Effective Instructional Strategies Series

Interactive Tasks

Teacher Story and Compiled by
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Interactive Tasks

Contents

A Teacher's Story

Ms. Wilson gazes out at her 4th grade class sitting in neatly arranged rows. She is teaching a science unit about how fast processes and slow processes shape and reshape Earth's surface. The class choral reads from the science textbook. Ms. Wilson pauses to ask questions from the Teacher's Manual.

> *What slow process can shape the Earth's surface?* asks Ms. Wilson. She observes the same students again raising their hands to answer her question.
>
> *Robert?*
>
> *Weathering,* Robert replies.

The students continue reading. Ms. Wilson periodically asks the students questions. She notices other students are disengaged and fidgeting. Students repeatedly interrupt the lesson with requests to use the restroom.

At the end of the lesson, Ms. Wilson's assessment reveals that most students did not learn the important ideas from the text and discussion. *What could I do differently?* she wonders.

Ms. Wilson recalls the other 4th grade teacher talking about her success with group work. She decides to have students work in groups for the next science activity.

> *Students, today we are going to try something new! We are going to work in groups. After I've assigned you to a group, please move into that group. Group 1 is around Kayla's desk, Group 2 is at Tyler's desk, Group 3 is at Ava's desk, and Group 4 is at Jackson's desk.*

She places the students into groups of six. Students move noisily into their groups. Chairs scrape along the floor as students move to form groups within the rows of desks.

> *Boys and girls, you are going to read the next chapter and answer the questions at the end of the chapter. Take turns reading and answering the questions.*

Ms. Wilson circulates around the room, observing each group. One group argues about who will read first. Another group has one person reading the text with two other students giggling and talking. In another group, a student ignores a fellow student's contribution.

She brings the class back together and asks questions from the Teacher's Manual. Almost the same thing happens. While there are a few more hands raised to answer the questions, the multiple-choice assessment at the end of the chapter shows that most students still didn't learn the lesson's important ideas.

Ms. Wilson reflects back on the lesson and again wonders what she could have done differently. She wants her students to stay on task, transition to group work seamlessly, and actively participate in the activity. Ultimately, she wants the students to learn and understand the content.

Ms. Wilson knows she needs help and decides to ask Ms. Turner, the literacy coach, for assistance.

Teaching combines content—what students must learn; what teachers must teach—with lesson delivery—how to teach lessons to maximize student learning. For some, content is emphasized more and lesson delivery is overlooked. However, both are equally important. In this book, *Effective Instructional Strategies: Interactive Tasks*, you will learn the importance of how to facilitate content learning by incorporating interactive tasks through one teacher's journey. The goal is for you to learn the key practices of interactive tasks, the research supporting these key practices, and how you can take these practices to apply them in the classroom.

The framework for this book is the *Pacific Communities with High-performance In Literacy Development (Pacific CHILD) Teachers' Manual*. Pacific CHILD is a professional development program that was tested in the Pacific region using a true randomized control trial design. Pacific CHILD is a principles-based professional development program consisting of research-based teaching and learning strategies proven to help improve students' reading comprehension using informational text. All persons referred to are fictional characters.

What are Interactive Tasks?

Interactive tasks are an effective and intentionally planned format of instruction that makes learning a shared social experience. Students and teachers learn from one another as they work collaboratively and cooperatively—observing, discussing, questioning, sharing, and transferring knowledge. Through these interactions, students learn content knowledge and how to work productively in a group, an important social skill for life.

Interactive tasks are teacher-to-student interactions and student-to-student interactions. Teacher questioning, Think-Pair-Share, and small group work are examples of interactive tasks.

Why are Interactive Tasks Important?

Interactive tasks are important for a variety of reasons.

- **Interactive tasks can support reading comprehension.** Reading is active and personal involvement with the text. Giving students opportunities to write and talk about the text with others allows students to reinforce their understanding of the text, use the language of text, and exchange ideas about text with others. Students use their receptive language (input) when reading and listening. Productive language (output) is used when writing and speaking. Using both input and output during content study supports student learning.

  For example, asking students to *turn and talk* to find the main idea of the text allows oral processing of the text. Students also make meaning of the text together.

- **Interactive tasks help to shift responsibility for learning from the teacher to the student.** Recent research tells us the number of opportunities students have to demonstrate their learning through language output is equally important as language input (Anthony, 2008).

