are being introduced it is a safe bet to say students who enter my classroom will be dealing firsthand with technology and also already have a decent idea as how to use these technologies. With that said, my classroom will frequently make use of the technologies available. I plan on incorporating various technologies into my lessons to solidify my goals of teaching well rounded lessons.

Students will also work in groups or teams as often as deemed necessary to build up communication and social skills which are important for when they enter higher learning institutions and the workforce. These groups will change periodically to expose
all the students to one another and to put them in situations, in which they will experience different personalities.

In terms of lesson planning it is my duty as a teacher to incorporate and make use of the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards. However, in addition to making sure these standards are met, it is my goal to plan thorough lessons that will be sensitive to all learner personalities and backgrounds. I am aware of the “melting pot” public schools in the State of New Jersey are so I will make accommodations to meet the needs of the students and their families.

It is also my belief that all students are capable and entitled to an education regardless of ability so for the students whom I will encounter in my classroom with special needs I will make accommodations for with the help of special education teachers and in-class support systems.

As a future teacher for the State of New Jersey, I pledge a commitment to the students and families that I will be fortunate to have in my classroom. I understand the responsibilities I have been given and take them seriously. I am aware that these families are trusting in me to provide their children with a safe and vivant educational experience and will dedicate my time, knowledge, and work to making sure I meet their expectations.
Community, District, and School Factors:

_.__Middle School is located in the urban area of _____ within Union County of New Jersey. _____ was originally formed as a township on March 4, 1861, from portions of Elizabeth, Rahway, and Union Township. Portions of the township were taken to form Cranford (March 14, 1871), Linden Borough (March 30, 1882), and Roselle (December 20, 1894). As of the census of 2000, there were 39,394 people, 15,052 households, and 10,084 families residing in the city. The population density was 3,645.5 people per square mile (1,407.0/km). There were 15,567 housing units at an average density of 1,440.6 per square mile (556.0/km). The racial makeup of this city is Caucasian 66%, African American 22%, Hispanic 14%, and other 4%. The rapidly increasing population of _____ in the 1920’s necessitated the building of a Junior High School _____, begun on June 5, 1926, along with additions to many of the other six existing schools in _____ became a middle school in the early 1980’s, and it currently has about 650 students enrolled in grades 6, 7, and 8. There is a staff of about 70 employees including 50 teachers. The daily schedule for _____ is a block schedule of 90 minutes. Parental involvement is minimal in _____ Middle School.

Classroom Factors:

The school is three floors tall and has lockers outside of the classrooms in the hallway. Students are allowed to go to their lockers twice a day—once before homeroom and once after lunch. There are bulletin boards abundant in the hallways, in which students’ work is displayed as well as posters and flyers pertaining to school and district events such as dances, sporting events, and community service opportunities. Within the classroom there are cabinets and closets
provided to store materials for science experiments. There are three computers that are easily reached by the students. Other sources of technology that are accessible to both students and the teacher are an overhead projector with the LCD Screen, TV, VCR, and microscopes. There is the teacher’s workstation in the front of the classroom with her desk and technology center to the left. The classroom also holds a large cabinet, in which biological samples and fossils are displayed. There are nine long tables in rows each with three seats for the students. Also, there are two desks in the back of the room for the paraprofessionals. Other materials available are textbooks, globes, journals, chalk board, folders, and student boxes filled with calculators, rulers, markers, pencils and other materials needed to complete all lab work. The teacher has a large display, in which all assignments are listed so students have an idea of how to organize their notebooks and folders. Posters related to science are in abundance in the classroom and a bulletin board has been set up which serves as a word wall. Vocabulary words pertinent to the unit of study are displayed on it throughout the span of the unit. The rules and procedures of the school and classroom are posted as well as students’ work within and outside the classroom.

**Student Characteristics:**

This particular science classroom hosts a general education population with a minimum of two special education students in two of the six periods. They are between the ages of 11 and 13. The majority race is African American in this classroom with a few Hispanic, Caucasian, and Asian American students as well. None of these learners are ELL students. In comparison to the other middle school in 1, I have been informed that their standardized test scores for science are slightly higher than the scores of the students in the other school.
There are six periods total, in which the minimum amount of students is 16 and the maximum is 28:

Period One: 10 Boys vs. 6 Girls

Period Two: 15 Boys vs. 5 Girls

Period Three: 14 Boys vs. 10 Girls

Period Four: 11 Boys vs. 7 Girls

Period Five: 15 Boys vs. 10 Girls

Period Six: 17 Boys vs. 11 Girls

Each period has a majority of boys in relationship to the girls. Out of these six periods two are accompanied with a paraprofessional to assist in the needs of the special education students. There are more girls with special educational needs than boys in this classroom.

Most of the learners in this classroom appear to be visual and kinesthetic learners, which are proven by their responses to the technology that is implemented into the lessons. They do very well with group work and experiments and participations increases during these events as well.

