



Learning Safari Adventures

Becerra Safari, 3rd Grade

9/26/16 - 10/7/16



IB Adventures:

Central Idea: *Inquiry provides opportunities for discovery and exploration into how individuals learn.*

- **Sound Energy:** Last week students inquired into sound. Students read about sound, learned about sound vocabulary words in the classroom and in Music, watched a Magic School Bus video, and experimented with sound waves of various objects. Five mystery objects were placed in canisters. Students shook each canister three times, recorded the prediction, and then opened the item to reveal its identity. After recording the mystery object, we discussed the object's sound waves and frequencies.
- **Planetarium:** Mr. Childs, the district's Planetarium teacher, taught the students about the states of matter in space. After a lesson up front involving water, ice, and atoms (acted out by a student), we viewed the states of matter under the space dome!
- **Science Lab:** On Friday, we went to the Science Lab. Ms. Nieves, the Science Lab Coordinator, led an engaging lesson on the scientific method. Students worked through the scientific method using gobstoppers. Do you think the gobstoppers changed the most in warm or cold water? Go ahead and make your hypothesis! I'll post pictures over the weekend. (If you're reading this newsletter this evening, Thursday, 10/6, our trip is tomorrow.)
- **Is that a SOLID or a LIQUID? -- Summative Assessment:** This unit went by so quickly! At the end of each unit, students will complete a summative assessment that involves inquiry, careful thought, and reflection. This unit's summative assessment involved a **mystery object**? Students applied their knowledge of matter to determine if a mixture was a liquid or a solid. Students used hands and items to "play" in the mixture to make a decision. After exploring, each student defended his/her thoughts by writing an explanation. Some students explained that it was a solid because a fist wouldn't go through. Some students explained that it was a liquid because when it was taken out of the container, it took the shape of wherever it was put (hand, floor, desk...). Many students even wrote about atoms and molecules. You may be wondering which answer is correct. BOTH ARE! This assessment could be either phase of matter, as long as it was explained. Pictures of this will be on our class website, as will a short video with the recipe. (I know that some students want to try this at home, too!)
- **Art-to-Go:** Our class attended this special program on Wednesday. Artifacts were brought in by the Cleveland Art Museum and handled by the 3rd graders. Special gloves were worn so that students could handle the items with care. Students sharpened their observation and questioning skills before the "big reveal!"

HOW WE ORGANIZE OURSELVES:

Central Idea: *Some individuals within organizations desire and seek out leadership.*

- **Provocation:** Our new IB unit started this week. The first lesson was a provocation to generate excitement and inquiry. I posed a question to the students. What can YOU do to make the world more awesome? Each student recorded his/her answer on a hand cut out. After sharing and discussing the responses, I explained that this unit would involve an inquiry into leadership. I told the class that one person truly inspires me to be a better person and to make the world more awesome. I took ten questions to guide students into my inspiring leader's identity. Afterwards, I revealed the secret leader (THE KID PRESIDENT!) and we watched some inspiring videos of the leader. Next week, students we will begin to dig deeper into leadership and local communities.

Language Arts Adventures:

- **Word Study:** Differentiated spelling lists started last week.
- **Café Strategy:** This week I started direct instruction on reading strategies. Each week I will teach a direct lesson on a specific strategy. Each lesson involves modeling and guided practice. Students practice that strategy during the Daily 5 rotations and while in reading groups. This week small group instruction began during Daily 5. The strategy covered this week is listed below.
 - **Summarizing & Retelling:** This skill demonstrates understanding of the story or text. Retelling is a **detailed** summary of what was read. To visually represent this, I showed students a graphic organizer. When cut out and folded, it resembles a table. The flat surface is the main idea of the story (story elements), and the legs represent the details. For example, the summary would include the characters' names. The retelling would provide not only the names, but also details about the main characters.
- **Guided Reading Groups Part 1:** At the start of the school year, I informally assessed reading levels and placed students in "loose" reading groups. This past week I began formal reading assessments. This is quite the process because it's one-on-one – but well worth it because I gather great information about each student's reading fluency, comprehension, and strategies. Once the assessments are over, I'll make changes to groups if necessary. (So far, I've been right on with the levels!)
- **Reading Groups Part 2:** Two weeks ago, students read about sound during reading groups. This week, students practiced summarizing and retelling during reading groups.
- **Synonyms and Antonyms:** Students practiced identifying, writing, and creating synonyms and antonyms. Students played a memory game, matched words, and watched a short Brain Pop video.
- **Paragraph Writing:** I started this lesson with a brief PPT about strong paragraphs and how they should include a topic sentence, details, and a closing sentence. (For fun, we started calling the closing sentence "Thinky Pinky.") Afterwards, students received a scrambled up paragraph, with 8 sentences all out of order. Each student cut out the sentences and placed them in order. Later in the week, I guided students into rewriting the paragraph on paper. Students wrote a title, indented the topic sentence, wrote on the margin, skipped every other line, and wrote a closing sentence. I have been telling students to "tag" the margin – where every first letter on a line must touch the margin (except the indented topic sentence).

