

Stacey Gershkovich:

Well, welcome to the Roberston Center. Welcome to our webinar on intellectual preparation. It is our first webinar for this school year. We're really excited to get started. I've got on the screen with me Jacqui Friedman. I've got Sydney Diana. I am Stacey Gershkovich. We're going to introduce all ourselves in a moment, but before we do that just some quick logistics.

Stacey Gershkovich:

Hi, Kristen. Hi Keaci. Mr. Malone. Lacey, great to see you. I love that you guys are all introducing yourself. Following group directions. We want to know who's here. We want everyone to be able to interact with each other while we're talking. So after you introduce yourself, tell us why you're here. Tell us what you think about intellectual prep. Tell us what you're struggling with. Tell us what brought you here today. Tell us anything that you think we should know. But use that chat. We want this to be really supportive for you and the best way for us to do that is to hear what is that you need.

Stacey Gershkovich:

So with all of that said, we have the chat. There's also a Q & A. We will save time at the end for question and answers. So if there's a specific reason you came here today, a specific question that's on your mind, you can go ahead and put it in that Q & A box now or you could wait for later and add it later. At the very end, we'll get to as many questions that we possibly can.

Stacey Gershkovich:

Steve, it's good to see you. I know you're always curious. Lisa, Roosevelt. I'm loving all these names. Kevin Hefell, good to see you. Or here from you or see your name pop up.

Stacey Gershkovich:

Great, I think we can get started. So, I introduce your name so you don't have to tell us your names again. It also says it right in the box that you're in, but can you tell us your favorite subject to teach and why. Jacqui, why don't you go first.

Jacqui Friedman:

Sure.

Jacqui Friedman:

Hi everyone. It's great to virtually not quite see you all, but we're so happy you're here. I'm Jacqui and my favorite subject to teach would definitely have to be theater. I started my education journey as a drama teacher so that is my first passion and it's always incredible to give students the freedom to really express themselves creatively and see them build confidence and then see them apply that confidence to all areas of their lives.

Jacqui Friedman:

Theater will always be my favorite thing to teach.

Sydney Diana:

Hi, I'm Sydney. It's nice to kind of meet everyone. My favorite thing to teach is writing. I think that it's something that kids resist sometimes at first because it can feel challenging. So like opening their world into realizing that writing can just be a really fun way to express yourself. To convince someone of something. To tell a story. To teach someone something. And there's just so many different ways and styles of writing and I love communicating that to the kids.

Stacey Gershkovich:

Right and it's really hard for me to decide. Math really is my favorite subject to teach, but just yesterday, I was doing some fun science experiments with my kids with some oil and water and alka seltzer tabs and so right now I'm on a little bit of a science mode.

Stacey Gershkovich:

Ms. Rodriguez, Mr. Malone, I'm so glad you're here because this is actually what we are going to do. We are hopefully going to share with you strategies that we use at our schools to make sure that we are intellectually prepared to teach our lessons and I'm hoping that you can bring those back to your team and find them really useful for the way that we think about it.

Stacey Gershkovich:

So, with all of that said, when you signed up for the webinar, we asked you to share some thoughts about what makes lesson planning challenging. And so thank you for all of you who shared your thoughts. If you didn't get a chance to share your thoughts, I imagine some of these things will sound very familiar.

Stacey Gershkovich:

The number one thing we heard was finding the right materials. We'll talk a little bit with Sydney about the importance of really picking an exciting book that you love so much.

Stacey Gershkovich:

Certainly, time is of the essence. Sydney just dismissed her kids a couple of minutes ago and I'm sure she's got a lot to do before tomorrow. So I know that's top of mind for her as well.

Stacey Gershkovich:

Some other things are on there as well. You can see it on the slide, but that's why we're here today. One of the things that we at the Robertson Center are going to launch, in fact, if you're on our mailing list which I think all of you will be, we are sending out tomorrow our quarterly. Our first annual quarterly. Or, not annual. Our first quarterly edition. And we're launching the core values that success has. The first one being thinking.

Stacey Gershkovich:

So today we are going to be talking all about, and you saw this in the invite, about how we think about planning for the purpose of helping kids really make sure that they are doing the thinking in the lesson.

Stacey Gershkovich:

When we say the word intellectual prep, you'll hear us say it a lot today, we mean first knowing the content that you're going to teach yourself as well as knowing the learners in your room so that you can really be purposeful with what you're doing so that they can really do the thinking.

Stacey Gershkovich:

We understand that preparation is not just that. We get that you have to find the book. We get that you have to make the charts. We get that there's lots of other things to do in order to be prepared, but today we're really going to focus on what teachers are doing to really make sure that they've done all the thinking that they need to do so that they can support their students in doing that thinking on their own.

Stacey Gershkovich:

Our focus today is going to be fourth grade read aloud because Sydney teaches fourth grade. If you are interested in more, we're going to talk about our approach to read aloud just to give a little bit of context.

Stacey Gershkovich:

First and foremost, purpose of read aloud is to make sure kids get to love books and love reading and so hopefully you'll see that come out in the planning today.

Stacey Gershkovich:

We're really lucky to have Sydney join us. One of our fourth grade teachers at one of our elementary schools and we're going to get a chance in just a moment I'm going to kick it over to Jacqui to get a chance to hear about the way that she plans for a lesson and then we're going to watch that lesson live with Sydney. Pausing strategically to have Sydney talk about what she was thinking as she was teaching.