  Rather than simply listening to the teacher, giving students opportunities to respond to information provided by the teacher or through reading or seeing other media focuses students both on communicating what they learn and how they communicate this information.

It challenges students not only to discover what they know and what they don't know, but also to reproduce the language that carries meaning in the classroom.

For example, an appropriately scaffolded lesson and well-thought out response activity is likely to pique students' curiosity and desire to learn more about a topic. They work harder at developing the vocabulary and language skills to express what they want to share.

This shifts the responsibility and opportunity of seeking and making meaning from the teacher to the students.

- **Interactive tasks provide opportunities for peers to support and learn from one another.** Students often feel more comfortable working with their peers. A student struggling to make sense of an idea may understand better when it is explained by a peer (who may have only recently figured it out himself/herself) rather than by an adult (Kohn, 1999). Also, by working in groups, students learn from their shared discoveries and experiences together (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986; Walker, 2005).

- **Collaboration helps English language learners to engage in meaningful content work while acquiring English.** In second language research, Swain (1995a; 1995b) found that students did not develop native-like proficiency in English sentence construction and word choice until they had opportunities for extended output (speaking and writing) and collaborative dialogue that demanded linguistic accuracy. Working with others requires English language learners to: notice the gap between what they want to say and are able to say; test what they want to say and modify output based on feedback from others; and reflect on language use to internalize language knowledge (Swain, 1995a).

  A well-structured interactive task, one rich with context, visuals, and manipulatives, can include students of mixed-language proficiency. This allows proficient English speakers to model and consolidate their own learning by taking leadership roles. Beginning and developing English learners can try out new words and sentence frames with a small audience. Most importantly, English language learners are thinking and learning in meaningful ways about real content, in spite of a lack of English proficiency.

  An example of this is having students work in small groups to draw the cause and effects of an earthquake. English proficient students facilitate the process using resources, such as a science textbook,

Internet sites, and video, and sharing the learned information. When English language learners work alongside their peers they immerse themselves with learning the cause and effects of earthquakes, through listening and participating in the discussions and, at times, trying to use their new words and sentences.

- **Interactive tasks help build life skills necessary for success in the 21st century.** Cooperative opportunities help students prepare for the 21st century, where expectations to work and learn in a team-like environment are frequent (Uchida, Cetron, & McKenzie, 1996). Students recognize that when they work collaboratively, they are better able to solve problems (Kirchner, 2005; Johnson, et al., 1984; Uchida, et al., 1996). Research also has shown that this type of learning, as opposed to competitive or individualistic efforts, results in higher achievement, increased positive interpersonal relationships, and higher self-esteem (Gupta, 2004).

- **Incorporating student interaction into a lesson can help teachers chunk language and content into manageable pieces.** When teachers periodically stop throughout the lesson and allow students to digest and demonstrate their understanding of what has been taught, it makes processing the content more manageable. For example, when teachers have students orally use a new vocabulary word with a partner during explicit vocabulary instruction, this permits students to immediately process the meaning of the word. This chunks the vocabulary instruction into smaller pieces. Teaching the vocabulary all at once emphasizes language input only.

Ms. Turner and Ms. Wilson meet for the first time. They discuss the opening vignette and Ms. Wilson's frustration with group work.

I don't understand how my co-worker can have such success with her groups. I mean, my students were disruptive and didn't learn the content! My classroom was noisy and disorganized. I felt completely out of control!

Ms. Turner wants to tackle the largest stumbling block for teachers that want to use interactive tasks in the classroom: classroom management. She works with Ms. Wilson, sharing how to manage interaction.

How to Manage Interaction

Classroom management and organization are integral for successful interactive tasks. Teachers may initially feel a lack of control when students are participating in group work. Keep in mind that a productive learning environment can appear noisy and chaotic.

The key components of successful interactive tasks are planning, organizing, and managing the classroom. Many teachers assume students know how to work in groups and learn together.

Students need preparation for collaborative learning. Prepare students for interactive tasks by explicitly teaching routines, behaviors, and procedures for partner or group work. Modeling and practicing establish norms for interactive tasks. For example, have students practice moving into groups. Also, posting cooperatively created behaviors (e.g. "Follow directions" and "Stay on task") remind students of their responsibilities.

