

Balls Video Episode

Science Unit

- *Balls and Ramps*, published by Insights
- The lesson was adapted to the Washington State Science Standards, which, at the time, required that older elementary students know how to design and conduct a controlled investigation. Learning how to plan a testing procedure and conduct the procedure correctly are important scientific skills.

Time Required for the Sessions

Science session:

- 20 to 30 minutes for planning the fair test
- 20 to 30 minutes for conducting and discussing the fair test

Writing session:

- 20 to 30 minutes for shared writing as a class and independent writing using the scaffolding

The two sessions were filmed in one morning, but typically, the science session would take place on one or two days and the science-writing session would happen the next day.

Time of Year

- This video episode was filmed in late January at the beginning of the students' second science unit. They had done an inquiry-based science unit about weather in the fall, which is what the teacher refers to when she asks students to think about the two fair tests they had planned and conducted in that earlier unit.

Strategies and Tools

- One student is using a crayon to make a notebook entry; students should use pencils.

Teacher and Her Classroom

- This is the fifth year that this teacher has taught the *Balls and Ramps* unit.
- She loops with her students from first to second grade, so she teaches the three first-grade units every two years.
- She has no adult help in the classroom during her science and science-writing sessions.
- This classroom teacher teaches all subjects in this classroom, but the videotaping purposely focuses on only the science materials.

- The teacher always models her science-writing minilesson in this part of the classroom, and she writes on white chart paper as she models the scientific thinking and writing.

Students in the Class

- This first-grade class has 22 students, 7 of whom were absent, for various reasons, the day of the videotaping.
- Some of the students had inquiry-based science instruction in kindergarten. Few, if any, had science-writing instruction in kindergarten.

School Demographics

- African American: 42.3%
- Asian: 22.8%
- Latino: 23.8%
- Native American: 2%
- White: 9.1%
- Free or reduced-price lunch: 93.6%
- Limited English proficiency: 44.3%

In this school, some of the students are homeless, moving in and out of transitional housing or shelters.