**Instructional Implications:**

This classroom does not have any ELL students but there are a few special education students included who are being helped through modified instruction. Each period with a special needs learner has a paraprofessional who works with the teacher to best accommodate that student.
Some ways in which this is done is by modifying instruction, placing that learner in a group with students who are patient and able to help, re-wording dittos and tests to suit the learner, and encouraging participation by that student.

All of these factors are important to my instruction of this classroom in an urban community. Most of these parents are single, working parents of one to three jobs. Many of these students take on roles in the household like cleaning, babysitting, and cooking that interfere with their school and homework. As a teacher I have to come up with a strategy to communicate with the parent that are working or have other children and responsibilities so they can become more involved in their child’s education.

I will send out a form and letter with my contact information and request contact information from them as well such as work number, home number, cell number, and email address. I will also have a communication section in each child’s notebook for parents to sign off on when the student is done with their homework and so that I may communicate back to the parent. I will accommodate my lessons to each learning style so everyone will have the opportunity to be successful in my classroom. I will continue with the schools focus which is students’ success, which makes it a great learning environment for the students and me.
LEARNING GOALS

Learning Goal #1

*Students will be able to identify the following vocabulary and relate them to experiments conducted in class.

- individual
- population
- community
- ecosystem
- biotic
- abiotic

*In accordance with the revised Bloom's Taxonomy, students will generate new ideas, demonstrate comprehension, and use information by:

- defining vocabulary words.
- using the vocabulary words to construct sentences.
- discuss the meaning of the vocabulary words and use them in scientific conversation.

*Local, state, and national standards are met through:

NJCCCS for Science

*The stressed importance of this learning goal is justified for it allows students the means to provide subject related conclusions when completing the experiments.
Learning Goal #2

*Students will be able to analyze and sort images on cards to determine which represent individuals, populations, communities, and ecosystems.

Students will also identify biotic and abiotic elements in an ecosystem.

*In accordance with the revised Bloom’s Taxonomy, students will explore ideas, demonstrate comprehension, and recall information by:

-working in groups to sort image cards.

-discussing various individuals, populations, communities, and ecosystems.

-reading articles on people who are responsible for categorizing these systems.

- watching a video on Jane Goodall and her study of the population of chimpanzees.

-answering questions about Jane Goodall’s research.

*Local, state, and national standards are met through:

NJCCCS for Science

*This learning goal is justified because it promotes students to think and communicate more effectively about ideas they will encounter.
Learning Goal #3

*Students will be able to assemble the abiotic elements of an aquatic and terrestrial mini-ecosystem.

Students will also be able to introduce (biotic) organisms into aquatic and terrestrial mini-ecosystems.

Students will have the opportunity to use scientific logs to record interactions and changes in the mini-ecosystems over time.

*In accordance with the revised Bloom’s Taxonomy, students will recall information, recognize abiotic and biotic factors, demonstrate comprehension, and perform applications by:

- sorting images into biotic and abiotic categories.

- assembling an aquarium and a terrarium.

- preparing biotic and abiotic factors for organisms and their habitats.

- observing aquatic and terrestrial organisms.

- predicting how organisms will interact in their environments.

- attending to the basic needs of the organisms such as feeding and maintenance.

*Local, state, and national standards are met through:

NJCCCS for Science.
*This learning goal is justified because students will have a hands on learning experiment, in which, they can make connections between what they have been studying to what they will be building.

Learning Goal #4

*Students will be able to research the functional roles of twelve organisms in the Mono Lake ecosystem in order to construct a food web. Students will be able to diagram a food web, using arrows to indicate what eats what in Mono Lake.

*In accordance with the revised Bloom’s Taxonomy, students will justify decisions, demonstrate comprehension, use information, and perform applications by:
- reviewing the definition of an ecosystem.
- watching a video on Mono Lake.
- answering and discussing questions related to the biotic and abiotic factors of Mono Lake.
- discussing the concept of the “food chain.”

*Local, state, and national standards are met through:

NJCCCS for Science

*This learning goal is justified because students will have an opportunity to put their knowledge of populations and ecosystems to use when conducting research for Mono Lake.
Family Communication Project

As discussed in the contextual factors, Middle School is located in the urban city of Linden, New Jersey. Factors contributing to this label are due to low income families, single parent homes, moderate to high crime rates, and street gangs.

In order to combat the problem that students and parents alike are faced with, Soehl Middle School maintains an open communication policy between teacher, student, and parent. All aspects of the students' time in the classroom are relayed to the parents by the teacher and administration via email, phone conversations, weekly progress reports, and meetings. Back-To-School night is held in September so parents have the opportunity to meet their child’s teachers, Parent-Teacher conferences are held during each of the four marking periods for the same reason, and PTO (Parent-Teacher Organization) meetings are held on a regular basis so parent and school staff can voice their opinions or concerns.

Forms are sent home in September requesting parent and guardian contact information such as email addresses, work numbers, cell phone numbers, and home addresses. These forms are kept private in the school office and referred to when contact is necessary. These forms are updated regularly and are vital for maintaining the parent/teacher relationship.