Stacey Gershkovich:

At the end, as I mention, we'll pause. We'll have time for questions so as you are thinking, as questions come up, feel free to put them in the chat as a lot of you are doing already. But also feel free to put them in the Q & A. I'll also flag, it's in the chat, but if your setting in the chat is to host and panelist, only we can see it, that's totally fine if that's what you're comfortable with. But if you are comfortable, go ahead and click it to everyone that way everyone can see your chat and we can make this more of a conversation.

Stacey Gershkovich:

With that said, Jacqui, I'll turn it to you.

Jacqui Friedman:

All right. Okay, so I'm very excited to hear from Sydney about her approach to read aloud. Sydney, we'd love to hear a little bit about how you intellectually prepare to teach this really wonderful component of our literacy program.

Jacqui Friedman:

What's your process like for this type of intellectual prep and what do you keep front and center in your mind as you prepare?

Sydney Diana:

I try to work backwards. Usually the first thing I try to come up with is the big idea that I'm trying to focus on in this lesson. Maybe that's going to be characters and their feelings or their traits or their motivation. Maybe it's going to be the lesson we can take away from a story. Maybe it's going to be more specific craft and structure things like descriptive language, other choices the author's making.

Sydney Diana:

So I try to first come up with the idea or ideas if it's more than one that I want to focus on and narrow it down. Then, I go and find a book that will help support that. Honestly, even before coming up with the big idea is just making sure kids are excited to read and to read books. I love to read. I spend a ton of time reading in my personal time. I want the kids to feel that, so picking books that the kids are going to be excited to read but also I'm going to be excited to read. Because if I don't like the book, they're going to know that and they're not going to like the book. So finding something that's going to be enjoyable for everyone that then can be used to support the idea that I'm working with, the big idea.

Sydney Diana:

and then getting down a little bit more specifically and thinking about the types of questions that I want to ask. Really focusing on open ended questions. You need to ask some right there questions along the way just to make sure the kids are with you. They're following along. They understand the basic things that are happening, but really prioritizing asking questions that just allow kids to share their thoughts, come up with deeper ideas, make connections across the text as they read.

Jacqui Friedman:

Great. And again, as Stacey mentioned, we're really focused on this idea of thinking and how our instruction can set kids up to do their best thinking. I think these are really interesting guiding principles for read aloud planning.

Jacqui Friedman:

As Stacey also mentioned, you can find more about our approach to read aloud and the structure of a read aloud lesson on the Success Academy Education Institute which we're linking in the chat right now. If you create a login, you will have access to all of Success Academy's released curriculum. It is free of charge. Please feel free to go explore. There's a lot of really good stuff on there.

Jacqui Friedman:

Also, I just want to highlight that the first three points you'll see on the slide are really transferable to other content areas. Math, Science, Social Studies, and at S.A. we really do use these guiding principles to prepare for all of our subjects. We really value thinking in all content areas and these are kind of principles that we live by.

Jacqui Friedman:

All right. As I mentioned, and I'm really excited to share this all with you, all of our programming at the Roberston Center this fall is connected to our core value of thinking. We have seven core values of educators and learners which we'll be sharing with you all over the next months and years. Critical, original thinking is always our goal at S.A.

Jacqui Friedman:

Sydney, would you tell us a little bit about how you plan to illicit strong thinking when you do your intellectual prep to teach.

Sydney Diana:

Yeah, and it's hard. Right? That's the thing we all want and that's the thing that's the hardest to do. To get them to go above things that you might just be getting or you think you're used to. And I think a big thing for me is also recognizing that the kids are very capable of getting to high level thoughts and high level explanations and supporting their idea.

Sydney Diana:

Starting by expecting that I can have a conversation with them, and granted it is fourth grade so that's going to be different in a younger elementary, but I can have a conversation with them at a very high level. Almost an adult level, about things that they're noticing. So not thinking, oh it's a child so I want to have a conversation like a child. First allowing them to reach a really high bar.

Sydney Diana:

The other thing is really the types of questions. Providing the opportunity for them to provide unique insights, original insights. To use information they they have read and make inferences about it. To get great thinking, you kind of have to ask great questions to set them up for it. So thinking about ways to ask types of questions that will then give you the responses back and really pushing them to use examples from the text to support their ideas.

Sydney Diana:

In the video when we get there, you'll see sometimes I cut them off to say how did you know that? And they're already doing it because that's something that we really focus on throughout schooling but also in my classroom. You have an idea that's great, but I want to know where it came from because that will help me get a little bit more insight to what you're thinking. And then also helps other kids learn from that thinking process if they don't have it on their own just yet.

Sydney Diana:

And then, sorry, one more thing. Knowing the kids in the room. That's hard thing in the beginning of the year especially. As the years goes on, knowing what types of thinkers you have. Strategically asking questions to certain kids based off where they are and things that they're working on individually. Asking, if I'm asking an inferencing question, if I have someone who's working on inferencing, trying to ask them a question. If I have someone ...that's ... Some struggle sometimes with thinking about why an author wrote a text. Asking a kid that question just so you can hear from a wide range and get their individual needs. Because that's really hard too.

