

# Good example of essay on research question: what motivation techniques do teacher...

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## **Final Field Notes**

Observation: A Little Dynasty Chinese School, Miss. J's beginner-level classroom.

This is the basic Zhuyin class and so Miss. J teaches the students the Chinese Alphabet. The beginner-level class is very spacious and colorfully decorated with student writing projects, stickers, posters and Chinese-themed learning charts. Brightly inviting colors have been used for the interior design of the classroom. There is also a language arts wall displaying different aspects of the Chinese language (grammar, spelling, punctuation and numerals). There are a number of book shelves that are filled with Chinese literature. The two huge windows at the back of the classroom ensure that the class is brightly lit with natural light. A small kitchen sink is present at the back of the classroom and is filled with a number of equipment including toys and paint. There is a small kitchen sink on one side of the walls and it is filled with a number of utensils. There are a number of little red seats and tables which occupy the center of the classroom. The seats and tables are arranged to form a u-shaped able set and a square shaped table set. The seats and table are arranged in such a way to allow a group of students in one area at any given time. The front area of the classroom is filled with a huge white board that is used by both Miss. J and the students for the purposes of learning. The classroom is also fitted with an AV projector. Miss. J is of Taiwanese descent (which I knew through asking) and seems to be 30 years of age. There are six students in the class (3 of them are Asian-looking, one middle east-looking, 2 Caucasian-looking) of approximately 4-6 years old.

The students have just arrived to school and take their seats getting ready

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for their first class. Miss. J welcomes them to class warmly. The students sing Chinese song (it is kind like a welcome song) between the first 5-10 minutes of the class. It is a beautiful and engaging song and as a result Miss. J instructs them to move to the center of the classroom where there is more space to dance. The song is accompanied with a simple dance movement that involved nearly all parts of the body (I quickly notice that the purpose of the song is to wake up the students, make them move and get psyched up for the class) (I notice that the welcome song and dance was a daily routine for the class before the lessons commenced). Miss. J instructs the students to settle down and get ready for the lesson. The students were really excited and motivated as they took their seats while singing the song. Miss. J rings her bell to get the attention of the students and reminds them to be quiet and get ready for the classroom. (I notice that Miss. J is very patient and sweet with the students as she does not seem frustrated when the students do not listen and she constantly spoke with a warm tone of voice).

Miss. J began the class by taking a roll call of the students. She wrote the students' names on the white wall using the Chinese characters and besides the names she drew some cute images. Miss. J asked the students what they would like her to draw besides their Chinese names (I realize that this was also a method that Miss. J employed to capture the attention of the students and prepare them for the class). Most of the students requested her to draw the common pets (cats, dogs and rabbits) beside their names. Nearly all the students in the class could correctly identify their names on the white board. Miss. J was so impressed with that and congratulated each one of them. “Well done” she could be heard saying to the students (This was a way of

encouraging and motivating the students). Only one Asian-looking student could not correctly identify her name but she guided her until she got it right (this shows Miss. J's focus on individual students). Miss. J quickly consults her schemes of work as she prepares to begin conducting the lesson (I notice that she is organized and plans ahead before conducting her lessons).

Miss. J started teaching by reviewing the Zhuyin (Chinese alphabet) that they had covered during the previous class. During the review, she used a game to motivate the students and also assess their progress in the class. The game involved Miss. J sticking the entire Chinese alphabet on the white board and asking out each of the students to identify the alphabet that she mentioned. Miss. J gave the students a toy hammer that they would use to hit the alphabet that she mentioned. Miss. J would mention a certain alphabet and randomly call a student to go to the white board and identify it by hitting it (I quickly realize that the game was not only a way of motivating the students but also a way of boosting their self-confidence as they stood in front of the class. Miss. J ensured that the students clapped for each student that correctly identified the mentioned alphabet. She showered those students with compliments such as “ Excellent,” “ Correct,” “ Wonderful” and “ Good job, Keep it up.” (These compliments boosted the morale and confidence of the students as they took their seats with happy and jovial faces). (This was a really engaging and fun game as the students enjoyed the hitting part of the game). The students could be heard discussing the game as it progressed. The game carried on until the whole Chinese alphabet had been covered. On instances where an alphabet was incorrectly identified, Miss. J guided the student until they could get the correct answer

(individual attention).

