
www.coolcatteacher.com/e88

[Recording starts 0:00:00]

Here's a shout out to two reviewers on iTunes. Mr. Jiminez from Iowa. Your story is endearing, and I'm so glad you and your students are falling in love with learning and that you're so excited. And remember, being remarkable starts with you. And theteachermike72, I also appreciate your feedback.

Now, at the end of the show, I'm going to tell you about something new I'm doing that I actually learned about on yesterday's show. You can go to [patreon.com/coolcatteacher](https://www.patreon.com/coolcatteacher) to learn more or I'll give you some details at the end of the show.

Promoting academic discourse in the English as a second language classroom. This is episode 88.

The Ten-minute Teacher podcast with Vicki Davis. Every week day you'll learn powerful practical ways to be a more remarkable teacher today.

VICKI: Today, for Wonderful Classroom Wednesday, we are travelling into Greetzel Mojica's [@Mojica_CJUSD](https://twitter.com/Mojica_CJUSD) classroom in California. And with her sixth-graders, she recently did a project where she had them present about volcanoes and uploaded the video to Twitter, (see https://twitter.com/Mojica_CJUSD/status/865414547468713984) and it kind of intrigued us. So Greetzel, tell us a little bit about this project and what you were trying to accomplish with the assignment.

GREETZEL: So the whole goal of the students is to see whether they actually understood the different types of volcanoes that they were researching. And I just felt like the best way to understand something and know if you actually know the information is to be able to actually explain it to someone else. When I had this idea for them to do the project, it was hands-on. It got the students discussing and working together, collaborating. And then in addition to that, it just gave me a great assessment tool to be able to assess whether they had actually mastered the type of volcano that they each had researched.

VICKI: Now, how is this different from the typical volcano assignment, because didn't you have some peer review going on?

[00:02:00]

GREETZEL: Students then, toward the end of the project when they were done, they gave oral presentations in small groups, and they were able to discuss the actual facts behind what they built. And the students then evaluated whether their information went along with what their model showed. I mean, when you give a normal assessment, whether they know composite volcanoes or shield volcanoes, you could just give a clear paper test and they could either write and fill it out. But, for me, the explanation behind it is so much more powerful to actually know that they remembered it versus them just filling out something by hand.

VICKI: Now, I'm intrigued by how you wanted the students to give peer feedback, because you didn't want them to just give basic feedback. What were your goals for their type of feedback they gave each other?

GREETZEL: I actually wanted it to be thoughtful. And in order for that to actually happen, I needed to have a rubric for them to actually see. And prior to them actually giving their presentations, I explained to them what each numbers stood for. So for example, our rubric was based off of a number system, so 4 being the highest; so 4, 3, 2 and 1. And 1, with the students, when they were presenting, like they didn't even know facts about their volcano or they didn't really make a lot of eye contact. The students were able to see the rubric. And I wanted it to be based off of that, versus them just saying like, "Oh, I really liked your presentation," which was what I used to get last year. But with the new rubric being posted up and then being already used to presenting in that manner and using that, it just made it, I guess, more academic.

VICKI: You said you've been learning about discourse when we were talking before the show. What do you mean?

GREETZEL: Yes. Our district is moving toward this – well, I don't think it's a big movement, but it's just starting to emphasize the importance of discourse in the classroom.

[00:04:00]

I think a lot of us as teachers, we're used to having the students just collaborate and think per share, but it's never really purposeful. So I think starting to really think about the common core state standards and how we want the students to actually master and show mastery through oral language. Especially being that our school is widely ELL learners' population, the vocabulary part for them is such a big part in order for them to be proficient English learners at our school. So them being able to speak academically, using academic vocabulary that they don't get at home, only here at school, they need to practice it. And the only way to do that is through oral discussion.

VICKI: So Greetzel, give me some examples of some academic vocabulary that you want to hear from your sixth-graders.

GREETZEL: Oh, my sixth-graders actually have a handout. It's a research that I got from my training. And it's by Kate Kinsella. And it's called Language Strategies for Academic Interactions. *(Here's the handout -* <http://www.rcsdk8.net/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=4099&dataid=4832&FileName=Conversation%20starters.pdf> *)* And on there, it pretty much has sentence frames. And when their expressing an opinion, it has different sentence starters. The one that they like to use is "in my opinion" or "I think", "I believe that", and then they finish the sentence with whatever subject we're teaching or learning from. If it's math or science, they start with whatever, the question I propose, and they find what it fits. So if they're agreeing with

something a partner says, they have the sentence starter that says, “I agree with that person” or “I share your point of view”, and then continue on.

VICKI: So Greetzel, what is the biggest mistake you made when you started this approach of trying to help kids learn academic language as they give each other feedback?