The goal of this classroom in accordance with the above mentioned policy at Middle School is to keep parents involved in their child’s education. If this is done, the student’s probability of success will increase significantly. Also, through parent involvement the student is
more likely to strive to do better academically and become model citizens, in which they can change the reputation and future of the city of

Middle School was given a grant by the State of New Jersey to host the after school program, 21\textsuperscript{st} Century, which takes place when school dismisses at 2:45pm. The purpose of this program is to enrich the lives of these students, most of who come from low income homes, so they are exposed to opportunities they otherwise may not have been able to participate in. While activities are in place as entertainment such as trips to museums, aquariums, and local colleges and universities, the goal of 21\textsuperscript{st} Century is to reinforce the academic subjects on state and national levels. Literacy enrichment is this program's main goal and through it, strives to help parents with literacy as well.

My goal is to communicate to the families of the students I work with at School so they can get to know who I am, why I am there, and why I want to teach their children. I have prepared a short presentation for parents explaining this goal, which can be used the next time parents are invited into the classroom. I believe this will allow these families to see how much teachers, especially I, care about making a difference in their children's lives.
Professional Development Plan-
Goal Setting and Choice of Tasks

In order to effectively give these students a proper education, their teacher and I have set goals based on the Spectrum Model, which includes knowledge, skills, and dispositions for the classroom that we will use to ensure they are learning. These goals pertain to subject matter, student learning, diversity of learners, classroom management, assessment, technology and critical thinking, and communication.

Goal #1- Subject Matter
As this is a Science classroom it is imperative to have a solid knowledge of the subject. In accordance with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards as well as national standards I will keep informed on the subject of Science through workshops, and reading newspapers and Internet articles.

___ Knowledge of Science
___ Teach science skills such as safety procedures and the scientific method

Goal #2- Student Learning
Students learn in different ways. Therefore, as a teacher I have to come up with ways to accommodate all the different learning styles. I will ask questions to ensure learning is taking place, I will create “Do- Now’s” that will challenge thinking, and encourage participation as a means of assessment.

___ Diverse and plentiful methods of teaching are implemented
___ Learning types are noted and understood
___ Provide opportunities for learning and participation

Goal #3- Diversity of Learners
This particular classroom is a general education classroom with special education learners included. Therefore I have to make exceptions and modifications to include all learners such as repeating directions, wording tests in ways that can be understood by all learners, repeating statements, displaying facts relevant to subject matter all around the class and keeping open communication with the students and their parents.

___ Awareness and respect for all cultures
___ Understanding of special needs
___ Awareness of ELL
Goal #4- Classroom Management
Organization is vital to a successful classroom. I will keep my grades and the students’ papers and dittos organized. I will update the grades in Genesis grading system updated. I will prepare all labs and dittos in a timely fashion so when I am teaching the lesson will go smoothly.

___ Organized classroom
___ Rules and student expectations are in place
___ Grades are updated frequently
___ Students have a sense of responsibility
___ Lab safety is stressed
___ Procedures are consistent
___ Discipline is enforced

Goal #5- Assessment
A specific grading system is used by the Science Department that ranges from A+ to F. The student is given every opportunity for success. Learning is assessed in many ways- visual assessment, quizzes, reading aloud, tests, homework, etc. I will be looking for signs of learning disabilities or any factor that may hinder success during assessment as well. Praise will be given where due and all positive efforts will be rewarded in some way. If students have difficulties, I will continue to monitor them for signs of improvement.

___ Students are made aware of grading policy
___ Assignments/test dates are given in advance
___ All means of assessment are covered
___ Students with learning disabilities are recognized

Goal #6- Technologies/Critical Thinking
Technology is a huge part in Science so it will be incorporated as often as deemed appropriate. All warm up activities will be in either PowerPoint format or on the overhead projector. Short clips and videos pertinent to the area of focus will be used as well. Students will be encouraged to use the computer to research for in-class projects or homework. Challenge questions will be issued to promote critical thinking and to make connections from subject to subject.

___ Rules for Internet use are established
___ Technology will be used in at least one part of the lesson a day
___ Students will have access to technology
___ Parents will be informed
___ Setup and use an e-board

Goal #7- Communication
Parents play a vital role in the education of their children. Parents will be informed frequently on the progress, whether good or bad, of their children. Forms of communication will include email,
phone, and in-person meetings. Professional colleagues will be consulted for ideas and suggestions on how to improve or modify lessons.

___ Means of communication are established by teacher/parent
___ Progress reports are updated and distributed each marking period
Parent/Guardian Contact Information

Dear Parents/Guardians,

There will be times throughout this school year, in which I will contact you on your child’s progress in this class. Please provide as many methods of contact below so we can communicate.

Thank you.