Jacqui Friedman:

Yeah. These things are not so easy to do and they do take a long time and a lot of practice and development. I see the questions are coming through in the chat. We are going to get to your questions in the end so keep them coming. We're keeping track of them. We'll make sure to answer as many of them as we possibly can.

Jacqui Friedman:

Now, we are going to have a chance to see Sydney in action as she teaches a read aloud lesson to her students. We sent Sydney's plan to you ahead of time. If you have it, you can feel free to pull it up so you can follow along. We're also going to add it to the chat right now if you need it so you can see Sydney's thought process. You can see the questions that she's planned to ask. Also, you'll find in the resources, Sydney's planning template which is blank and for you to use as needed as you like at your schools if it's helpful for you. We've provided that as a resource for you as well.

Jacqui Friedman:

As we watch Sydney's video, we're going to stop at moments to have her reflect on the intellectual prep that she did and the instructional choices that she's making. Both the ones that were planned but also changes made in the moment. As many of you know, sometimes you have the most perfect plan in the world. It doesn't go quite as you expected. There are always fun surprises in teaches. I'm really excited to hear Sydney's thoughts on how the lesson is going.

Jacqui Friedman:

Again, you can feel free to add your noticings to the chat anytime. We have some guiding questions for you if you'd like to think about them. Of course, feel free to answer and share any thoughts.

Jacqui Friedman:

Where are you seeing Sydney make strategic moves to illicit that interesting thinking? And how is her lesson plan setting her up for success?

Jacqui Friedman:

Those questions are in the chat for you to think about but of course feel free to share any thoughts and other noticings that you have.

Jacqui Friedman:

Before we get started, Sydney, can you tell us just a little bit about the book that we're going to see you engage with, why did you choose to read this with your kids and what did you hope to achieve with this read aloud?

Sydney Diana:

I picked this book, I love this book so that's really the primary reason why I used it and then it also supports what I was trying to get to in this lesson about opportunities to make inferences about characters and then also talk about a lesson that's learned. Because the ending of this, I found so unexpected. When I read it for the first time, I gasped out loud because I just was so shocked that it ended that way and I think that kids especially in fourth grade are very used to things ending a certain way. They expect everything to end very nicely and neatly and have this sort of like lovely life lesson that they can go off with. And this is a little bit different. It provides opportunity for a more interesting conversation than we're sometimes used to and I just think it's a really complex book presented in a short form.

Jacqui Friedman:

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Great. Yes. And the book is Each Kindness by Jacqueline Woodson. She's one of our favorite authors at S.A. So we love the book too and we're super excited to see you teach the book to your kids.

Jacqui Friedman:

We are going to pull the video up. We hope that you enjoy. Again, please feel free to share your thoughts in the chat at any point. Ask questions. We're going to get to as many of them as we possibly can.

Jacqui Friedman:

So we will get started.

Video:

Okay. We are going to read a new book today.

Stacey Gershkovich:

Jacqui, you've got to stay off of mute.

Video:

It's one of my favorites because I think it teaches a really important lesson in kind of an unexpected way.

Video:

Before we start, I want you guys to think about something. I want you to think in your head has there ever been a time when someone was unkind to you? You have? I see some nods. I see some hands. I'm not going to go into the specifics of that incident, but how did it make you feel when somebody was unkind? How did that make you feel? Why do you think Niya?

Video:

It made me feel sad.

Video:

It made you feel sad. Okay, do you have other words to describe how we felt when someone was unkind? June?

Video:

I felt like disappointed and I didn't like it.

Video:

Disappointed. You didn't like it. Gabe?

Video:

I felt mad.

Video:

You felt mad, maybe? Yeah. That's me too. It happens in life and it doesn't feel good. [inaudible 00:16:40] Has there ever been a time maybe when you were unkind to someone? Okay.

Video:

It's happened to me before too, right? Yeah, you can put your hands down. Sometimes it happens not on purpose. Sometimes you say something and you're like, oh shoot, that wasn't very nice and I didn't mean it. I can tell you a story later about a time where I wasn't very nice to Ms. [inaudible 00:17:01] when we first met. I didn't even know that it was happening. She told me about it later, and I felt that, I still to this day feel really sad about it. Because I didn't mean it but it made her feel bad.

Video:

So I want you to think today, we're going to pay really close attention to the narrator of this story. Her name [crosstalk 00:17:17] I want you to notice her actions and her feelings throughout the story and think about the lesson that she's learning as a result of those feelings and those actions. Okay?

Jacqui Friedman:

All right, so we're going to pause there for just a moment. Love your launch and I want to talk a little bit about it. Why did you launch asking students about their own personal experiences? Do you often launch read alouds this way and if so what is the impact of launching in this way?

Sydney Diana:

I usually do launch read alouds this way. Most lessons this way, honestly. Just because everyone loves to have a personal connection to something. As adults, we're going to read a book, we're going to watch a movie, we're going to join in on a conversation if it's something that we know a little bit about, feel connected to. The kids just get so much more excited to read what's about to come if they're like, oh yeah, that's happened to me. I'm curious how that's the same. How that's different. What's going to happen to this character.

