A Look Into Mr. Jamison's Middle School Science
Learner Active, Technology-Infused Classroom™

The bell rings and students begin entering Mr. Jamison's classroom. They head to the *resource area*, a group of repurposed milk crates, to retrieve their *two-pocket folders*, then sit with their *home groups*. They spend a few minutes looking at their *activity lists*, selecting goals for the day, and scheduling their time. While they don't all schedule the same activities, they rely upon one another to make the best decisions possible to attain their goals.

As groups finish scheduling their time, the students move to various areas of the room, including round tables, lab tables, and couch areas. Jackson grabs a laptop and selects a quiet area of the room. He opens his folder and reads the notes that Mr. Jamison left for him. He looks through all of the work on the "Work Completed" side, smiling as he reads some of the feedback. He then transfers all the papers except one to his binder. Mr. Jamison indicated needed revisions, so Jackson moves that paper to the "Work in Progress" side of his *two-pocket folder*. He then looks at his schedule and notes that he has planned to watch a screencast created by another teacher on "Identifying Secondary and Tertiary Cause-and-Effect Relationships" and then work on his erosion experiment. He begins watching the video.

The class is engaged in a five-week unit, "Do We Have Enough," working to determine how the Earth can sustain a growing population with limited usable land, drinkable water, and clean air. They are to examine human impact and decide what they can do to help. It is part of a grade-level theme, "From Dependence to Independence to Interdependence."

Kayla and Lisa are sitting on the couch sharing their ideas for what students can do to reduce their negative impact on land and animal habitats. Each of them created several cause-and-effect chains on how humans negatively affect habitats, which in turn affects animals, which in turn affects humans. They share their findings and brainstorm ideas for how they can make a difference. They write down all of their ideas in their science journals.

Meanwhile, Mr. Jamison began the class period by sitting with a group of students who were sharing their findings from a recent lab on wind erosion. He listens to their discussion and then asks each of the students to define some terms: *suspension*, *saltation*, *surface creep*, and *abrasion*. As each student correctly explains the terms, he notes their mastery on his *facilitation grid* that he carries with him on a clipboard. He then asks them what their most surprising finding was. Isabelle shares that they were surprised at the amount of dust they found in the air in one of their experiments. Mateo adds how dangerous this is for people to breathe; Emma explains that they found that dust from the Sahara Desert in Africa was landing on the coral reefs and causing harm to them. Mr. Jamison asks if they thought they had explored the topic enough to start brainstorming ideas for how to reduce the negative effects of wind erosion. The group agrees that they want one more day to research additional questions they identified during their lab.

Mr. Jamison then checks the *help board* and sees that Kris has added her name. He sits with Kris, who is struggling with reading an excerpt from a book on water pollution. He helps her work through some of the words and suggests that she sign up for a reading buddy. He looks at the schedule she made for today's work and tells her he plans to hold a *small-group mini-lesson*

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tomorrow on “Reading Science Content,” and she should plan to sign up. He tells her, for now, to move on to working on her graphs, an activity at which she is more successful. He makes a note to hold that *small-group mini-lesson* tomorrow for those who were struggling with texts.

A group of five students who have signed up in advance is assembling for a *small-group mini-lesson* on “Water Availability in Florida.” Mr. Jamison arrives and hands out coded maps of the freshwater drinking supply throughout the state and begins working with them on analyzing the data.

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