Teacher

Teacher’s name:
Soehl Middle School website:
Linden School District website:
Soehl Middle School Office phone line:
Soehl Middle School Guidance phone line:

1. Parent/Guardian Name:
   Cell number:
   Work number and extension:
   Home number:
   Home address:
   Email address:
   BEST MEANS OF CONTACT:

2. Parent/Guardian Name:
   Cell number:
   Work number and extension:
   Home number:
   Home address:
   Email address:
   BEST MEANS OF CONTACT:

Signature

Signature
Appropriateness of Learning Goals

These four learning goals are used to introduce the unit of study for *Populations and Ecosystems*. This is the first unit, in which, students will have the opportunity to work with biotic (living) organisms. They are appropriate because they clearly define what biotic organisms are and also relatable to prior knowledge students have pertaining to abiotic (non-living) factors.

These four learning goals address the importance of distinguishing between biotic and abiotic factors and therefore give students the means to identify the necessities of life and of successful ecosystems.

These learning goals support the efforts of New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards and National Science Standards. They are also supported by the FOSS Curriculum which is the science curriculum of Joseph E. Soehl Middle School in Linden, New Jersey.

The FOSS Curriculum is arranged so students are able to gain knowledge and build on it by finding meaning in the reading and experiments, and by making connections between the information they are given and the labs they are participating in.

Students will also reinforce their knowledge of the other academic subjects such as Language Arts, Social Studies, and Mathematics through these learning goals with activities such as reading, writing, simple calculations and estimations, and research.
# Assessment Plan Overview

## Learning Goal #1

Students will be able to define the following vocabulary and relate them to experiments conducted in class:

- *individual*
- *population*
- *community*
- *ecosystem*
- *biotic*
- *abiotic*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Format of Assessment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Assessment</td>
<td><strong>Anticipatory Set</strong>&lt;br&gt;Chose an animal and describe it in detail.&lt;br&gt;What makes it an animal?&lt;br&gt;What makes it different from other animals?&lt;br&gt;Does that animal live by itself or with others of its kind?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formative Assessment</td>
<td><strong>Oral Discussion</strong>&lt;br&gt;While giving students the definitions of the above mentioned vocabulary words, the teacher will call upon several students to give examples of individuals, populations, communities, ecosystems, biotic organisms, and abiotic factors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Assessment</td>
<td><strong>Written Quiz</strong>&lt;br&gt;Ten questions with a variety of multiple choice, fill-in, and matching words to definitions.</td>
</tr>
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**Adaptations:**

For pre-assessment, SNL (Special Needs Learners), will be allowed an extra 5 minutes to work. They also have the opportunity to work with a partner and directly with in-class support to complete their assignment.

For the written quiz, SNL may take it another room with the in-class support teacher.
Learning Goal #2

Students will be able analyze and sort out images on cards to determine which represent individuals, populations, communities, and ecosystems.

Students will also identify biotic and abiotic elements in an ecosystem.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Assessment</td>
<td><strong>Quick Write-</strong> In their notebooks, students will use all of the vocabulary words from the previous learning goal to construct two to three paragraphs. Students will read their paragraphs aloud in class for assessment. Teacher will identify ability to read and write with science concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formative Assessment</td>
<td><strong>Visual Observation-</strong> While the students work in their groups to sort out the image cards, the teacher will look to observe: -ability to correctly categorize images -ability to work as a team -ability to provide reasons as to why they categorized the images into the piles they chose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Assessment</td>
<td><strong>Short Answer Worksheet-</strong> While students are viewing the video, the teacher will look to observe attentiveness and students working on their worksheets. The worksheet pertains directly to the video so students must be paying close attention in order to answer correctly and in a timely fashion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adaptations:
Students, who are SNL, will be provided with an extra five to ten minutes to complete their Quick Writes. The in-class support teacher will also be available to assist them. Students who are SNL will be placed with an “advanced” and capable group so they may assist in helping the SNL. For the worksheet, SNL will be provided with the same
amount of time as the general education students, however, they may come to the teacher after the period to complete the ditto or review the video.

**Learning Goal #3**

Students will be able to assemble the abiotic elements of an aquatic and terrestrial mini-ecosystem.

Students will also be able to introduce organisms (biotic) into aquatic and terrestrial mini-ecosystems.

Students will have the opportunity to use a scientific log to record interactions and changes in mini-ecosystems overtime.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>ASSESSMENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Assessment</td>
<td><strong>Make a Prediction</strong>- Students will refer on knowledge thus far to make an educated prediction as to how the biotic organisms and abiotic factors will interact in their habitats. The teacher will observe attentiveness and participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formative Assessment</td>
<td><strong>Test</strong>- Students will take a 10 question, short answer test, in which they must recall the steps taken to construct the aquariums and terrariums.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Assessment</td>
<td><strong>Homework</strong>- Students will read Biosphere in their resource books for HW and will state five facts from the reading in their NBs. The teacher will check this the next class period.</td>
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**Adaptations:**

SNL will be reminded what a prediction is and reasonable ways to go about making one. The in-class support teacher will assist with this.