Math Adventures:

- **Guided Math:** Guided Math allows for differentiation, movement, and small group instruction. Small groups are formed from each unit's pre-assessments, and the groups change depending on the lesson's topic. Each unit has 7-12 different topics. The flexible grouping is powerful and meaningful to instruction because it's specific and data-driven. After a whole-class mini lesson (through direct instruction and small group interaction), the students watch a short video (2-3 minutes). Discussions take place during this visual learning to deepen understanding and to stretch concepts. Afterwards, students rotate through 3 stations. The stations are:
 - 1. *Teacher Time*: specific lesson activities and problems
 - 2. *Compass Learning*: computerized individualized math program
 - 3. *Daily Common Core Review & Fact Fluency*: review worksheet / Fact fluency (at level)Each student is on task, learning at his/her level, and is greatly improving. The lessons taught during Guided Math the past 2 weeks are below.
- **Problem Solving:** This was the last lesson of Topic 2. The lesson centered around reasonableness—using estimation to test the reasonableness of an answer.
- **Topic 2 Assessment**
- **Topic 2 Assessment Review:** correct mistakes with an adult and game day
- **Topic 3 Pre-Test:** Results from this assessment guide me in forming the groups for math instruction.
- **Topic 3 Lessons:**
 - Expanded Algorithm (Break-Apart Method for 3-digit numbers): $371 + 625 = 300 + 600 + 70 + 20 + 1 + 5 = 996$. It was so exciting to see many students practice this method by mentally grouping in their heads, rather than by using a calculator and paper and a pencil.
 - Review of addition with regrouping (2- and 3-digit numbers)
 - Review of estimating (2- and 3-digit numbers)
 - Adding 3 double-digit addends (regrouping and break-apart method)
- **Growth Mindset Lesson:** On Tuesday students were surprised to have a math lesson unlike previous math lessons so far this year. Mrs. Clark, one of the district's instructional coaches, and I planned a lesson that involved growth mindset, open-mindedness, and perspective. I coined it an "IB-itized" math lesson, and that was AFTER a student said, "Hey, this is like a combination of math and IB." As Mrs. Clark put it, "This is the math behind the math students are used to seeing (numbers and operations)." In this lesson, students were given an interesting graph without numbers. Students had to interpret and analyze the graph. (We didn't give them many directions, except to share responses with group members as if it was a campfire chat.) Each group shared their interpretation of the graph, and this led to a marvelous discussion about graphs (the x-axis, the y-axis, labels for each axis, and a graph title). No interpretations were wrong because we all have different perspectives. Next, each group created their own graph using the knowledge gained from the discussion. Lastly, each group swapped their graph with another group, interpreted the graph, and shared out their interpretation with the rest of the class. The lesson got a big thumbs-up from students! I'll have to find a place to hang the graphs.

Information Hut:

- **Rosh Hashanah:** One of the (MANY) things I love about Shaker Heights is its diversity! I love having students and families from different backgrounds, countries, religions, and cultures! Understanding perspectives and beliefs of others make all of us well rounded, respectful, and knowledgeable. A few weeks ago Farrah's mom and Abdullah's family came in to the room to share their special holiday. Last week, **Talia and her mom**, shared their special holiday, **Rosh Hashanah**. Students learned about the symbolic meaning of this special holiday through a Power Point, an activity, and special treats. Each student made a New Year card for someone special. THANK YOU for sharing your holiday with us! You can view pictures of the event on our class website soon!
- Mrs. Becerra is out for an all-day training on Thursday, 10/13/16.
- **Book Bags:** Do you have books in different languages? Perhaps you have books written in your home language. If so, send them in! Students can add the books to individual books bags. (We call these bags "zippie book bags.")
- **Tour Your Schools:** This special day is on Monday, 10/10/16. I hope you're able to tour the schools!
- **Mandarin Website:** Ms. Kuehnle and Ms. Peng (Mandarin teachers) shared a great website resource to help learn Mandarin. The website has many activities, games, and videos. This is a great way for students to practice and reinforce their Mandarin skills. Check it out at: <https://www.youtube.com/user/DailyNoodles?app=desktop>.
- **Math Vocabulary E-Flash Cards:** Mrs. Lasheen made math vocabulary flashcards to support some students. She's going to add each vocabulary word as each math topic is taught. We thought this would be a great resource for all students to practice and apply math knowledge! Thank you to Mrs. Lasheen for sharing!! <https://quizlet.com/91098994/math-vocabulary-for-3rd-grade-flash-cards/>
- I'll put both of the above websites on our class website, in the "Websites" section.
- Have a good weekend! ☺