Round Reflection

I had such an incredibly fun time during my round, and the smiles on everyone’s faces reassured me that they were too! I was so proud to see my scientists engaged in the material and all the while having a blast. The adult presence in the classroom made what could’ve been a messy disaster into a learning experience for every child. This is evidenced in their performance during the experiment as well as the outstanding responses on their Meltdown! worksheet.

During the experiment, students seemed to be copying each other a bit, as made clear by the universal smashing with the straws and blowing. However, several students had unique methods to help them along. For example, Cameron was attempting to provide his and partners’ cup with shelter, which might provide extra warmth to melt the snow. Additionally, students were doing an excellent job of integrating their prior knowledge of the water cycle into their activation of new knowledge regarding matter. Frequently, students were overheard using words such as “heat,” “change,” and even “condensation”! The use of these terms in their astute observations assures me that they are ready to incorporate the new discipline specific concepts and vocabulary that are associated with matter.

The major delta of my round is my lack of written language throughout the lesson. As Holly noted during our post-round, I relied on oral communication far too much. I am going to take her suggestion of writing a formula (snow + heat = water) in order to transition from this primer lesson into the meat and potatoes of the matter unit. Written anchor charts will also be necessary for the inclusion of the new vocabulary for the unit; we may be able to further integrate our work during the Meltdown! by labeling the pictures on the worksheets.
Notes on my round questions:

1. *Did you encounter scientists using vocabulary words orally or in writing? Please circle and provide context.* (solid/liquid/heat/change/matter/state)

   This question turned out to be an excellent diagnostic tool for the rest of the unit. From my peers’ detailed responses, students are comfortable with the words “melt,” “heat,” and “change,” but were not familiar with any of the matter specific vocabulary. Thanks to everyone’s detailed notes, I know that I have to be extremely explicit about my introduction and use of these discipline specific words. I wonder if I had mentioned even once a state of matter if they would have the familiarity with this concept to employ the terms themselves.

2. *Did the activation of prior knowledge (the water cycle) present itself in the scientists’ discovery of new material (matter)? For example, students may refer to the sun as the agent of heat in the water cycle and recognize that they need to generate heat to melt the snow.*

   The students clearly had so much to offer during this lesson as a foundation for the unit on matter. I’m so grateful for your copious notes, as you’ve reminded me of the smaller details that students have picked up on from our extreme weather unit and applied here. For instance, I was reminded that Cameron referred to the dust particles that water droplets attach to; this might be an interesting conversation about mixtures between states during our oobleck lesson.

3. *Did you consider the period of discussion and sharing at the end of the lesson provided adequate closure?*

   I was comforted that my mentors and peers considered the ending discussion period to provide adequate closure to discuss conclusions and misconceptions. Going forward, I will use this time to provide written cues for the students to latch on to.