Students also need to be taught social skills. Some of the skills needed are how to encourage others to participate, ask for help, keep the group on task, and disagree with others. These skills are modeled for students. Students are also given explicit wording for each situation. For example, a teacher could model and provide a sentence frame for disagreeing with a group member. *I disagree with you, Jack. I think the cause is an earthquake and the effect is a tsunami. Not the cause is a tsunami and the effect is an earthquake.* As a guideline, having students stay in a cooperative group for approximately five weeks gives time to learn how to use social skills to work with others and resolve any challenges that may occur.

Modeling and Scaffolding for Interactive Learning

Keep in mind that many of the behaviors needed for small-group work are the same behaviors needed for whole-group work (e.g., listen, focus, don't disrupt others, follow directions). Teachers can begin the year with modeling and scaffolding these behaviors. Similar to teaching a new academic concept, teaching group-work behavior requires explicit teaching, modeling, and gradual release of responsibility from the teacher to the student.

Explicit teaching is explaining the behavior and why it is important to learning. Have students show examples and non-examples of the behavior (e.g., *What does it look like to be doing your work? What does it look like when you are not doing your work?*). Two examples of modeling behavior, including those for small-group work (e.g., If

you have a question, ask your group members first) are whole-group and fishbowl activities.

Whole-group modeling is combining expected behaviors within whole-group activities or discussions. For example, after a whole-group activity, the teacher explicitly points out the positive behaviors exhibited. The teacher refers to a class-created chart of expected classroom behaviors, and records the number of times the class exhibited each behavior. Keeping these behaviors visible to the class helps remind students of what is expected and how many times they have shown each behavior.

After modeling expected behaviors in a whole-group setting, the teacher moves onto modeling small group behaviors by using a technique called fishbowl. To begin the fishbowl activity, the teacher informs students they will be working in cooperative groups. The teacher describes the procedures and behaviors for small-group work (e.g., helping the group complete the task, listening to group members, respecting the opinions of others) and provides a visual reminder. This can be a chart or individual rubric. A group of students is selected to work in a small group and complete an activity. This activity should be well within the group's academic ability. The remaining students observe the small group working. Afterwards, the whole group debriefs the activity using the rubric. Students take turns working in fishbowl small groups. The fishbowl activity lasts for approximately a week or two.

Scaffolding behaviors is shifting the behavior responsibility away from the teacher to the student. For example, during whole-group activities the teacher starts to move away from pointing out behaviors. In other

words, the focus shifts away from behavior and more toward academic learning. Scaffolding is also gradually introducing group work. Teachers can use a combination of whole group and small groups until students are prepared and ready for more group work. In addition, teachers scaffold small-group work by serving as a coach, visiting each group to scaffold as needed, as well as monitoring their progress.

Classroom Organization

The physical layout of a classroom is important to managing interaction. Teachers can arrange furniture to create working spaces for interactive tasks. For example, student desks that are arranged in groups make it easier for discussions to occur. Supplies may be grouped in centers for students to access easily without interrupting the lesson or the teacher.

Ms. Turner follows up with Ms. Wilson and asks, *Given what you've just learned about managing interactive tasks, what might you do differently next time?*

Ms. Wilson smiles sheepishly. *All of the professional development I've had and I didn't make the connection between explicit teaching, modeling, and group work. I mean I didn't think about having to explicitly teach how to move into groups, let alone practice it! And it makes sense that we need to explicitly teach, model, and scaffold behaviors and social skills. Students come to us from different places and situations. Explicitly teaching and modeling the behaviors and social skills just makes good sense. It establishes norms for our class. I really think modeling how to disagree is very important because students would just say, "You're wrong!" Asking for help is another social skill that I think is important and needs modeling.*

I also think the fishbowl modeling can really help my students "see" what good behaviors look like. It is more than just a chart on the wall. I really like pointing out good behaviors during whole group activities. This can be a little "competition" to see how many points we can earn before next month. The students will love that!

What do you think your next steps are then, for planning for group work? asks Ms. Turner.

Oh my, there are so many things I want to do! First, I'd like to work with the students to create a list of expectations and rubric. I need to be sure to ask them why they think these are important and have them demonstrate examples and non-examples. This would be the explicit teaching of the behaviors. I plan to post the expec-

tations on the wall for students to be able to refer back to during group work.

Second, I'd like to use pointing out good behaviors and fishbowl techniques to model what good group work looks like. I also want to go over the social skills needed for group work. It would help my students to have sentence frames to use when needed. I think I'll make a chart with some of the more common phrases like, "I disagree with you...." We could practice this in a whole group by turning and talking to a partner.