Sydney Diana:

And I think that it also can than be a very natural connection to frame their thinking into what we want to learn. Because otherwise it's just me sitting up there teaching them something yet again. But once they feel like oh I have skin in the game. This has happened to me, now I can see how this character is handling it and then you can be like, okay, great. I want you to take that and pay close attention to this character and then set the up like think about this. Think about that. Kind of give them thinking jobs to start once you've got them bought in.

Sydney Diana:

Obviously, you can go down a rabbit hole. I'm not going to call on them and be like yeah, tell me about that time because they're going to be like my sister, brother, cousin, aunt, uncle and tell you a ridiculous story. So balancing it, but I think it's helpful to get them bought in with a personal experience.

Jacqui Friedman:

Yes and that is definitely a pre mortem that I've dealt with when teaching read aloud is that you can spend so much time talking about personal experiences, but it really is meant to frame the thinking that they're going to actually do as they're reading. I love that. It resonates with me.

Jacqui Friedman:

All right. We're going to keep going.

Video:

That winter, snow fell on everything turning the world a brilliant white. One morning as we settled into our seats, the classroom door opened and the principal came in. She had a girl with her and she said to us this is Mya. Mya looked down at the floor. I think I heard her whisper hello. We all stared at her. Her coat was opened and the clothes beneath it looked old and ragged. Her shoes were spring shoes not meant for the snow. A strap on one of them had broken.

Video:

So from this first section, what does this page reveal about Mya?

Video:

[inaudible 00:20:15] That she doesn't have good clothes and people are already finding a chance to be mean to her.

Video:

Okay, let's talk about Mya to start. What did you notice? What in the text made you think that?

Video:

That she is very shy and that she has things that other people don't.

Video:

What made you think that she was shy? That's a nice description for it.

Video:

Because she whispered hello instead of actually saying it.

Video:

Yeah, so like if I looked down at the ground and whispered hello, probably I'm not feeling confident about that, right? What else do we notice about Mya from this section?

Video:

Dahlia?

Video:

It said that her clothes looked kind of old so I think maybe she might be poor.

Video:

Maybe she doesn't have enough money to get the clothes for the season. Okay.

Video:

Her shoes were broken.

Video:

So one of the straps were broken. Actually, one of the things that I just mentioned as beginning with talking about how much snow there was, right? And then telling us that they were spring shoes. What would it ... If you had spring shoes, the snow inside your feet right now, right? All right.

Jacqui Friedman:

Okay. We're going to pause again. You keep asking students what do you notice. What do you notice, and this seems very intentional. Will you tell us a little bit about this question of what do you notice and why this is impactful to ask?

Sydney Diana:

I love to ask that question also because you can just ask it in almost any situation and then it really lets me see what they're going to say authentically without any scaffolding or leading to start.

Sydney Diana:

And we will have talked previously in the year, when I'm asking you what do you notice, I'm asking you to sort of comment on things that you've heard and then tell me what that makes you think. For example, when the girl was looking at her shoes that makes me think that she's shy. So then what did you notice is a little bit deeper than just I notice that there's snow on the ground. That's generally not something that's going to be said because we've had that conversation previously in the year. But it just let's me see where they are. Read the room. Get a range of kids. See the things that they're starting to notice and if they are starting to pick up on the things that I would want them to like noticing that maybe that that character was feeling shy. That other kids are starting to be unkind to her because of things that she's wearing. Things that make her different.

Sydney Diana:

Just see where they are but then I have scaffolded questions prepared. If they are saying, oh I notice that there's a lot of snow on the ground. It must be winter. I'm like, okay, let me be a little bit more specific. What do you notice about how this person is feeling? What do you notice about how people are reacting? Start really broad to just see what they're going to do and then narrow down and be more scaffolded if they need that.

Jacqui Friedman:

Yeah. I love that and also it just helps activate original insights. What do you notice? It's a low stakes question. Its just getting the thoughts going and getting kids to really share they're initial ideas. I find that very powerful.

Jacqui Friedman:

All right. We're going to keep on going.

Video:

So let's keep.

Video:

Our teacher, Ms. Albert, said say good morning to our new student but most of us were silent. The only empty seat was next [inaudible 00:23:41]. That's where our teacher put Mya. And on that first day Mya turned to me and smiled but I didn't smile back. I moved my chair, myself, and my books a little farther away from her. When she looked my way, I turned to the window and stared out at the snow and every day after that when Mya came into the classroom, I looked away and didn't smile back.

Video:

So this gets to a little bit of the [inaudible 00:24:07] that we started to say before. How would you describe the class and the narrator, the person telling the story, based off this section?

Video:

You can describe her as kind of, kind of like rude because she's not looking at Mya while she smiled. She's not very [inaudible 00:24:40]

Video:

The narrator's kind of being mean. Probably she doesn't like the girl because of her clothing. People judge people.

Video:

Yeah, that's terrible right? They don't even-

Jacqui Friedman:

Okay. This is a very interesting moment. This student seems to be going through their own thought process as they're speaking and arrives at a strong idea at the end that Chloe is judgemental. Any thoughts on this kind of answer and this kind of thinking and processing aloud? Let us know a little bit about why you let the student go on and get through that thinking.