SNL will take a 10 question test with a majority of multiple choice questions and a
minority of short answer questions. 
SNL will be allowed an extra day to hand in their completed HW assignment.

Learning Goal #4

Students will be able to research the functional roles of twelve organisms in the Mono Lake ecosystem in order to construct a food web.

Students will be able to diagram a food web, using arrows to indicate what organisms eat other organisms.

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<th>ASSESSMENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Assessment</td>
<td>Oral Discussion-</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>The teacher will state terms learned in this unit and call upon students to answer with a definition in their own words and an example. All students will be called upon to answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formative Assessment</td>
<td>Worksheet-</td>
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<td>Students will watch a video on Mono Lake and answer a worksheet specifically pertaining to the movie. Worksheets will be collected and counted as a quiz grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Assessment</td>
<td>Homework-</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students are to research an ecosystem other than Mono Lake in class using the Internet (w/ supervision) and be prepared to discuss it in class as the next day’s anticipatory set.</td>
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</table>

Adaptations:
SNL will not be called upon unless they volunteer an answer during the oral discussion. They will be responsible for listening to their peers responses. SNL will be allowed extra time to view the video after class and to complete with the help of in-class support or the teacher on a one- on- one basis. SNL will have access to in-class support when researching the ecosystem on the Internet and will be allowed to decline oral participation for the next class if they choose, however they will have to write a few paragraphs on the ecosystem that will be handed in.
Explanation of Assessment Plan

The unit of study for Populations and Ecosystems under the FOSS Curriculum calls for many assessments of student learning and many varieties of assessment. With these assessments, special adaptations must be made in order to ensure learning and comprehension is taking place by all who are in the classroom.

Pre-Assessment:

The pre-assessments chosen for this unit of study are most commonly used as the anticipatory set, or “do-now.” With this the teacher is able to assess areas of strength and weakness from the beginning of the class, and therefore make modifications early enough to ensure all students in the class are working to the best of their ability and are comprehending the material being taught.

These pre-assessments are aligned with the learning goals of focus and with New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for Science. They are appropriate for all learners in the seventh grade at.

Formative Assessments:

A rich variety of formative assessments have been included in this unit to keep the students from experiencing boredom and to reach the different learning styles. These assessments are sequential in the sense that they build upon knowledge the students obtain from day to day in this science class. In other words, a student will not be given an
assessment from Learning Goal #4 until Learning Goals #1, #2, and #3 have been mastered.

They include oral discussions, visual observations, written tests with a variety of questions from multiple choices to short answer, and worksheets. All of these are examples the teachers reasoning to provide a comprehensive learning experience in the classroom.

Oral discussions are assessed on a (+/-) system. The rating scale is as follows:
+ will be given for answering two or more questions, even if the responses are not correct, and is equivalent to 95%.
- will be given for answering only one question, even if the response is not correct, and is equivalent to 85%.
A grade of / will be issued for no participation at all and is equivalent to 75%.
All grades for oral participation as counted as quiz grades.

**Post Assessment:**

Post-assessment are used as reinforcement in the science classroom and as a means to see if the teacher needs to re-teach concepts from prior classes or is able to move on to the next lesson.

The teacher uses a variety of post-assessment evaluations such as written quizzes, worksheets, reading assignments, and homework.
All post-assessment work is either handed in for a grade, checked at the end of class, or check at the beginning of the next class.

Homework and other written assignments that are graded as part of evaluation and assessment are graded as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Number Grade Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>89-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>79-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>69-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59 and below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this Science classroom, + or – grades are not given along with the letter grades. Students have large window between scores, which seems to help with grades, especially post-assessment assignments.
Design for Instruction

Class of Study (Classroom Layout) -

Table One:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>26</th>
<th>27</th>
<th>28</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empty Row</td>
<td>Empty Row</td>
<td>Empty Row</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEY:**

- PINK = Female
- BLUE = Male
- Student 1 = SNL
- Student 15 = SNL

Pre-Assessment Scores:
(Averages taken from the LG 1-4, Pre-Assessments)

Table Two:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>90</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Breakdown of Pre-Assessment Scores:

Highest Average Score: 98% achieved by student #8 and student #13.

Lowest Average Score: 43% achieved by student #17.

Most Occurring Score: 90% achieved by 6 out of 28 students.

**Interpretation of Pre-Assessment Scores**

Pre-assessment scores were taken from each learning goal and calculated. The scores were averaged out and recorded. Since only four students out of twenty-eight failed the pre-assessment tests, the teacher was able to identify which students would need the most attention and determine the pace at which this unit would be completed.

Table 1 diagrams the classroom setup. It identifies each student with a number from 1 to 28 and separated them further by gender. Special needs learners are also identified as well as their position in the classroom with grid marks. This table has been provided to easily identify where students sit and which students scored what grade.

