TASK 2: INSTRUCTION COMMENTARY

Respond to the prompts below (no more than 7 single-spaced pages, including prompts) by typing your responses within the brackets following each prompt. Do not delete or alter the prompts. Commentary pages exceeding the maximum will not be scored. You may insert no more than 2 additional pages of supporting documentation at the end of this file. These pages may include graphics, texts, or images that are not clearly visible in the video or a transcript for occasionally inaudible portions. These pages do not count toward your page total.

1. Which lesson or lessons are shown in the video clip(s)? Identify the lesson(s) by lesson plan number.
   [Lesson 1 and Lesson 2 are shown in the clips.]

2. Promoting a Positive Learning Environment
   Refer to scenes in the video clip(s) where you provided a positive learning environment.
   a. How did you demonstrate mutual respect for, rapport with, and responsiveness to students with varied needs and backgrounds, and challenge students to engage in learning?

   [During discussions, I believe it is important to value students' ideas and converse with them to affirm and develop their suggestions. The teacher's tone of voice as well as discourse demonstrates respect and contributes to the creation of a positive learning environment. At 4:09-4:43 of the clip 1, while I'm modeling the literacy strategy, I took Lucas's idea and helped him develop it into a character trait we could write in the Venn Diagram. At 5:33 of clip 1, I worked with Ava and gave her a suggestion to help her idea fit into the Venn Diagram. At 6:46 of clip 1 while Katrina is sharing, I quickly and quietly “ssshhhh” Ava and remind her that Katrina is sharing right now and she needs to respect her classmate by being quiet and listening. Affirming and working with the students' ideas demonstrates mutual respect among the students and the teacher. They are eager to share ideas because they trust the teacher and are comfortable in the learning environment.

   I demonstrated rapport with all of the students in multiple ways. First, in my clothing (see anywhere in Clip 1). I chose to wear a chef hat and apron for the opening activity (What would you put in an enemy pie?) and continue to wear them for the lesson because it was creative and different, making the lesson special and inviting students to learn. I knew the students from all backgrounds would be attracted to it and want to know why I was wearing it and what was coming up next. In clip 2, at 5:15, during the review quiz, the group named the “Orange Owls” share with me their answer all at the same time and it makes us all laugh. I am impressed and exclaim that it seems like they do everything together! The smiles and laughter demonstrated rapport between the students and I. At 2:32 in clip 1, I say, “1, 2, 3 eyes on me” and the class responds with “1, 2, eyes on you” demonstrating both rapport and mutual respect between teacher and students.

   In clip 1 at 2:40-3:35, I challenge students to engage in learning by letting them know they need to be detectives to help identify character traits of both enemies and friends. I challenge them to engage in learning by letting them know that they will receive their own detective tools (a magnifying glass and Venn Diagram) to use when they begin their own. It is exciting for them to use tools like this and motivates them to engage in learning. At 7:55 of the same clip, I challenge the students to engage in learning by producing two more character traits on their own. At 2:06 of clip 1, I show responsiveness to Ben's need for a quieter environment while it's time to tell the learning target to each other. It was overwhelming for him to have noise going on around him and Haili whispering in his ear at the same time so he covered his ears and leaned away from her. I gave both of them the option of reading it through again and thinking about saying it in their own words in their minds. That option met their specific needs. At
the very beginning of clip 2, I challenge the students to a quiz. This quiz not only challenges the students to engage in learning and prepares them for the lesson ahead, but also demonstrates rapport with the students because they love to earn points. They will engage whole-heartedly and put a lot of effort into anything where they can work together in their groups to earn points. Having them participate in a quiz to assess their comprehension and provide a foundation for new learning shows rapport and knowledge of the students. During this quiz in clip 2, at 5:52 I show responsiveness to Micah who has hearing loss in one ear as well as struggles socially to participate in team work. I noticed that he did not participate in discussing with his group what the answer was, so I got down on his level to ask him personally if he remembers what the boy had to do to make the pie work. Micah knew the answer and shared it with me and his group was proud of him.

