

3 Act Lesson Plan
Patient Problem Solving (Teaching without the Textbook)
Adapted from Dan Meyer

The Big Idea

- Take away the text and incorporate as many senses as possible
- Make it real life and let students see it happening
- Students have ownership of the questions b/c they came up with it.
- Remove the literacy challenge.
- Students had to think of the important information.
- As Jo Boaler states, “low floors and high ceilings”

Act 1: Get them hooked!

- Pose the conflict and introduce the students to a scenario
- Teacher says “I’m going show you something I came across and I found it interesting.”
- Teacher ask “What was the first question that came to mind?”
- Students share with each other first, and then class (Think-Pair-Share).
- Teacher collects questions, rank them by popularity, “How many hairs would you need?”
- Teacher asks for an estimation/guess, think-pair-share.
- Teacher asks for a number that was too high, too low. This allows the Teacher to support the students in creating a range for their estimate.

Act 2: Let them struggle!

- Teacher sets students free to grapple with the problem.
- Students soon realize they need more information.
- Teacher asks, “What information do you need to know to answer it?”
- Teacher offers just enough information to give the fuel to get going.
- Teacher has a variety of resources available to the students if they need them.
- Teacher questions...that’s it! No explaining, just questioning.

Act 3: Get them explaining and reveal!

- Students share what they have learned with the class.
- Students discuss each other’s strategies and question the thinking of their peers.
- Teacher creates the “Big High Five” moment by showing a reveal video or picture.
- Teacher revisits the class estimates and finds the closest answers. Students discuss the thinking behind their estimate and what they would’ve changed.

Act 4 (The Sequel): What else can we learn?

- Teachers ask: “Using what they learned in the lesson, is there anything else that we want to learn?” This may address an additional question listed in Act 1 or it could be something sparked in their learning.
- Teachers challenge students to “algebrafy” the problem

For more information:

<http://blog.mrmeyer.com/category/3acts/>

gfletchy.com