Table 2 indicates the averaged scores for the four pre-assessment tests given to the students.
# Unit Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>LEARNING GOAL (LG)</th>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Monday 45- Minute Period</td>
<td>LG #1</td>
<td>1. <strong>Do Now:</strong> Choose an animal and describe it in detail. What makes it an animal? What makes it different from other animals? Does that animal live by itself or with others of its kind? (10 minutes) (Pre-Assessment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LG #2</td>
<td>2. <strong>Introduce the Investigation:</strong> Students will define the following vocabulary: individual, population, community, ecosystem, biotic, and abiotic. Review the concepts of population, community, etc. by asking students to give example while defining the vocabulary. (5 minutes) (Formative Assessment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 + 3 Tuesday/Wednesday 90- Minute Period</td>
<td>LG #2</td>
<td>3. <strong>Give notes:</strong> Ask students to open their NB and copy down the notes. (10 minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. <strong>Introduce Organism Pictures:</strong> Ask students to open their resource books to pages 64-68 and study each picture carefully as well as read the captions. (5 minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. <strong>Distribute Mini Ecosystem Needs ditto.</strong> After reading the pages carefully, student will work at their tables to complete this ditto. Discuss responses. (5 minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. <strong>Written Quiz:</strong> Ten questions with a variety of multiple choice, fill-in, and matching words to definitions. (10 minutes) (Post-Assessment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7. <strong>Clean up/Dismiss.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Do Now:** Quick Write- In their notebooks, students will use all of the vocabulary words from the previous learning goal to construct two to three paragraphs. Students will read their paragraphs aloud in class for assessment. Teacher will identify ability to read and write with science concepts. (Pre-Assessment)

2. **Describe lab and discuss responsibilities.**

3. **Assign tasks.**

4. **Assemble the mini ecosystems:**
For the terrarium - One group will fill the basin with \( \frac{3}{4} \) soil and sand mixture. They will add shelter for organisms.

For the aquarium - One group will fill the basin with \( \frac{3}{4} \) treated water. They will add rocks, gravel, and sand to different parts of the bottom. Finally, they will add shelter for organisms.

While the students work in their groups, the teacher will look to observe:
- ability to correctly categorize images
- ability to work as a team
- ability to provide reasons as to why they categorized the images into the piles they chose.
(Formative Assessment)

5. Introduce aquatic organisms.


7. Distribute materials.

8. Make drawings and observations.

9. Share results.

10. Demonstrate organism transfer.

11. Introduce organisms and place organisms into their aquatic habitat.

12. Briefly observe the aquariums.

13. Introduce terrestrial organisms.


15. Distribute materials.

16. Make drawings and observations.

17. Share results.

18. Make predictions.

19. Add organisms to terrariums.

20. Video/Worksheet

While students are viewing the video, the teacher will look to observe attentiveness and students working on their worksheets. The worksheet pertains directly to the video so students must be paying close attention in order to answer correctly and in a timely fashion.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4 + 5</th>
<th>LG #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday/Friday</td>
<td>90-Minute Period</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Clean up.**

- **Assign HW:** Students will read *Biosphere 2: An Experiment in Isolation.* Students should list 5 facts from the reading in their NB.

1. **Do Now:** Make a Prediction-
   Students will refer on knowledge thus far to make an educated prediction as to how the biotic organisms and abiotic factors will interact in their habitats.
   The teacher will observe attentiveness and participation.

   (Pre-Assessment)

2. **Check previous night's homework.** Students were to read *Biosphere 2: An Experiment in Isolation* and list 5 facts from the reading in their notebook.

3. **Test-**
   Students will take a 10 question, short answer test, in which they must recall the steps taken to construct the aquariums and terrariums.

   (Formative Assessment)

4. **Observe mini ecosystems.** Distribute one aquarium and one terrarium to each group. Have them analyze each one carefully and see whether or not their predictions were right or not.

5. **Discard dead organisms.** Some organisms may have died. Students should remove them from the habitats and dispose of them properly. If this is the case, discuss why it is important for them to remove them from the living organisms and what would happen to the dead in nature.

