*Two Bad Ants*

The lesson started with the reading of Two Bad Antsby Chris Van Allsburg.  The book is about two ants that become separated from the group and are left in the kitchen that seems like an “unnatural” place that makes them nervous.  After I read the story to them, I grouped them up and we talked about things in the story that were real and things that were fantasy.  We looked back at the story and I had them pair/share about what specific pictures were and why they looked so different from the way we view them. Using pair/share was a helpful scaffold for them because they were able to verbalize their thoughts before being asked to write and show them visually.   Because the pictures were made larger in the book to appear as an ant was looking at them, it helped them to think about objects in a different point of view.  It helped them to look at the environment in a different way. We also discussed what writers do when they write in first person, and what pronouns they would want to use in their writing.

I then differentiated by student interest.  Students could choose one of three projects to complete.  They were all placed on PowerPoint when they completed them to share with their peers.  The first choice was that they could choose to write journal entries telling what it was like to be an ant.  The next option was a project where different kitchen gadgets and appliances were photographed and they were in charge of naming the gadget/appliance from the ant’s point of view and then writing a caption to fit the gadget/appliance based on an experience they had with the object as an ant.  The last choice was that they could create a comic strip telling about their experiences in the kitchen and how it affected them as ants.

Giving them options based on their interests was a major motivator for them.  Some students that were not always excited about writing were extremely motivated by the option to make a comic strip.  It also was a motivator for them to have the option of drawing. Putting in captions by pictures was also an option that was less overwhelming to some knowing that they just needed to write a sentence or two caption in response to different pictures. And the journaling choice was good for those that writing seems to just flow from their fingers.  Although all three choices varied, they all met the goal of students writing with point of view in mind.  Each activity required them to describe the traits and feelings of their main character and respond to the different situations the characters were exposed to.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.3](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/3/3/) Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.6](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/3/6/) Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.3b](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/3/3/b/) Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.

Something else that went well with the lesson was that I noticed a lot of collaboration especially with those that chose to do the comic strip and the caption assignment.  A couple of groups of the students asked if they could collaborate to do a group project.  And one student actually wanted to do two projects because he couldn’t decide between the options.

Something that I plan to change the next time I teach this lesson is that I plan to give them more opportunity to research the lives of ants.  Although they had some prior knowledge of ants and gained some insight of the ant’s point of view from the book, I think that giving students more materials for research and more time to research would have given them more information to draw from so they could include it in their projects and make them even more interesting.