3. Engaging Students in Learning
Refer to examples from the video clip(s) in your responses to the prompts.

a. Describe your strategies to elicit student expression of their understanding of the learning target(s) and why they are important. (Optional, if evidence is provided in the student self-reflections in the Assessment task; evidence may also be provided by responding to this prompt.)

[My strategies to elicit student expression of their understanding of the learning target and why it is important are through discussion, students telling it to each other in their own words, and the students' personal target boards they fill out at the end of each lesson. The personal target boards are not shown in either clip one or clip 2, but the students are expected to fill in a dot based on where they feel their understanding of the learning target was on the target board. This lets the students express to me their understanding.

In clip 1, the students and I are just finishing going through the academic language and how it fits into the learning target. We have just discussed why it is important and are reviewing the target itself. At 1:04-2:34, I elicit student expression of the learning target by having them read/review the learning target along with me, then whisper it to each other to re-affirm it their minds before moving on. Immediately following this, we move into the literacy strategy, which is described in the learning target. From 3:30 onwards in clip 1, the students and I discuss what the character traits are of friends and enemies and directly apply the learning target in this process. This discussion is valuable to my assessment of the students' understanding of the learning target and gives the students opportunities to express their understanding of it and why it is important.

In clip 2, I elicit student expression of the learning target without them knowing it! Before we even go through the learning target, I give them an opening activity quiz. By working together in their groups, they do very well on the quiz, demonstrating what they already know about Enemy Pie. This lets them express what they know and prepares them for the part of the learning target which is determining what we know already, what we're still wondering, and what we want to know. This is demonstrated from beginning to end of clip 2.]

b. Explain how your instruction engaged students in developing an essential literacy strategy and requisite skills.

[At 3:30 in clip 1, we begin going through the Venn Diagram together, which is our literacy strategy. I am modeling how to compare and contrast by filling it out with them and engaging them in discussion and learning. This helps them to develop the essential literacy strategy and requisite skills which are the use and meaning of vocabulary in context. As they suggest ideas, affirm and/or help them use their vocabulary in the correct way to fit into the Venn Diagram as a character trait or phrase. At 3:42-4:05 of clip 1, I help Haili develop her idea and affirm the
character traits she suggested. At 5:00 of clip 1, I assist Hayleigh when she says enemies are “not nice.” I suggest the word, “mean,” as a trait and she likes that idea. The class agrees. Through this discussion, my instruction is able to guide students in developing the essential literacy strategy while using and practicing their requisite skills.]

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

[The learning segment theme of friends and enemies naturally links the students’ prior academic, personal, and cultural learning with new learning as it is a very tangible topic that students in the second grade deal with every day. They value and love their friends, but if someone does something that hurts them emotionally or physically, that person can immediately become an “enemy” and the friendship is severed. This theme and the book enemy pie is purposed to help the students build on to what they already know or think about how to handle “enemies” or friends that hurt their feelings. At 5:58 in clip 1, we begin to talk about character traits of enemies vs. friends and what they have in common. The students readily share what they already know based on prior learning, experience, beliefs, or culture.

Just before saying the learning target in clip 1, (1:06) I linked the students prior academic learning with new learning by reminding them that we will say the learning target to each other just as we had the day before. The day before, we had used a learning target in Science and the students were challenged to repeat it to each other in their own words. At this point in the video, I jog the students memory of yesterday’s learning to assist them in their task today: understanding and internalizing the learning target.

While writing down a trait of both friends and enemies, the students and I ventured down a path to deeper understanding when we realized that friends can sometimes do things that enemies do (6:35, clip 1). At 7:15 (clip 1), during the literacy strategy, I linked the students personal knowledge and learning to new learning. I gave them the option of writing “be mean” or “make mistakes” because I wanted them to determine what makes a friend a friend or an enemy an enemy. They have all most likely made mistakes before in their friendships, so they can relate to it. Figuring it out together and writing it in the Venn Diagram helps them combine personal experience with new learning in a graphic organizer.