Sydney Diana:

Definitely, in hindsight, more think time before calling on someone would've been a better move because I asked it. She raised her hand and I called on her right away. It definitely should've given some more time to not only let her think through her ideas, but other people who maybe didn't even get a chance to get there before she started talking. When she did start talking, I often let them ramble. I'm a rambler as you probably have noticed. It takes me a second to get to my ideas so I sympathize with it. If I think they're going in the right direction, I will let them go for a little bit. She said rude to start which was not super accurate but then I could see her sort of start to self correct and knowing this girl, I know her thinking process and she often does get there.

Sydney Diana:

In that specific moment, I let her go because I did think that she was going to get to a different idea at the end just based off of knowing her. I also, I do think it's good to give kids an opportunity to process and know that you don't have to be like judgemental right away. You can talk through and she was talking through why she was changing her mind based off of what happened in the story. Which I do think is good for kids to hear other kids thinking process.

Sydney Diana:

But in hindsight, definitely should've let them think a little bit long or put a turn and talk there. I actually didn't think, I thought they were going to be like she's unfriendly and get to sort of a more basic answer right away. It took her a little longer to get to this sort of deeper idea. Probably should've let them turn and talk just to give more kids the opportunity to do that.

Jacqui Friedman:

Thanks so much. That's an interesting reflection. Yeah, and again, I think it's actually really helpful to watch videos of your teaching because you can say, oh that was an interesting moment. Maybe I will, you know, a question like that needs a little bit more think and turn and talk time.

Jacqui Friedman:

All right. We're going to keep going.

Video:

They didn't know her. They just met her. Nina you want to say something?

Video:

She's going to see if that comes through.

Video:

My best friends that year were Kendra and Sylvia. At lunchtime, we walked around the school yard. Our fingers laced together whispering secrets into each others ears.

Video:

One day while we were near the slide, Mya came over to us. She held open her hand to show us the shiny jacks and tiny red ball she'd gotten for her birthday. It's a high bouncer, she said, but none of us wanted to play. So Mya played a game against her self.

Video:

How do you think Mya's feeling at this point in the story?

Video:

[inaudible 00:27:53]

Video:

Why?

Video:

[inaudible 00:28:03]

Video:

You feel like that's happened to you before and that's how you felt? Other ways to describe how she might be feeling? Athena?

Video:

Disrespected.

Video:

She feels disrespected. Say more about that.

Video:

Because they're being very disrespectful to her and they judged a book by it's cover.

Video:

Okay. Another negative feeling. Right? We're not really sure based off of her response if she's necessarily feeling disrespected, but it's sort of just a negative feeling.

Video:

Trying to avoid her.

Video:

Say more about that.

Video:

Because they don't like her.

Video:

How do you know they're trying to avoid her?

Video:

They don't want to play with her and she's playing by herself.

Video:

That afternoon when we got back into the classroom, Mya whispered to me, bet you can't guess who the new jacks champion of the world is. Behind me Andrew whispered, Chloe's got a new friend. Chloe's got a new friend. She's not my friend, I whispered by.

Video:

The weeks past. Every day we whispered about Mya. Laughing at her clothes, her shoes, the strange food she brought for lunch. Some days, Mya held out her hand to show us what she had brought to school. A deck of cards, pick up sticks, a small tattered doll. Whenever she asked us to play, we said no.

Video:

What patterns do you notice about Mya's interactions with her classmates? You can put your hands down. I'm going to have you talk to your partner about it. I'll say it one more time. What patterns are you starting to notice about Mya's interactions with her classmates. You can turn-

Jacqui Friedman:

Okay. We're going to pause. That's a very sophisticated question. What patterns do you notice about how Mya's interacting with her classmates. Can you tell us a little bit about how you came up with this question and why are you using this moment to do your first turn and talk of the read aloud?

Sydney Diana:

The patterns question came from ... This is obviously a shorter book, right? A picture book that can fit into one lesson. Often in fourth grade where they're reading chapter books or just longer texts where they need to connect details across the text to draw understandings about either things that are happening, characters in the story. Trying to get that some type of thinking in the shorter books so then they can then transfer it to, have that in their tool box when they do read a longer book. And a pattern can be hard to identify if they aren't picking up on the fact that a [inaudible 00:30:46] behavior turns into a pattern.

Sydney Diana:

So I did the turn and talk here because in order to identify the pattern, they'd have to come up with multiple examples of something happening and I wanted them to be able to bounce off of each other. To be like, oh, you said that. Well, I remember when this happened that was similar and then be able to come together and be like, oh we're noticing a common thread that makes a pattern.

Jacqui Friedman:

We're going to keep going.

Video:

Talk to your partners.

Video:

[crosstalk 00:31:39]

Video:

You think they think that she's boring? Okay, why don't you guys think about maybe some other reasons why they're deciding not to play with her. Okay? See if you can figure out why.

Video:

What are we thinking?

Video:

A little bit louder, Ben. And what does Mya do?

Video:

When they were at recess, she played by herself.

Video:

Okay what else does Mya try to do?

Video:

Mya is trying to find somebody to play with at recess but nobody wants to play with her because [inaudible 00:32:39]

Video:

Yeah, that's terrible, right?

Video:

Yeah.

Video:

Awesome. Turn back to the front in three, two, one.

Video:

Fabrizo, can you talk to me about what you and your partners were saying?

Video:

We were saying that her classmates were mean to her because she was just trying to find somebody to play with at recess but nobody wanted to play with her because her clothes are much, [inaudible 00:33:07]. So she had to play by herself.