Third, I think I need to move my students out of rows and into table groups. It will give my students a space to work in small groups on a regular basis without having to move the furniture each time there is a small-group activity. But, most importantly, I really need to train myself to let go of control of the classroom and accept that some level of noise is good. It is a different mindset. Just because a classroom is noisy, doesn't mean learning isn't going on. I really just need to let it go!

Ms. Turner agrees these are good starting points for learning how to manage interaction in the classroom. She understands the importance of classroom management for interactive tasks and suggests they meet in a few weeks to further discuss interactive tasks.

How to Promote Interaction

Teachers need to intentionally and regularly plan activities that promote teacher-to-student and student-to-student interaction. Well-planned activities enable all students to participate and actively engage in learning the content and, more importantly, create opportunities for students to receive and produce language. When students regularly participate in group work, routines and expectations are established, thus making the classroom more manageable.

Teacher-to-Student Interaction

It is common for the teacher to do most of the talking in a classroom, with the students speaking only when asked a question. Teacher-to-student interaction is a two-sided dialogue between the teacher and student. This dialogue is important because teacher-talk

serves as a language model for students, offers opportunities to expand language skills, and reinforces content.

Ms. Turner wants to gradually introduce interactive tasks and content learning to Ms. Wilson. Therefore, this discussion focuses on the teacher-to-student interactions. Their conversation goes back to the opening vignette.

> *I try to assess student knowledge during reading. I stop and ask questions along the way, just like it suggests in the Teacher's Manual. Why aren't students learning the content?* asks Ms. Wilson.

Ms. Turner explains that teacher-to-student interaction is a dialogue in which teachers repeat the message in many different ways (message redundancy), elaborate on student answers (elaboration), and question students. She reminds Ms. Wilson that, as with all teaching strategies, teacher-to-student interaction is most effective when teachers provide learning objectives for students. Students must know what will be learned and why learning the content is important. Ms. Turner goes on to further describe teacher-to-student interactions to Ms. Wilson.

Message redundancy is when the teacher models information explicitly and in several different ways so students have models to follow. This can be accomplished through demonstrations, discussions, print, and multiple exposures to text. Message redundancy is also the repeated use of precise, grammatically correct language in key patterns (Wong-Fillmore, 1985). Having many chances to experience the same content in different ways allows students' comprehension to grow. For example, a teacher may define lava in many different ways. The teacher can explain lava is hot molten rock that comes from beneath the Earth's surface. Lava is hot liquid rock. Lava is called magma when it is below the Earth's surface. It is called lava after it comes out of the Earth's surface. Lava can flow out of a volcano after it erupts. Lava is hot. She can also show pictures or video clips of lava.

Elaboration is repeating students' one-word or phrase response in its full form. It is used to model a fully-formed answer and expand on an idea with more precise and coherent language. For example, if the teacher asks a question and a student gives a one-word answer, such as *lava*, the teacher may repeat the answer, but elaborate by saying, *When a volcano erupts, lava, or hot liquid rock, may flow out of the volcano. Lava can destroy people's homes and things.* Parker and Chaudron (1987) found that elaborations were far more effective than simplified input from teachers in increasing students' comprehension.

Questioning can be either closed or open-ended. Closed-ended questions often have a single word or phrase answer that is usually predetermined, such as, *What is lava?* Open-ended questions do not have a pre-determined answer and promote discussion and interaction, such as, *What are the effects of a volcanic eruption?*

Ms. Turner asks Ms. Wilson, *Now that you've learned more about how to have productive teacher-to-student interactions, what do you think you could have done differently during your lesson?*

Well, for sure I realize that I didn't provide any sort of learning objective or purpose for learning. I sometimes pose this as an essential question. The students didn't have a framework for learning the new information. And I forgot to review and post our content and learning objectives. I have found this really helps my students understand what we will accomplish by the end of the lesson, says Ms. Wilson.

She continues, *I could have used the essential question to close the lesson. Students could self-assess their own learning and I would have seen what needed re-teaching.*

From what you've shared, I realize that I asked a closed-ended question that could be answered in one word. I guess I could have asked an open-ended question like, "How do slow processes shape the Earth's surface?"

I also think I could have elaborated on Robert's response. I should have elaborated that weathering is a slow process because it takes a long time for weathering to shape and reshape the Earth's surface. I could have explained that weathering can be water or wind. Water and wind slowly break down the rocks on the Earth's surface. The Earth's surface changes because the rocks are broken down. The rocks look different. This is how weathering slowly changes the Earth's surface.