In clip 2, during the quiz, I remind the students of prior academic learning by saying, “This one was on our worksheet from yesterday” (1:44). I hope to jog their memories so they can comprehend what they learned yesterday, use the knowledge today and be ready to build on it. During this quiz in clip 2, my instruction linked to the students community assets, by having them work together in groups, developing classroom community. As they work in groups, they realize they are stronger because they can help each other, build on each other's answers, and someone might remember something that someone else does not. The students are supporting each other in groups to comprehend the story content from the book yesterday, prepping them for new learning. This supportive community is shown throughout clip 2, but specifically at 00:37-00:53 and 2:45-3:15.]

4. Deepening Student Learning during Instruction
   Refer to examples from the video clip(s) in your explanations.

   a. Explain how you elicited and built on student responses to promote thinking and apply the essential literacy strategy using requisite skills to comprehend OR compose text.

   [ In order to elicit and build on student responses in lesson 1, I asked questions and prompted the students to revise their answers in some cases so that they would make sense in a Venn Diagram. Understanding vocabulary in context is a requisite skill that was naturally practiced by producing ideas in the form of character traits applying to friends, enemies, or both. At 4:25 of
clip 1, I build on to a student's response to promote thinking and apply the essential literacy strategy. At 7:00 of clip 1, I also build on to a student response to promote thinking among the whole class. The class thought about it and responds as a whole, which develops their requisite skills and prepares them for comprehension.

Clip two shows the opening activity in Lesson 2. The opening activity is a quiz to prepare the students for the essential literacy strategy in Lesson 2, which is the K-W-L chart. I wanted the students to realize what they knew about the story already to lay a solid foundation for the lesson. Throughout this opening learning task, students are demonstrating their comprehension of the story so far to me. I am eliciting their responses to comprehend the text that was read in lesson 1 and work together to do so. At 00:22 of clip 2, I ask the students what some other reasons were that Jeremy Ross was the boy's enemy, eliciting use of requisite skills (vocabulary meaning in context) and promoting thinking. When the process of filling in the K-W-L chart began, I referred back to this quiz where the students demonstrated what they already knew about the story “Enemy Pie”. At 3:58-4:15 of clip 2, I encourage the students to talk about the answer to the bonus quiz question in their groups, promoting thinking and applying the first step of the essential literacy strategy (K-W-L), which is what they know from yesterday's lesson.

b. Explain how you modeled the essential literacy strategy and supported students as they practiced and applied the strategy in a meaning-based context.

[ The essential literacy strategy in Lesson 1 is the Venn Diagram. The meaning-based context is the theme of friends and enemies extracted from the story “Enemy Pie.” Having the students apply the literacy strategy in the context of enemies and friends gave them a better understanding of the situation in the story, “Enemy Pie” and prepared them for deeper understanding and comprehension. I modeled the essential literacy strategy by engaging the students in a discussion about friends and enemies and prompting them to come up with character traits of enemies and friends. At 2:40 in clip 1, I begin modeling the process of comparing and contrasting by filling in the Venn Diagram with the ideas the students suggest. At 3:40 in clip 1, I support a student by affirming her suggestion and helping her put it into words that will be appropriate for the Venn Diagram. This supports her and the rest of the students for when they go to apply the strategy on their own. 

At 7:55 of clip 1, I support the students by challenging them with further instructions to come up with two more adjectives on their own just as we had been doing together in the meaning-based context of friends and enemies, preparing for the story of “Enemy Pie.”]

5. Analyzing Teaching

Refer to examples from the video clip(s) in your responses to the prompts.

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

Consider the variety of learners in your class who may require different strategies/support (e.g., students with IEPs or 504 plans, English language learners, struggling readers, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students).

[In my instruction, there are some opportunities missed that I wish I could go back and re-do. For example in clip 1 at 00:30, I am beginning to talk about character traits and I give examples using two students. However, I do not give any specific adjectives! Adjectives are what I'm wanting the students to think about and use. This would have been a perfect time to remind them of adjectives and how they can be used to describe character traits. Then, I could have...]

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directly applied character traits to describing enemies and friends, making a smooth transition to the modeling of the literacy strategy (Venn Diagram). This change would have made the understanding of the academic language more clear for the whole class, especially those needing greater support.

