

DreamIT Focus Group Report

When going into this experience with my colleagues, I had the memory of the teaching demonstrations we did in our cohort during the summer. I was excited to engage in conversation with the people I work with daily because although we share the same hallways, we don't always have the opportunity to sit down and share ideas. I was also eager to share all my efforts from this summer and see them in action in my classroom and hopefully to inspire some DreamIT efforts in other classrooms. The energy was infectious while we engaged in dialogue around my DreamIT project as the focus group took place. This focus group exceeded my expectations. The experience went from a lesson demonstration and turned into a "mini movement" among my K-2 teaching colleagues.

I presented my DreamIT project, explaining the background, the objective, and the overall transformation I would like to see in my students' learning. I conducted the demonstration lesson involving the integration of science into morning meeting. The lesson included concepts from our weather unit. I received valuable feedback such as suggestions of text to incorporate, conducting the morning meeting outside and observing weather conditions that way, and allowing students to conduct the morning meetings share and activity.

After the feedback the discussion shifted to how science can be incorporated more often in morning meeting, not just in isolated lesson regarding specific content, but how the elements of morning meeting can be transformed using science concepts and activities that become the routine instead of the every now and again

phenomenon. We decided as a K-2 grade level team that we will use, Doing Science in Morning Meeting, by Lara Webb and Margret Berry Wilson to help guide our components of morning meeting to implement science initiatives. We then mapped our specific greetings, shares, and activities to do during our units to help make connections. Examples are, “Seed Travels” a greeting during our plant unit, “Push and Pull,” a share activity during our forces and motion unit, and “Honeybee Dance,” a group activity during our insect unit.

After reflecting on what transpired from the focus group with my colleagues, I implemented many elements into the focus group with my students. First, I changed the location to outside. I took eight students, ranging in all different academic ability outside to conduct a morning meeting. One benefit of morning meeting is that it helps build a strong classroom community. I was strategic in which students I chose to partake in this focus group. I chose students who needed extra support in social interactions, students who needed motivation in the area of science, and also students who love science but struggle in other subjects areas so they need a positive academic experience.

This dynamic group worked flawlessly together. They were eager and engaged almost to the point where they “were on the edge of their seats” waiting for the next activity. During the lesson I gained some insight on some misconceptions students had about the types of clouds they observe outside. Also, students discussed particular conversations they were engaging in at home with their parents about the forecasting on the news. This was great to hear, because it gives

an example of how my DreamIT initiatives are helping make connections to students' daily lives.

The feedback I received from my students, both directly and indirectly, were very helpful for my plan moving forward. My students exclaimed to me their excitement of bring morning meeting outside. They also discussed their enjoyment with weather scavenger hunt that took place in the activity portion of the meeting. They explained how it was easier because they were surrounded by the weather elements being outside. I can see the benefit from incorporating science into our morning meeting. It will help build scientific talk, engage students in observations about the world around them, and will give them the opportunity to share and discuss daily science phenomenon in their lives.

The feedback didn't necessarily give me concrete elements that I want to change moving forward, however it has motivated me to implement more DreamIT components throughout my classroom because I see the great potential and benefit. The engagement level that occurred in both focus groups helped affirm that my DreamIT project will increase student excitement around the content of Science and also motivate myself as the teacher to incorporate more science because it's what my students enjoy. I am looking forward to what is in store as I fully implement all components of my project and heighten my students' experience in connecting science to their every day lives.