Oh! Wow, I just elaborated AND repeated the content in different ways. Hey, this isn't as difficult as I thought! exclaims Ms. Wilson. *Put this together with a purpose for learning and I think the lesson could have been really effective!*

Ms. Wilson understands that interactive tasks are much more than a mere placement of students into groups. Ms. Wilson moves onto working with Ms. Turner, planning her implementation of teacher-to-student interaction for her earthquake lesson the next day.

Ms. Wilson begins her lesson by explaining the lesson objectives.

Boys and girls, today we will be learning more about fast processes that change the Earth's surface. An earthquake is one kind of fast process. Let's read today's learning objective together.

The class reads aloud together. *I can describe how an earthquake changes the Earth's surface.*

To assess students' background knowledge, Ms. Wilson asks an open-ended question to her students, *What can happen as a result of an earthquake?*

Chloe responds, *A big wave can destroy us.*

Yes, one of the effects of an undersea earthquake is that the level of the ocean may rise and cause tsunamis, or large waves, says Ms. Wilson. She shows a tsunami diagram. (Ms. Wilson elaborates.)

Using the diagram and hand motions, Ms. Wilson explains, *When an earthquake happens underwater, it can cause waves in the ocean. These waves move quickly and in all different directions. When these waves come toward shore, they can get bigger and bigger and eventually crash into the shore. This is a tsunami.* (Ms. Wilson repeats the information in a different way.) *Now we are going to learn other ways the Earth's surface can change after an earthquake.*

Student-to-Student Interaction

Student-to-student interaction is when students work together in partners or groups to learn content and discuss their learning. Student interaction is important because it provides opportunities for extended language output.

Ms. Turner and Ms. Wilson meet again. Bolstered by her success with classroom management of interactions and teacher-to-student interactions, Ms. Wilson is eager to move on and learn more about student-to-student interactions. Ms. Turner shares the following with her.

Planning Student-to-Student Interaction

Effective and productive group work involves careful lesson planning and preparation. Successful student group work requires a well-planned and cognitively appropriate activity with students talking and

learning together. Each student is dependent on one another to complete the task and held accountable as an individual and for the group.

Group work should be in small groups. An optimum number of people in a group are 2–5 students. Students can be grouped by ability, heterogeneously or homogeneously.

Effective group work also has clear individual and group goals. These goals are given both orally and in print. The goals are specific to the activity (e.g., individual goal: read the text independently; group goal: complete a graphic organizer and summarize the cause and effect of earthquakes).

> Ms. Wilson says to Ms. Turner, *Oh, I am starting to see why my group work didn't work. The groups were too large. I had groups of six students.*
>
> *For the activity, I didn't model it for my students. I think I got so wrapped up in figuring out how to have students work in groups that I forgot to model the task! From what I've learned now, I see that I also didn't give individual goals, or really a group goal either. I just said, 'Read the text and answer the questions. Take turns.' There weren't any individual responsibilities laid out. The group responsibilities were pretty weak, too. I need to make sure to use this in my next lesson. Last, I didn't provide any student assessment for students to grade their own performance and the group's performance.*
>
> *You know, it is funny. When I say all these things, it seems overwhelming. However, I see that once I establish the forms, like the self-assessment at the end of the activity, I can use the same form over and over again. I may need to make small changes, but I have the bulk of the work done. The individual and group goals are just writing out what I want the students to accomplish as individuals and as a group.*
>
> *I also see that if I create these lessons this year, I can reuse them next year! So when I think about it, interactive tasks aren't so overwhelming!*

Ms. Turner nods and continues.

In addition, productive group work requires collaboration. Group tasks are structured so each member's contribution is needed to successfully complete the task. It is important for students to know that they need