6. **Introduce log sheets.**

7. **Model log sheet recordings.**

8. **Add temperature data.**

9. **Record observations.**

10. **Share observations.**

11. **Introduce snail and fish food.**

12. **Introduce ongoing observations.**

13. **Wrap up.**

14. **Look for population changes.**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>15. Clean up.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16. Assign HW.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will read Biosphere in their resource books for HW and will state five facts from the reading in their NBs. The teacher will check this the next class period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Dismiss the class.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-Minute Period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LG #4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 1. Check previous night’s HW. |
| 2. Do Now. |
| The teacher will state terms learned in this unit and call upon students to answer with a definition in their own words and an example. All students will be called upon to answer. |
| (Pre-Assessment) |
| 3. Resume video. |
| Worksheet- |
| Students will watch a video on Mono Lake and answer a worksheet specifically pertaining to the movie. |
| Worksheets will be collected and counted as a quiz grade. |
| (Formative Assessment) |
| 4. Homework- |
| Students are to research an ecosystem other than Mono Lake in class using the Internet (w/supervision) and be prepared to discuss it in class as the next day’s anticipatory set. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7 + 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday/Thursday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-Minute Period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LG #1,4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| 1. Do-Now. |
| Students will discuss the various ecosystems they researched for HW. |
| (LG #4 Post-Assessment) |
| 2. Pick an ecosystem to research as a group. |
| One person from each table will reach into a bag and pull out ONE piece of paper. Whatever ecosystem is picked is the one your group will be researching and presenting on. |
| 3. Write a one page INDIVIDUAL report on the ecosystem you picked. |
| What are the biotic organisms associated with your ecosystem? |
| What are the abiotic factors associated with your ecosystem? |
| What types of biotic and abiotic interactions occur in your ecosystem? |
| What are the predators, consumers, and decomposers associated with your ecosystem? |
| What role do humans play in your ecosystem? |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 + 10</td>
<td>LG #1,2,3,4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Thursday/Friday| 1. Do Now.  
Students will be given 10 minutes to organize their presentations. |
| 90- Minute Period | 2. Group Presentations.  
(LG #1,2,3,4 for Pre, Formative, and Post Assessments) |
|              | 3. Dismiss class.                                                        |

**Description of Activities:**

All of the activities that the students will partake in will be diverse to meet all learner needs. These activities will all be covered within 10 days to ensure maximum learning potential and to assess learning with various methods.

Most activities require materials the students and teacher have direct access to making all of these planned items achievable. Technology is utilized in the forms of computer-based research, television and DVD viewing, and overhead transparency projection.
On day one students will be introduced to organisms and abiotic factors. This will set the tone for the rest of the investigation by laying the groundwork for learning about a new topic. Days two and three will be used to put the acquired knowledge to work by assembling ecosystems that will host both biotic organisms and abiotic factors. On days four and five students will be observing the factors in the ecosystems they have created firsthand, and then will be tested on the information they have obtained. The final days of the study for this unit will be used to continue to reinforce the differences between biotic and abiotic factors, and their roles in the ecosystem. Students will also be introduced to new ecosystems within the North American continent.
Instructional Decision-Making

Group work was used often to allow students to reach their maximum potential in this class. I noticed that special needs learners (SNL) were able to focus better and complete their assignments with more accuracy while working in groups as opposed to individual work. By partnering SNL with classmates who would promote enthusiasm for the tasks, they were willing to cooperate and participate more in class.

Student #1 (SNL) was placed in a group with student #5 and student #10, who have managed to earn the highest grades all around in this class thus far. Together they were able to work cooperatively to complete the group presentation and visual aid on the ecosystem they were assigned to. Student #5 and student #10 demonstrated strong work ethic when working on their individual reports. This seemed to motivate student #1 to work hard on her report as well. She scored higher on this assignment than previous assignments for the fourth parking period.

Student #26 is constantly distracted. She is not a SNL. When taking written exams she cries and is not able to complete more than 10 questions. The cooperating teacher and I were notified by the guidance department that she was having serious problems within the household, which could be reason for the sudden change in behavior in regards to testing. To accommodate student #26, I have been issuing an oral exam to her. I read the question directly from the test to her and she provides an oral answer. By making this modification and accommodation for her, she has been able to score an average of 20 points higher for each quiz or test. This provides proof that she is listening in class but is having trouble focusing during written assignments.

Student #15 was suspended from school (OSS) during this unit therefore modifications and accommodations were not applicable in class. Work was sent home for him to complete,
however he did not do any of it and received “zeros” for each assignment given. When he returns to class he will be given the opportunity to complete the assignments for half credit.
Analysis of Student Learning

Whole Group Results:

The following table provides the averages for all formative and post-assessment results for each student in the class of study. The pre-assessment scores were averaged out and calculated in the section for Design for Instruction.

Table 1: Formative and Post-Assessment Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FORMATIVE-</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POST-</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDENT</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORMATIVE-</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>OSS</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POST-</td>
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<td>91</td>
<td>OSS</td>
<td>90</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>FORMATIVE-</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>88</td>
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<tr>
<td>POST-</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>90</td>
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<td>94</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Formative-assessment evaluation results show that students had a decent knowledge of content (Biology) before the unit progressed. All students, excluding student #15 (n/a due to OSS), student #11, and student #17 had passing pre-assessment scores.

Post-assessment evaluation results also show that the majority of the students were able to build on previous and recently learned information taught in the class. There were significant increases in averages for some while others were able to maintain solid passing averages. Students did not drop in averages from formative-assessment to post-assessment. However, the students who failed formative-assessment also failed post-assessment, but did improve in overall average.
Table 2: Breakdown of Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL SCORE</th>
<th># OF STUDENTS FORMATIVE-ASSESSMENT</th>
<th># OF STUDENTS POST-ASSESSMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100-90 A</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89-80 B</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79-70 C</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69-60 D</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59 and below</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on Table 2, there was significant jump from students who scored a “B” during formative-assessment to an “A” in post-assessment. No student scored a “D” in pre- or post-assessment and the two students who did fail formative-assessments also failed post-assessments, however, did improve in overall average.

