

Stem Cell Lesson Plan Reflection

I thought my lesson on stem cells went okay, but there are definitely areas where I can improve. I'd say that the components of my lesson- the mystery bag hook, Poll Everywhere discussion, and the card game- were fine individually (though the game definitely needs more work), but they didn't all mesh together very well.

I thought the mystery bag activity went well, and it seemed like everyone had a good time with it. My goal for this part of the lesson was to get students engaged with critical and divergent thinking, which I could tell was working based on the things they came up with. I think I'll probably use this activity in some form when I start teaching, but one thing I want to do is better explain how it relates to the content after the students have completed it. I felt like I stumbled through this part a bit, and I think it led to some confusion in the next part of the lesson because there wasn't a clear bridge.

The Poll Everywhere discussion was where I included technology, and unfortunately I had some technical difficulties. I was hoping to be able to connect my laptop to the projector to display the answers because I couldn't get the extension I needed on the computer in the classroom. However, the projector didn't seem to want to cooperate with my laptop so students couldn't see the answers on the board. I was pretty disappointed about this at the time because there were some cool graphics that I had chosen to display the answers, but I tried to make up for it by reading some of the answers out loud. Again, I think I could have done a better job discussing the answers because there were a lot of question marks when the answers were coming in. One person expressed on the exit ticket that this portion of the lesson was somewhat confusing because the questions weren't always asked very clearly, which I can agree with. I did a dry run before my lesson with my little sister, who is taking high school biology now, and she had the same critique, so I adjusted those questions using her advice, but I think some still weren't worded as well as they should have been.

The card game is the one part of my lesson that didn't fit with the others, but it was also something that I just wanted to test run anyway. I honestly didn't know if it was something I should do with students in the future or if it was just way too complex to even attempt with high schoolers, and I kind of got a mix of both. Overall, it was really confusing for students, which is completely understandable. I rushed through the rules of the game because I thought it might be easier to learn as you go, but this just wasn't the case. In the future, I think I'll just read through the instructions first and see if students have questions before diving in, and I think it will be more successful. A few people mentioned that it would fit better at the end of the unit, rather than as an introductory activity, which is what this lesson was geared towards. Someone even suggested using it as an assessment, which I never considered originally, but it does make a lot of

sense. The game is pretty heavy on vocabulary and does require background knowledge on how stem cells work, so I think it could make a good summative if I can work out the bugs.

Even though I won't be starting practicum until next spring, I think my biggest worry, which I hope is just an irrational fear, is that students aren't going to like me or that they're going to like me for the wrong reasons. On one hand, I don't want to be the teacher that students complain about for not understanding what it's like to be a high school student, but I also don't want to be the teacher that lets students push them around because there's a lack of respect. I know that this all comes down to building relationships with students, but it seems like such a hard balance to find. I know this is something that takes time to figure out, but I worry that I'll struggle a lot in the process.