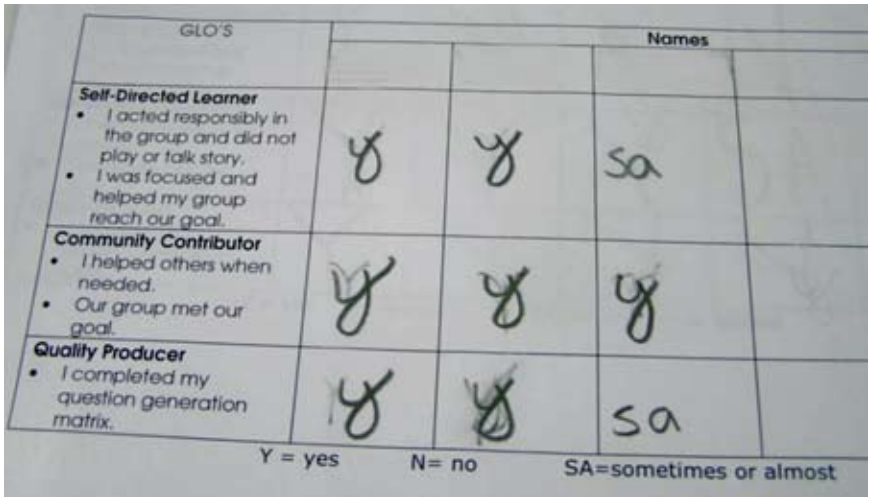
to participate in order to help the group succeed. This can be accomplished by assigning specific roles to each group member (e.g., facilitator, recorder, timekeeper). Role cards can help define each member's job and provide a visual reminder. Modeling of each role also helps students see exactly what they are supposed to be doing during group work. Sentence frames give students wording for their role.

Activities are designed to require student collaboration and discussion. Informing students that any group member may be called on to share with the whole class encourages discussion. Group tasks are not meant to be a consolidation of individual student work, but rather an activity that is completed together. Tasks should be difficult, but achievable. "It seems when the task is structured so that it is difficult, but not impossible, learners actually outperform those who were in groups that had tasks that ensured success" (Frey, Fisher, and Everlove, 2009).

Ms. Wilson agrees. Ms. Turner continues on.

Effective group work also holds individuals and groups accountable for their learning and conduct during group work. Students individually self-assess their performance during group work. (See Attachment A.) Individual learning can be assessed using a follow-up assignment. Groups also collaboratively process their ability to work together and brainstorm ways to improve. (See Attachment B.) Teachers can provide individual and group self-assessment rubrics to focus attention on specific social skills and encourage reflection and discussion. Examples include: *One way our group worked well together today is..., We learned that in any group, it is helpful to...,* and *Next time our group will improve by...*

Teachers rotate around the room to assess individual and group work. The teachers listen in for accountable talk (e.g., Are students discussing the content?). They notice if students are stretching their thinking, and learning from and transferring learning to others in the group. They observe if all students are engaged and interacting. Monitoring the groups working allows the teachers to give immediate feedback or redirect the learning. A rubric can also be used to assess the group work. The teacher can mark the rubric during the activity and another rubric can be marked a second time at the close of the task.



GLO'S	Names			
Self-Directed Learner • I acted responsibly in the group and did not play or talk story. • I was focused and helped my group reach our goal.	y	y	sa	
Community Contributor • I helped others when needed. • Our group met our goal.	y	y	y	
Quality Producer • I completed my question generation matrix.	y	y	sa	

Y = yes N= no SA=sometimes or almost

Well, what do you think now? asks Ms. Turner.

Wow, I really like the immediate feedback idea. Students can see how their group is doing right then and there. I also think the reflection piece is huge because it makes the students think about how to work better as a group. I need to put some thought into what the self-assessments will look like, replies Ms. Wilson.

There is a lot to think about when planning interaction and I see that it isn't that overwhelming. But it would be really helpful to have you help me plan my next lesson to make sure I include everything we talked about. I'd like to do a small-group activity, says Ms. Wilson.

Sure! Ms. Turner replies.

Over the next few weeks, Ms. Wilson works hard with her class to create a classroom ready and able for interactive tasks. One way she prepares her class is to explicitly explain that they will be working in groups because, as a community of learners, they will learn with and from one another.

Ms. Wilson is pleased with both her and the students' progress. With Ms. Turner's planning help, today Ms. Wilson is having students work in heterogeneous groups to understand how volcanoes form (cause) and the effects of a volcanic eruption. She decides the best way for students to learn the content is to work in small groups to read, discuss, and write information (in a graphic organizer) about volcanoes and volcanic eruptions.

Ms. Wilson looks out at her class sitting in table groups, takes a deep breath and begins, *Boys and girls, today we are continuing*

our work with volcanoes. Let's read our essential question and learning objectives together.

Essential question: Why is it important that we learn about how volcanoes form and change the Earth's surface?

Learning outcome: I can tell, write, and draw how volcanoes form (cause). I can tell, write, and draw how volcanoes change the Earth's surface (effect).