Table 3: Learning Goal Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT #</th>
<th>LG 1</th>
<th>LG 2</th>
<th>LG 3</th>
<th>LG 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, all learning goals were accomplished by students. The students who did not meet all four learning goals was due to reasons such as distractions in the classroom in forms of
talking, fooling around, lack of attention, or not being prepared for class. Even so, most students were able to master the majority of the learning goals thus making this a successful unit of study.

Sub-Group Results:

Two groups were selected by gender to compare the results for Learning Goal #1- Students will be able to define these vocabulary words- individual, population, community, ecosystem, biotic, and abiotic; and relate them to experiments conducted in class.

This class consists of 28 students- 17 boys and 11 girls. Each gender has one special needs learner (SNL). At the beginning of this investigation all students were asked to work on a “do-now” in which, they were to pick an animal and describe it in detail. All the females in this class were able to complete the task without hesitation or asking questions. On the other hand, the males in the class asked for the question to be repeated several times (even though the question was posted on a PowerPoint and available for viewing) before they were able to start. The females as a whole finished the assignment on average 5 minutes before any one male did. When the results were checked it turned out that student #9 and student #25, both males, completely disregarded the instructions and did not receive an adequate grade for the assignment.

Individual Results:

Student # 10, a female who scored the highest in post-assessment and Student # 17, a male who scored the lowest in post-assessment were chosen for individual study.

Student #10 sits in the last row towards the back of the classroom on the end. She is seated next to another female who like her, is quiet and always attentive. She comes to class prepared with the resource book, notebook, folder, and writing utensil every day. On the other
hand, student #17 sits in the second row towards the front of the classroom. He sits on the end of the row next to another male student. These two males are similar in that they are never prepared for class. Student #17 has to go to his locker everyday with an escort to retrieve his required items for the class. He is very talkative to his partner and is argumentative. Student #17 is not classified however; it is my belief that he exhibits signs of ADHD. The cooperating teacher has requested an IEP meeting for this student through the guidance department so steps may be taken to correct his behavior and/or possible learning disorder.

Student #10 has expressed verbal and written interest in the subject of school. She speaks often of her desire to work in research when she grows older while student #17 expresses clear disgust for the subject.
Reflection and Self-Evaluation

This experience at Middle School in_, NJ has been just that, an experience. I was able to be a part of the Middle School experience once again, however this time as a teacher. I bonded with my clinical supervisor, cooperating teacher and my students. It truly was a time of learning. Even though it was hectic at times, it provided me with a taste of what the daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly schedule of a Middle School teacher is like.

This Teacher Work Sample (TWS) is documentation of time and work with the students of Middle School. Although it focuses on one of the six classes I assumed responsibilities for teaching, all of the students I saw were exposed to the dedication I put forth and care I expressed for their education. With the information I learned through Kean University’s demanding curriculum for prospective teachers, I was able to provide each student a fair and accommodating education in lieu of the cooperating teacher for these past four months. It is my belief that this TWS is evidence of my abilities to successfully teach grades K-8 focusing on the academic subject of Science.

The unit covered and used as data for this TWS spanned for a total of 10 days. Up until this point the students had been learning about abiotic or non-living factors. I chose a Biology unit to use as part of this TWS for this reason and also to see the reactions students would have to being able to study life as a process and actual living organisms.

I have developed professionally through this experience. I was given an abundance of support by my clinical supervisor and cooperating teacher which allowed me to gain the confidence needed to strongly believe that I am ready to walk into any seventh grade classroom and teach as if I have been doing it for twenty-five years.
I feel time I spent teaching was successful based on the results my students obtained when performing the work. The learning goals I had established were met by the learners and based on the results, Learning Goal #3 was the LG I feel the strongest connection to. For LG #3 students should have been able to assemble the biotic organisms and abiotic factors into aquariums and terrariums, and log the changes and observations they noticed. Due to the fact that students actually had a “hands on” experience, in which they could relate the material they learned to the task they were assigned, students were most successful with LG #3.

Students were least successful with Learning Goal #1. A possible reason for this is because LG #1 was expected for the beginning of the unit of study. Some students had no prior knowledge of the subject and therefore may not have been adapt to the material yet, as simple as it was. Still, overall results for LG #1 were satisfactory.

As a professional, I feel I can improve or modify LG #1 to accommodate those who are learning this unit for the first time. I assumed this time around that all students did have prior knowledge on the subject. I have learned not to make assumptions. The next time I may use this learning goal I will give clearer explanations of my expectations as well as more background information on the material.

Overall, this experience was successful for the students and me alike. The students learned a lot form me but I learned the most from them.
References and Works Cited


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