Video:

Anna, you want to add on?

Video:

I think that pattern is that Mya asks and then they reject. And that just seems to be happening over and over again.

Video:

Yeah. So, I love how you [inaudible 00:33:24] and sort of explained it at-

Jacqui Friedman:

Okay. That's a very interesting moment which I want to talk about. The first student you called on, shared some interesting insights but didn't necessarily touch on the pattern which was the question you had asked. The next student you called on quickly clarified, answered the question about the pattern.

Jacqui Friedman:

Was that an intentional move that you made and what might you had done if that second student did not actually answer your question?

Sydney Diana:

Definitely the benefit of the turn and talk also is that I can hear what they are saying. I didn't set that up very well watching it back also because I asked the initial question about the pattern and then I was listening to that conversation and he was saying good things but not necessarily articulating it as the pattern. But I was positively reinforcing what he was saying and then called on him. It made sense to me that he didn't specifically describe it as the pattern based on what he was saying. Then when I was like can you share what you guys just said.

Sydney Diana:

I went to someone else to try to go back to the original question because I had heard over there them saying the pattern is so I knew that they were going to then clarify the pattern. Then also sort of being like, hey you didn't actually answer the question. You said great things. I know I was telling you you were saying great things, but if we go back to the original question as the pattern this is how you can express it to answer the question.

Sydney Diana:

If she had not said that, I definitely would've been like okay, let's stop. Let's back up. What is a pattern? Do you understand if I'm asking for a pattern, we're trying to find a repeated behavior that gives us a larger idea. And then be like, okay, now that we know that can you answer the question based of the book? Because if it's two or three it's me and not them and I need to clarify what I was asking.

Jacqui Friedman:

Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. And I think the turn and talk is so beneficial. You can hear students ideas. You can push them if they're not going in the right direction. They're pushing each other. Turn and talks, I find, are always super helpful for those higher level thinking questions.

Jacqui Friedman:

For the sake of time, we're going to skip ahead to the end of the book. Very sad. But just to give everyone a little recap of what's happening. So during this portion of the story, Chloe's teacher leads a lesson on kindness and Chloe sadly realizes that she showed no compassion to Mya. Then, Mya doesn't show up at school one day. She doesn't show up the next day and the next. And the teacher announces that Mya won't be returning. In the end, Chloe realizes that she's missed her opportunity to show kindness to Mya.

Jacqui Friedman:

As Sydney mentioned, it's kind of a different type of ending to the stories that we're all used to reading. So we're going to get to the end of the book and we're going to watch Sydney wrap up the lesson.

Video:

I watched the water ripple as the sun set through the maples and the chance of a kindness with Mya became more and more forever gone.

Video:

Another different kind of ending right? You maybe think, wait a second. Now the book's over? So that was an intentional choice by Jacqueline Woodson, the author. You're going to talk with your partner about two things. I want you to think about how the author ended the book. What is her message? What was the author's message in the story and why do you think she chose to write this book?

Video:

So what was the author's message and why did she choose write the book? You can turn and talk to your partner.

Video:

[crosstalk 00:36:58]

Video:

What do you think?

Video:

She chose to end this book like this because now it shows how Chloe is finally regretting how she treated Mya. And I think the author chose to write this book because she'd like to teach others about kindness and why you should always be nice.

Video:

Think about that message. If the book had ended differently, if Mya had come back and Chloe got the chance to fix it, how would that have changed your feelings as a reader?

Video:

It's kind of stronger when it shows that her chance is over, because then it's like, the person who's reading the book doesn't want that to happen to themselves. So they would instead be kind to the start. But let's say if Mya comes back, then the reader may think that, oh, I can always have a second chance so I don't have to do it right away.

Video:

That's awesome. Turn back in three, two, one. And done.

Video:

Okay. Let's start with our first question first. What do we think the author's message was with this story? We're probably going to have a lot of different ideas. We're not all going to say the same thing. What's one possible message from the story? Fabrizio?

Video:

I think the author ended the book like this-

Video:

What's the author's message. That was my first question.

Video:

Oh, the author's message is to be kind to everybody because you may never have the chance to be kind to a person you were mean to again.

Video:

And how did you get that idea?

Video:

I got that idea because of Mya leaving the school and Chloe [inaudible 00:39:11] and sad about being mean to Mya.

Video:

Okay. Other thoughts? Maybe we had a similar idea but we said it differently. Mila, go ahead.

Video:

So mine was, the message was don't [inaudible 00:39:28]

Video:

And what made you think that?

Video:

What made me think that is the way that ... Well, she kind of said it in the book but she didn't say all the words. I should've said different things. She's regretful of some things.

Video:

Like when she thinks, when I reached the [inaudible 00:39:55], my throat filled with all the things I wished I would have said to Mya. Each kindness I had never shown. That feeling of like wishing for something that now you can't have would be a really hard feeling.

Video:

[inaudible 00:40:07] you were having a conversation with Isabelle talking about why the author [inaudible 00:40:12] Specifically, why did the author, why did Jacqueline Woodson end the book this way.

Video:

He chose to end the book this way because-

Video:

She.

Video:

Oh, yeah. She chose to end this book this way because let's say she chose to make Mya return in the story. So then people will think oh, I will always get a second chance to be kind. But if they don't make

Mya return, they'll make it, it will be stronger because now she's feeling more regret. Which means that the reader wouldn't want that to happen to them and they'll start being kind right from the start instead of thinking they'll have a second chance.

