Observation and Inference
4th Grade
Voorhees/Fissora

References:

- Columbus Public Schools Curriculum Guide

Benchmarks:

SLC 3: Inferences and Observation

Objectives:

Students should be able to differentiate between observations and inferences, be able to make inferences based on observations, and make observations on their own and reach logical inferences.

Materials:

- Paper
- Writing utensil

Initial Demonstration:

This is a thinking exercise. It will be explained to the students that an observation is information that we gather with our senses and that inferences are the possible conclusions we might draw from our observations.

The teacher will then present pictures or scenarios whereupon the students will write down their observations. We will then discuss the class’s observations (i.e. are the making observations or presumption/inferences). Then the students will write down inferences from the observations. We will discuss the inferences as a class.

A student is seen in the hall with the principal. The student’s clothes are torn/disheveled. He or she appears to have a cut on his or her face. The student is crying and the principal seems concerned but unhappy.

Target Observations:

- The student’s clothes were disheveled.
- There was a cut on his/her face.
- They are crying.
- The principal does not look happy.
**Target Model:**

- The student was involved in a fight
- The student was running in the hall (thus the principal’s ire) and fell

**Procedure:**

The idea of using observations to make inferences will be a recurring theme throughout the year. This will be addressed both explicitly and implicitly in future lessons. Here is another thought experiment:

A young man is walking near a basketball court in the park. He is wearing loose shorts, a t-shirt, and gym shoes. He is sweaty and carrying a basketball.

**Target Observations:**

- He is wearing workout clothes.
- He is sweaty.
- He is carrying a basketball.

**Target Revised Model:**

- The young man just finished playing basketball
- The young man just ran to the basketball court.

**Summary:**

Students should be able to list observations without making presumptions or inferences. Students should be able to make logical inferences. Students should see that there may be multiple inferences based on observations.