GREETZEL: I think my biggest mistake when I first started was not having a rubric up of what I wanted them to see. When I was having a conversation with my colleagues, I realized that students do grade harder than teachers. Just letting my students focus on the actual rubric on the content that I wanted them to get from their peers versus them liking something off of their personal opinion, I think that was the most difficult part.

[00:06:00]

VICKI: What’s the best advantage of using this? I mean, have you seen any improvement in your classroom or engagement? Or what have you seen?

GREETZEL: Oh my gosh, yes. I think having them speak academically, they’re just more confident. They’re able to find their voice in what they’re trying to explain. They’re not embarrassed anymore; they don’t mind, I think, because they have something in front of them. And even some of my higher students, my English only students, they were able to express their opinions and stopped using the sentence frame starters that they have. Some of them even put it away because they didn’t need it anymore. They’re just more confident and comfortable with public speaking. And I think it’s so important because that’s something that’s going to continue throughout their whole life.

VICKI: Now, one thing that you really believe in, in the bio that you turned in, is the importance for us teachers to keep advancing and learning in our craft. What’s next for you? *VICKI DAVIS @COOLCATTEACHER*

GREETZEL: You know what; I just feel like whenever something comes up or starts to change, in 21st century learning, it’s an opportunity for me to learn something different. So right now, I think what’s next is just becoming an expert more in discourse and trying to master that more purposefully, versus having me just sit and listen to students. Having my students actually learn to listen purposefully as well. So I think my thing next is being able to empower my students more versus myself.

VICKI: I love that – purposeful listening. I had somebody almost share it recently; Dean Jim Ryan from Harvard (www.coolcatteacher.com/e75) . And in his book, he talks about generous listening. And, you know, purposeful and generous listening, that’s hard, isn’t it?

GREETZEL: It is so hard. They recently sent me to a coaching training. So that way, when we collaborate as teachers, I think that’s our biggest mistake. It’s that we always have something to say. We’re always quick to give feedback even though the feedback

wasn't necessary. It's more to help the other person reflect on their own craft and process.

[00:08:00]

And I think we're so vocal, depending on our type of personality. Like I'm someone that wants to fix something; I'm a fixer. Listening with intent was super hard to learn.

VICKI: It is. And that's so much part of discourse, isn't it?

GREETZEL: It is.

VICKI: Greetzel, I have one more question for you. Do you have any special challenges because of the students that you serve that you think are different than most classrooms have?

GREETZEL: I think the biggest challenge is still learning more about the social background of students from our area. I think there's differences between economic status and differences between family lives and styles. I'm still processing and learning different ways to approach students from different social backgrounds. I mean, myself, I grew up in a home that was very different from most affluent families. So I think just still learning more about understanding poverty and understanding the mindset of students who come from different types of backgrounds, pretty much.

VICKI: Yeah. That's a challenge for so many of us, because we do want to – you know, we have to relate before we can innovate, and we really do need to know those students. So, remarkable teachers, we've gotten so many great ideas from Greetzel. And I hope that you'll apply those in your classroom and really think about discourse and feedback.

Okay, I have to admit that the show notes for yesterday's show, well, it went up a little late. Because I started experimenting with one of the websites I learned about on the show Patreon, [patreon.com/coolcatteacher](https://www.patreon.com/coolcatteacher). And here's how it works. This gives away for you to support your favorite shows and bloggers. And here's what you get. You know how a lot of us, like me, sell things or pay teachers or own little store, that sort of thing. Well, I'm able to just package those in at different subscription levels. Right now, everybody who supports it at \$10 or more will get the Do What Matters productivity book, <http://www.coolcatteacher.com/new-book-do-what-matters/> which is my 72-page eBook, plus 108 Excel and 108 PDF planning templates.

[00:10:00]

And that's worth \$9.99 right there. You're already getting that. At the \$5 level, you've got the three digital citizenship lesson plans in my substitute teacher manual. And that substitute teacher manual costs \$5. Well, the person who gets the \$10 package gets everything at the \$5 and the \$10. And then there's the \$1,

and I've got lots of things there too. You also get special private podcasts and polls and other goodies through Patreon. Now, I'm experimenting with it. And I look forward to learning about another way to give you remarkable value.

Hope you'll go over there, learn a little bit about it. And thanks for supporting the show and for listening and telling your friends.

Thank you for listening to the Ten-minute Teacher Podcast. You can download the show notes and see the archive at coolcatteacher.com/podcast. Never stop learning.

[End of Audio 0:10:59]

[Transcription created by tranzify.com. Some additional editing has been done to add grammatical, spelling, and punctuation errors. Every attempt has been made to correct spelling. For permissions, please email lisa@coolcatteacher.com]