Jacqui Friedman:

All right. We're going to stop there. I'm going to stop sharing my screen.

Jacqui Friedman:

All right. Would love to hear a little bit about this wrap up. Was this the kind of thinking that you wanted the kids to do? You called on one student to close the conversation out and this was the student you were conferring with. Would love to hear a little bit about his choice also.

Sydney Diana:

Yeah. Like realizing now the question that I asked initially, I was like I want you to think about how the book ends. Think about the message but then think about why the author wrote the book. I wish I had asked what is the message and then think about why she ended it this specific way. Because that's my favorite part of the book and just for whatever reason I get caught up in it and didn't phrase it that way.

Sydney Diana:

But in that conversation with him, realizing that like what's the message and then why was the book written is often very similar. The message is this. It was written to teach me this but this one ends very differently, obviously. So then in the follow up question, asking why did that happen and then hearing him articulate his understanding of that craft and structure move. I went to him because I had heard him say it and thought that that was a really powerful idea that I wanted everyone else to hear after they had had an opportunity to sort of share out their different, larger themes and messages from the book.

Sydney Diana:

I think, also, I get really stressed about the time. How long have we been here? What do I need to move onto next? In hindsight, would have definitely spent more time making sure that other people had the opportunity to sit with that a little bit because that's a pretty high level idea. He got there. A bunch of other kids probably did, but I'm sure there are people in the room that like that kind of went over their heads.

Sydney Diana:

Maybe that's a conversation for another time. Find another text that ends in an unexpected way and talk about choices and endings. Like if it didn't happen in that moment. Overall, seeing them to be able to come up with a variety of lessons to be learned and then also having people that can articulate why a specific choice like that was made, was definitely, I was excited to hear that. Because that's how I feel about that book.

Jacqui Friedman:

Yeah. There's so much to talk about. Stacey, I'll kick it over to you.

Stacey Gershkovich:

Yeah, so much to talk about and we're almost out of time. We will still do the question and answer so if you could stay on, totally optional, until five o'clock, we will go into a couple of the questions that came in.

Stacey Gershkovich:

But before everyone goes, Sydney, you've done a lot of self reflection. We've gotten a lot of chats about that and it's really powerful to think about how self reflection is helpful in planning. You want to just share with us some last reflections. How do you think the lesson went? You obviously shared that along the way, but the original preparation you did how did it set you up for success if you felt like it did?

Sydney Diana:

I definitely think the moments that we stopped at were good stopping moments and there are a lot of opportunities for the higher level thinking because the questions are pretty open ended. I feel like the prep helped me have good stopping points and had questions in place that would let them get to these higher ideas.

Sydney Diana:

Obviously had some reflections watching it back. I am, I get kind of rigid. When I make a plan, I stick to it very closely. Something that I'm working on is trying to be a little more flexible in the morning. And also just as a personal thing to note I put it in this plan to be a helpful external thing. I normally put it on post it notes and put it on the book as I'm reading. You can kind of see them as I'm reading the book because I'll just get lost in the book. And then I'm like, Oh, three pages ago I was supposed to ask you this question. Then it gets all messed up. So I do just put it on post its as I read as another thing.

Sydney Diana:

I do think overall they had some really great insights from this. They got to some things I didn't think they would. They did a nice job supporting their thinking with evidence from the book and got to this cool idea at the end that I will explore at another time.

Sydney Diana:

Overall, I enjoyed that lesson with them and obviously have some things I would do differently next time.

Stacey Gershkovich:

That's great. We'll pause for a second. I want to thank everyone for coming. We're at time. We're going to continue on with the question and answers so if you have questions that you haven't put there yet, please go ahead and do so.

Stacey Gershkovich:

I just want to do a quick plug. You should've heard about our upcoming workshop where we're going to dive deeper into the same topic. Into E.S. literacy and intellectual prep. If you are interested, we're going to put the link to ... It's in there now. Go ahead, fill out that form. We'd love to see any educators there so we could go deeper into intellectual prep. We'll get a chance to look at some more lessons, to plan some more lessons together. We'd love to see you there.

Stacey Gershkovich:

We're also going to share our first issue of the quarterly that I mentioned before which is full of resources to use both in the classroom and I also know we've got a bunch of parents here. So there's some resources for our parents as well. You can also read a little bit about what we're up to at the Roberston Center. We'll put that link in the chat as well.

Stacey Gershkovich:

With all that said, let's go over to our question and answer.

Stacey Gershkovich:

Sydney, while we were kind of figuring out our noids, you answered our first question but let's go to our second.

Stacey Gershkovich:

Thank you Marie. Thank you for the gift of joining us and all of your great contributions to the chat. Obviously in that video we saw it was your whole class together. Do you ever split up the class for read aloud and if so how do you decide what those groups look like?

Sydney Diana:

Yeah, I definitely ... So that was whole class. I definitely do a lot of groupings in class. I teach an I.C.T. class so there's a very wide range of learning needs in there so often the groups are based off of that. But I just generally try to be flexible with it. If we're reading a specific genre that someone struggles with, I'll make a smaller group. If there's a specific need based off a kid that I know, we'll go into a smaller group. If kids just maybe need more literal questions before getting to the higher level questions, I'll make a group based off that.