After the review, Miss. J started teaching new alphabet. She introduced the new alphabet by drawing them on the board and explaining what they entailed. She drew the alphabets on the board and gave each student a chance to come out and trace them. Tracing the alphabets on the board gave her a chance to evaluate the students' progress in class (the student's movement to the front of the class was a way of boosting their self-confidence and building their public speaking skills). Given that these were new alphabets, most of the students could not get right the drawings on their first attempt. Miss. J was very patient with them and guided them step by step to ensure that they got how to write them correctly. Miss. J would frequently tell them " You can do it," " Next time I know you will get it better," and " Nice try/attempt" (to ensure that the students did not give up and motivate them further). Miss. J ensured that each of the students had mastered an alphabet that she had drawn on the board before she progressed to the next alphabet (this showed patience and individual attention on her part).

After successful attempts at tracing the alphabets on the board, Miss. J instructs the students to take write the alphabets on their workbooks. The students could be heard making noise as they opened their workbooks ready to work on the exercise. Once again Miss. J reminded them of the need to maintain silence and being good girls and boys in class. The students promptly started working on the exercise. As they worked on the exercise, Miss. J went round the class monitoring what the students were writing and assessing their progress. At some point, she stood at particular students and

corrected them when she saw that they were drawing the alphabets incorrectly. She went to the board to clarify on an alphabet that she found out was confusing the students (this emphasis was a way of ensuring that the students correctly got how to write the alphabets). As soon as the exercise was over, she encouraged the students to exchange their work (I realize that this was a move to enable the students assess their fellow students work and motivate each other). (The students were really happy to assess their colleagues' work as they gladly discussed with each other). Miss. J later on asked them to turn their work over for marking. She marked the work in a few minutes and gave them back to the students. (On receipt of their work, the students were happy with their scores and boasted of their progress). Miss. J tells them that they have all done an excellent job and should continue doing so (this was a way to motivate them further). After the exercise, Miss. J engages them in a game of sticking the alphabets on the board and hitting them with the toy hammer (I quickly realize that this was a way she employed to reinforce the student's memory on the new alphabet as well as the old ones learned in the previous class). (The students had fun and really enjoyed hitting hard the alphabets with the toy hammer). After exactly one hour of class time, it was time for snacks. Miss. J issued each one of them with hand sanitizers and led them in singing two Chinese songs before they could eat their snacks. One of the songs was the "washing hands" and the other was the "I want snack song" (I notice how effective the songs were in motivating the students to maintain hygiene before eating any foods). The students were all smiles as they ate their snacks. I could overhear the students discussing about the hitting game (this

showed how effective the game was in reinforcing their memory). As the students took their snacks, Miss. J was busy preparing for the second lesson. After 15 minutes, Miss. J rang her bell indicating the end of snack time. She instructed the students to settle down quickly and get ready for their second lesson. The students could be heard making noise as they took their seats but Miss. J reminded them about being good girls and boys.

The second lesson was all about craft (craft time). Miss. J asked the students to assemble close to the kitchen sink where a number of paints were. She was leading the students on how to make art craft. In the session, she led the students in doing finger painting. Miss. J further instructed them to move to the white board where the paintings were to be exhibited. She slowly showed them how to dip their fingers in the paint without dirtying themselves and painting on the board to produce a good image. She often asked the students questions regarding the process of finger painting (this was so as to ensure that she captures their attention and reinforce their memory on the steps). Miss. J repeated the steps severally until she was cock sure that the students could do it on their own (repetition allowed for the mastery of the concepts by the students). She promised to give out stickers to the behaving students and the ones who would perform exceptionally well in the finger painting class (this was a motivational strategy employed by Miss. J). The students followed her cue step by step until they got the art finger painting right. Miss. J could be heard correcting those who did not follow the processes. “ This is how it should be done,” she could be heard saying to certain students. In the end, she was very proud of the artwork by the students and congratulated them for producing quality art

work. She told the students that each one of them would be handed with stickers and would be rewarded by higher grades on the behavior chart. In the last 5-10 minutes of the class, the students engaged in the singing of the goodbye song. In a similar fashion to the welcome song sang earlier in the class, the students took to the center of the classroom singing and dancing along to the song (they seemed happy with what they learnt and also enjoyed the prospect of going home). In unison, they thanked Miss. J for teaching them. Miss. J, on her part, thanked the students for being good girls and boys, and for being attentive during the class. Miss J could be heard saying “ Thank you for being good students today.” Miss. J dismissed the class and the students packed up their belongings, and left for the welcome lounge where their parents had been waiting for them.