Today you will work in your Big Wave groups to find out more about how volcanoes form and change the Earth's surface, or the causes and effects of volcanoes. Ms. Wilson points to the chart on the wall titled "Big Wave Groups." This chart lists the different groups and their members. *Remember, the cause is the reason for something happening and the effect is the result. While we are working in groups, I want you to keep in the back of your mind our essential question: Why is it important for me to know how volcanoes form, or are made, and how volcanoes change, or make different, the Earth's surface?*

At each of your tables, there are group folders. In your group folders, you will find your individual and group task sheet. Ms. Wilson shows students the task sheets from a folder. *Individually, you are responsible for reading the text on your own. Your objective is to read the section "Volcanoes." If you don't remember what section this is, look for the heading "Volcanoes" in bold print or big red letters.*

As a group, you have three tasks. Task 1 is to discuss, or talk about, the cause and effects of volcanoes using the guiding questions to help you. I want you to think about how the volcanoes form or what causes a volcano to form and what happens to the land after a volcano erupts. Also, what happens to the animals, and people? Or, what are the effects of a volcanic eruption?

Task 2 is to complete the graphic organizer. What are the causes of a volcano or how are they formed? What are the effects, or results, after a volcano erupts? Each of you will be responsible for answering questions at the end of the activity, so please be sure everyone in your group can talk about how volcanoes are formed, or made, and what happens to the land, animals, and people after a volcano erupts or explodes.

Task 3 is for each of you to write a paragraph and draw what you've learned.

Ms. Wilson shows the students the pages in the folder. *Also in your folders is the sample cause and effect graphic organizer we completed last week. There are the group expectations to remind you of how I expect you to behave during group work.* She briefly reviews these expectations and its consequences.

The role cards are also in the folder. Please remember if you don't know what your role is, you can ask others in your group for help by saying, "Could you please help me figure out my role?" Finally, in the back of the folder are the individual and group assessments. I will wander around and assess you using the On-the-Go rubric. Remember, we are working on actively listening, staying on task, and having everyone participate and contribute ideas while helping and encouraging others to participate. I will mark your paper once during and once at end of the group work. Also, as a group, you will assess your group's behavior."

You will only need a pencil for this activity. Does anyone have any questions? She pauses. *"OK, Big Wave,* calls Ms. Wilson.

Students quietly move into their Big Wave groups. Students open the folder and hand out their role cards. There is accountable talk in all the groups. She hears Isaac say, *I don't know what I have to do in my role. Do you need me to help you?* asks Mikayla. Mikayla helps Isaac understand that as timekeeper, he makes sure everyone is working and tells the group when half the time is left.

The room quiets down as students silently read the text. Then students begin to discuss how volcanoes form and how eruptions affect the land, people, and animals. The room gets louder as more groups begin their cooperative work. Ms. Wilson rotates throughout the room, observing different groups and listening in on their conversations. She hears rich discussion among the groups. She also marks the On-the-Go rubrics. She looks to see if students are staying on task, participating and contributing ideas, and that the group members are helping and encouraging one another.

In one group, she observes Joel encouraging Oscar to participate. Joel uses the sentence frames on his role card.

Oscar, what do you think of Layla's answer ... that one effect of volcanoes erupting is people losing their homes? Oscar nods and

says, *I agree with Layla. I think another effect is there is new land formed like the pictures we see in the text. The caption also tells me that.* Ms. Wilson positively marks the group's rubric.

Ms. Wilson and her students continue working. She calls the students back to a whole group. The group shares their work and discusses how volcanoes are formed and how volcanic eruptions change the Earth's surface. They also talk about other effects to humans and animals. Most students are able to contribute.

Ms. Wilson sends the students back to their groups to self-assess the group work and discuss what worked well and what they need to do next time to improve their ability to work together.

The groups share their ideas with the whole class. One group contributed that they needed to listen to one another more. Ms. Wilson notes this as something to work on next time.

Students move on to their individual writing and drawing assignment or the content assessment.

Ms. Wilson closes the content portion of the lesson by revisiting the learning outcomes or "I can..." statements. Students self-assess their learning with a thumbs up/thumbs down. Most students indicate they met the learning objectives. Ms. Wilson returns to the essential question. She asks the students to turn to their partner to discuss the answer to the essential question. The group discusses why this information is important to know. Most importantly, students recognize they need this knowledge because they live on a volcanic island.