Sydney Diana:

Then sometimes we'll just do things whole group because of the sense of community that comes with read aloud. We're all sitting here, hanging out reading this book together. It's nice in it's own way too and that's when it comes into asking specific kids specific questions so that they still have access to the lesson even if it's in a bigger whole group. I do it that way too.

Sydney Diana:

We try to mix it up.

Stacey Gershkovich:

Great.

Stacey Gershkovich:

And I will say, obviously, because a lot of reasons the co teacher is the one who's videoing the lesson. You can see her running around the room video taping. Typically, she'd be teaching with you but today, for that specific lesson we put her on video duty.

Stacey Gershkovich:

Great. And we should thank her for that.

Stacey Gershkovich:

Another question. What were the unit goals for the lesson? Are there specific unit goals? You had mentioned why you had picked out that specific book but could you speak a little bit to that?

Sydney Diana:

Sure. This was still in our beginning. This text wasn't a text that necessarily went along with the unit. But our first reading and writing literacy units, the big goal is honestly just falling in love with reading and writing. That investment in getting kids like, yes it's reading time, sets you up for the whole year.

Sydney Diana:

The goal of that was just getting them excited about books and then developing the habits of good readers and writers. Things like picturing what's happening in the book while you're reading. Being a focused reader. Being able to support your ideas with evidence. Being able to think about what's happening in the story. What does this make me think. Why did the author make these choices.

Sydney Diana:

Biggest goal was just falling in love with reading so I picked this book, obviously. I love this book and it just fosters the love of reading in the classroom. Because this was very early on in our school year.

Stacey Gershkovich:

Right.

Stacey Gershkovich:

Okay. Another question. What are some of the challenges that you face with read aloud? Is there anything you can speak specifically around this part of the day?

Sydney Diana:

Yeah. Definitely sometimes making it impactful. It seems like it always would be but because it is a really short component, sometimes we run out of time. Then that gets cut short and if you planned for this whole lesson maybe you only get through half the book that day and you don't get to have the extended conversation that you want to.

Sydney Diana:

That partially, but also just taking the time to make the questions worthwhile. It's very easy to just read the book and be like, okay, what happened. Okay, how, how is this different than what happened before. Sort of just like questions you can roll through very easily but actually taking the time to sit down and make a full plan from beginning to end can feel challenging because there's so much opportunity in each book or each chapter if you're reading a larger book. It can be hard to make the most out of the text that you have in front of you.

Stacey Gershkovich:

Right.

Stacey Gershkovich:

And just quickly I know we spoke about this. Jacqui spoke about this a little at the beginning with the questions, but how does planning for this look similar or different to other parts of your school day?

Sydney Diana:

I always try to start with first find something that's going to be engaging to them. If I'm bored, they're bored. Starting there and then coming up with my big ideas. Here I wanted to think about character motivations and the theme of the book. The messages of the book.

Sydney Diana:

If I'm doing math, what is my big goal for right now. Do I want you to understand this one place value pattern? Okay, now let's work backwards and make the materials work for this.

Sydney Diana:

Same thing in writing. If my big goal is to get to work on writing a convincing claim, a convincing topic sentence, that's all we're focusing on that day.

Sydney Diana:

Guided reading, if my goal is to summarize. Really coming up with the big idea I want to focus on and then making all of my questions and materials match that. And working really hard to not get thrown off track because it happens all the time. Someone says something that is great but not totally in the direction you want to go. Being okay, being like that's such a great thought. We're going to come back to it, because I don't want to get strayed away from what we're trying to do right now. Knowing that that's okay sometimes.

Sydney Diana:

So interesting, big idea and then finding materials to support it.

Stacey Gershkovich:

Right.

Stacey Gershkovich:

And probably last one. We have about a minute, two minutes left. Anything that you do specifically for students who have diverse learners, E.L. learners, processing issues, language, ex cetera.

Sydney Diana:

Yeah. Definitely I would often put the book under the Elmo or have them have a copy of the book themselves so that they can read along as it's being read aloud. As a person that has difficulty just hearing something out loud, knowing that seeing it in from of them is a helpful first step.

Sydney Diana:

Then also just scaffolding the questions more. What do you notice might be a really hard question for someone who had any kind of learning disability. Starting there and if that works, great, but having very scaffolded questions so they can sort of climb the ladder of the thinking that I'm trying to get to. And

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chunking it a little bit more. Starting more often ... or I'm sorry. Stopping more often. More just checks for understanding and using smaller bits of texts to ask questions rather than trying to read so much at one time.

Stacey Gershkovich:

And I love what you said at the beginning about starting there is fine because sometimes it's fine and it works. Well, you know this might be okay and if you notice the kids are struggling going from there rather than assuming from the beginning.

Stacey Gershkovich:

Well, I know you've had a very long day. I know everyone on this call has probably had a similarly long day. I want to thank everyone for being here. Sydney, I really want to thank you for taking the time. For allowing us into your classroom. We know that is a very vulnerable thing to do and we could not be more appreciative so thank you. And thank everyone for being here.

Stacey Gershkovich:

Again, if you're interested, a lot of resources on the website. You'll get a recording of this webinar. Feel free to share it with someone who missed.