VIDEO NOTES: ***6th Grade ELA Lesson on Similes***

Video Links: 6th Grade ELA Lesson on Similes
Common Core State Standards: see "What Could This Teacher Do To Improve" section
Compass Components and Ratings: Using Assessment in Instruction (3d), *Effective Proficient*
Lesson Objective: Students will use simile in a character sketch.

Compass Component 3d: Using Assessment in Instruction (Rating: *Effective Proficient*)	
Indicators	**Evidence**
Students indicate that they clearly understand the characteristics of high quality work.	• Through the explicit teaching of the daily learning target, students communicate in their own words that they understand the goal for the class. Teacher says, *"…the DLT (daily learning target) for today is what?"* Student responds, *"I can use simile in my character sketch"* (0:25). Teacher later asks, *"What is it all about for big learning targets? Take a minute and look [at the board]. Where is this [daily learning target] all going?"* Student responds, *"I can use effective language skills"* (0:48). When students can articulate in their own words the expectations that are set for them, it shows that they understand what they need to accomplish and will be more successful in doing so.
The teacher elicits evidence of student understanding during the lesson.	• The teacher elicits evidence of student understanding through individual conferencing while students are working in pairs (1:59), cold calling to ensure that all students share out (3:47), and asking students to show fist of five or thumbs to indicate understanding (3:53) • Lesson ends with a debrief asking students to summarize what they have learned in their own words (4:14). This allows the teacher to collect evidence of student progress which can then be used to alter instruction in response to students' needs and levels of understanding.
When necessary, the teacher makes adjustments to the lesson to enhance understanding by groups of students.	• When it appears that several students are struggling to complete the learning task, the teacher adjusts instruction and does an impromptu whole class lesson. The teacher says, *"there are some folks in here who are really good at doing this simile thing, and there are a couple people who need to get refocused."* (2:27). She then asks students to go back to the DLT and articulate how using a simile is helpful in expression.
There is evidence that students have helped establish the evaluation criteria. *(Highly Effective indicator)*	• Students help to establish the expectation that they will write one paragraph in ten minutes (1:36) and understand that it is important to grab the reader's attention (3:00), but it is unclear if these will be used as assessment criteria.
Teacher monitoring of student understanding is	• The teacher checks for student understanding throughout all parts of the lesson. Continuous

sophisticated and continuous: the teacher is constantly "taking the pulse" of the class. *(Highly Effective indicator)*	checks for understanding ensure student misunderstandings are addressed quickly. This allows students to have a deeper and more accurate level of content mastery.

WHAT COULD THIS TEACHER DO TO IMPROVE?

What did the teacher do in this lesson?	*Highly Effective* Indicators	What could the teacher do to move to *Highly Effective*? (example actions)	How could this lesson be improved for students to meet Common Core standards?
The students suggest how much work they could complete in a specific time period and the goal of a simile, but it is unclear if these will be used as evaluation criteria.	There is evidence that students have helped establish the evaluation criteria.	Make a clear connection between students' suggestions and how they will be used to assess the students. Or, prompt students to discuss the criteria that they would look for in a high quality simile, record these criteria, and use them to assess the students work. Supporting students in their understanding of the assessment expectations will result in higher levels of mastery and student success. Allowing them to develop the criteria themselves will increase investment and engagement.	The structure of this teacher's lesson is strong and can likely serve students in meeting the expectations of the CCSS, but the content of the lesson is not aligned to CCSS. To align to L.6.5a and W.6.3d, students must meet the expectations of those standards in the context of reading and understanding complex texts and applying understanding in writing. Students could look at a passage from a complex text which includes figures of speech, like similes. Students could interpret the figures of speech and analyze their strength and the varied impact they have on meaning of the passage and the reader. Students could then use the passage as a "mentor text" to emulate the author's use of figurative language and style in their own narrative writing about a similar topic.
Students receive limited actionable feedback.	Feedback to students is specific and timely, and is provided from many sources, including other students.	To increase students' understanding, provide specific feedback. For example, one student says a simile is "using like or as in a sentence" (4:36). Instead of moving on to another student, the teacher could have said, "That is only part of what a simile is. Can you explain what the use of 'like' or 'as' is a sentence is doing for the reader?" Additionally, consider having students review one another's similes and provide feedback, based on the criteria of a good simile that they established at the beginning of the lesson. When learning expectations are high,	

		students need specific feedback in order to know exactly where they can improve. The process of feedback and revision results in higher quality work products and deeper levels of learning.	
The teacher adjusts instruction for the whole class.	The teacher's adjustments to the lesson are designed to assist individual students.	Create impromptu pairs of students with different levels of understanding. The stronger student in the pair will reinforce their understanding while they teach the other student.	