That afternoon, Ms. Wilson reviews her students' work. She is pleased. Most students are able to identify how volcanoes are formed and change the Earth's surface. In addition, the students' self-assessments show that most of them believe they are focused and on task during the activity. She knows she needs to model listening more for improved group work. Overall, Ms. Wilson sees the hard work of planning and implementing interactive tasks has paid off with improved content and cooperative learning.

Later that day, Ms. Turner and Ms. Wilson meet to debrief the lesson and interactive task.

How did it go? asks Ms. Turner.

I am just over the moon! replies Ms. Wilson. *My students were on task, most were actively participating, and they got into groups quickly and quietly! I actually met the group work objectives we laid out at our first meeting! Also, students met the learning objectives of being able to identify how volcanoes are formed and how they change the Earth's surface!*

Ms. Turner asks, *Why do you think you were able to achieve this?*

I think the coaching, specifically the co-planning and chunking of information, made implementing interactive tasks easier for me. I thought my students wouldn't be able to productively work in groups or learn anything collaboratively and cooperatively. I thought I would have to spend loads of time planning, and the classroom management part would be a nightmare. I envisioned students up and about wandering and yelling.

But now I see that setting clear expectations of what content my students will learn and how they will learn takes intentional planning, and regularly engaging students in interactive tasks to build the routines needed for productive group and partner work. My students are having rich discussions and are truly learning from one another. I've also learned from them! And as far as planning goes, I see not all interactive tasks need lots of planning. It can be as simple as turning and talking, or as elaborate as my last lesson. Ultimately, the planning is time well spent and I can use these lessons and materials next year! In fact, I plan to start using interactive tasks at the beginning of the year.

Interactive tasks are an effective format of instruction for teaching and learning, and require thoughtful planning, preparation, and implementation. Interactive tasks can improve learning by inspiring students to explore topics and to listen and communicate respectfully with others, grow in their use of oral language, as well as provide the basis for academic inquiry and social interactions.

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Appendix A: Individual Self-Assessment

Responsible for my own learning
I stayed on task. ______

Y = Yes N = No S = Sometimes

Working with Others
I helped my group member when it was difficult for him/her. ______

Y = Yes N = No S = Sometimes

Quality of Work
I finished my work. I read the text, found the causes and effects, and wrote each in a graphic organizer.

______

Y = Yes N = No S = Some of it

Responsible for my own learning
I stayed on task. ______

Y = Yes N = No S = Sometimes

Working with Others
I helped my group member when it was difficult for him/her. ______

Y = Yes N = No S = Sometimes

Quality of Work

I finished my work. I read the text, found the causes and effects, and wrote each in a graphic organizer.

______

Y = Yes N = No S = Some of it

Responsible for my own learning
I stayed on task. ______

Y = Yes N = No S = Sometimes

Working with Others
I helped my group member when it was difficult for him/her. ______

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Quality of Work
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______

Y = Yes N = No S = Some of it

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Y = Yes N = No S = Sometimes

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Y = Yes N = No S = Sometimes

Quality of Work
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______

Y = Yes N = No S = Some of it

Responsible for my own learning
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Y = Yes N = No S = Sometimes

Working with Others
I helped my group member when it was difficult for him/her. ______

Y = Yes N = No S = Sometimes

Quality of Work
I finished my work. I read the text, found the causes and effects, and wrote each in a graphic organizer.

______

Y = Yes N = No S = Some of it

Responsible for my own learning
I stayed on task. ______

Y = Yes N = No S = Sometimes

Working with Others
I helped my group member when it was difficult for him/her. ______

Y = Yes N = No S = Sometimes

Quality of Work
I finished my work. I read the text, found the causes and effects, and wrote each in a graphic organizer.

______

Y = Yes N = No S = Some of it

Appendix B: Group Assessment

Each group member completes the assessment by filling in his or her name, reading the statements, and responding Y (yes), N (no), or S (sometimes). The last statement response is drawing of stars.

Date: _____

Group Assessment	Names				
Actively Listening • We all listened to one another. (Y/N/S)					
Staying on task • We helped one another stay on task. (Y/N/S)					
Contributions • Everyone contributed to and participated in the group activity. (Y/N/S)					
Encouraging Others • We encouraged one another to participate. • We respected one another's opinions and contributions. (Y/N/S)					
Overall We worked _____ together. ★ well ★★ really well ★★★ amazingly well Draw the number of stars.					

Y = Yes
N = No
S = Sometimes

What could we do better next time?

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