At 1:00 of clip 1, I wanted to make sure the students knew the learning target before we moved on to the literacy strategy. We had previously gone through the learning target as well as the academic language. This was a review. However, at 1:40, when I asked them to now say it to each other, I should have challenged them to see if they could remember the academic language (adjectives, compare and contrast). I also should have made it clear that I would be circulating the classroom listening for students repeating the learning target in their own words.

At 2:30 in clip 1, when they are finished telling the learning target to each other, I should have asked why we are using a Venn Diagram and what we are doing with it. I could have asked what we were going to use the adjectives for. This would have helped the whole class transition from the learning target to the literacy strategy and give them a more solid review before moving on, again giving more reinforcement and support to those that need it.

The central focus in this learning segment is comprehension. One reason for completing the Venn Diagram is to explore why the character traits of a friend make them a friend and why the character traits of an enemy make them an enemy. Are friends ever enemies? At 6:55 of clip 1, a student brings up the point that friends are sometimes mean too. I should have used that opportunity to ask some “why” questions about the Venn Diagram in general to assess whether the students were understanding the bigger picture. This literacy strategy was to provide a broader foundation for their comprehension of the story “Enemy Pie,” which teaches a valuable moral lesson.

Throughout the discussion in clip 1, I call on the students that raise their hands. While I give each one an opportunity to speak who wants one, there are still a few quiet ones who do not usually share in discussions. Many of these ones are struggling readers who are simply not as confident to share in any discussion having to do with language arts. I would make sure to find a way to specifically invite them into the discussion in a way that would not put undue pressure on them, but give them an opportunity to share if they are just lacking the confidence. This could simply be asking them if they agree with another students suggestion or asking if they have anything to add. In clip 2 (00:05-end), I ask comprehension questions crucial to the students knowledge for the literacy strategy coming up, but I could design the questions to make them open to build upon and open for deeper understanding of underlying themes and to promote thinking.

b. Why do you think these changes would improve student learning? Support your explanation with evidence of student learning AND principles from theory and/or research.

[The changes I would make to my instruction would greatly improve student learning in multiple ways. Clip 1 (1:00) First, making the learning target very clear and linking it to the academic language smoothly would make it easier to understand and internalize (especially when these are new or close-to-new vocabulary words). Preteaching vocabulary words (NICHD, 2000) facilitates reading of new text and also using new words in context. The Report of the National Reading Panel 2000 presented various methods of teaching vocabulary to support and increase comprehension. My lesson has “explicit instruction", but in order for the students to really internalize these words, they should have been explained with a close link to the learning target and literacy strategy so the students saw the tight connection between all three. This could also be called TVC, Teaching Vocabulary in Context (Moore & Moore, 1986).

Clip 1 (2:30) Second, I need to instruct in a way that meets the students' zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). This is a straightforward theory, but needs to be
considered carefully before instruction. In order for these second graders to stay on task and fully understand the learning target, my instruction must be planned carefully to lay out my expectations, remind them, engage them, and transition smoothly. If I wanted the students to really be internalizing and saying the learning target to each other in their own words, I would have needed to specifically tell them my expectations and what I would be listening for when I'm circulating the classroom. I should have given them an example of the learning target in my own words so they had a more tangible idea and felt more prepared. Then a review of what they shared with each other would have been helpful as well to solidify what they shared with each other.

Clip 1 (2:40) Third, I would engage the quiet learners and struggling readers more intentionally. Invite them into conversation by asking them specifically if they agree with a comment or have anything to add. This is personalizing instruction (Dietrich, Emil, 1925) which greatly benefits student performance. Some students could have used a little more of a challenge, whereas some students just needed to be invited into the discussion personally. When being more intentional about participation in discussions, I can better assess student understanding of the learning target and task at hand.

Clip 2 (00:05) Fourth, I would design my quiz comprehension questions to be able to be built upon for deeper understanding of comprehension and the underlying themes rather than just facts. I would have the groups work together to answer one fact-based question and one theme-based or learning target-based question to provide for more discussion and promote deeper thinking. This would help the students understand why they are focusing on a learning target and what their purpose is in this learning segment, (Pearson, 2013) which is all about building a concept in 3-5 lessons.]