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EDUC 430

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Clinical Report of Student Performance Data (Fall 2016)

The field experience for Teaching Mathematics was an exciting time for me as I was anxious to share my mathematics knowledge with the students at Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial Secondary School in Mr. Steffensmeir's sixth grade mathematics classroom. Throughout this journey, I encountered many different students and classes as not all of the class periods are held at the same time each day due to various circumstances such as programs, late starts, etc. However, I was given the opportunity to teach multiple lessons to period four. The main lessons that I taught included prime factorization, understanding fractions, and greatest common factors (GCF). The lessons mostly consisted of review, an attention grabber (typically relating to the concept of the day and how it pertained to their daily lives), direct instruction and note taking, collaborating with peers, question time, and then launching into their homework for the day. I spent three weeks in the classroom; however there was a no school day during the second week of my three week experience. As I began in the classroom, the students were finishing up a chapter and taking a test. The students seemed eager to learn and looked forward to their math period of the day!

Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial Secondary School is a fairly small school compared to the larger towns; however, it is a public school. There are minimal racial differences in the school as well as minimal cultural differences. The students are aware of their expectations as they show respect towards the school's property as well as their peers. The students, however,

did not seem to enjoy the challenges placed in front of them. Many students strived for the fastest method and wanted to get things done as soon as possible. This could be related to the age group of the students, as well. Generally speaking, students wanted to do the best as possible as they strived for a top grade as external motivation.

At this age, many students should be aware of how to take tests; however, the word “test” frightened many. It is important to enforce and remind students test-taking skills early on in their education so they have the time to perfect it for their future in high school and college (if they choose). The activity that will be the main focus is a lesson on the greatest common factor (GCF). With this, the ultimate objective of this lesson was for the students to model the GCF of an assigned number using numbered squares and yarn with a partner as well as being able to determine the GCF of a given set of numbers.

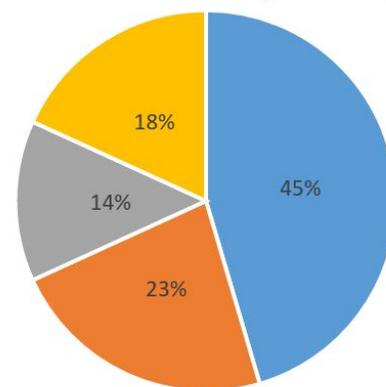
It is important for me to introduce the lesson in a sense that the students will be engaged in the material. With this, I began with a warm-up activity that related to their daily lives. Many students during math class will ask, “When am I ever going to use this?” It is vital for students to understand immediately when they will use this in their lives or how it relates to their daily lives. Once the students are aware of how this pertains to their own life, it will catch their attention for the lesson. I then proceeded into a direct instruction lesson along with notes as this is what they are used to on a typical day. We discussed various problems on how to find the greatest common factor (GCF) and found various methods to solve different problems. However, I then began to provoke their thinking into a more complex problem. I would give them a word problem in which they had to solve to find the greatest common factor. I was shocked to observe it was difficult for students to begin solving this as many struggled finding the first step. This was my

“lightbulb” moment when I knew this would be an area that we would need to work on in the future: word problems.

I asked students to brainstorm possible ways to find the greatest common factor (GCF). If students gave me an answer such as “I don’t know,” I ensured them that this was just an opinion and that they were not being graded on their answer. The students are so worried about achieving the highest grade. This allowed the students to think critically how they would begin solving a problem that they maybe did not know completely how to solve. I made mental notes of the student knowledge prior to the lesson. Following, the lesson, I administered an exit slip of three problems to students in which was to be completed in class and individually. As I did not mention that this was a “test” or an “assessment,” I instructed the students to do their best in the amount of time that was given. Following this, I recorded the scores on the exit slip and compiled it together.

Most students were capable of accurately solving problems related to the greatest common factor (GCF). I was happy with the amount of success that was displayed during instruction as well as on their exit slip. The textbook homework assigned is extra enrichment in which the students will expand their knowledge of the subject material, as well. As I examine the results that were below expectations (0 out of 3), I feel as if this was due to behavioral issues. There were many times that the select students were off task and not paying full attention. One student refused to complete the exit

Greatest Common Factor
Post-Assessment (Exit Slip)



■ 3 out of 3 ■ 2 out of 3 ■ 1 out of 3 ■ 0 out of 3

slip before the bell rang. This will affect the results dramatically, as well. However, I also need to take into account if the student did not understand the material. The results displayed to the right portray the post-assessment exit slip results. It is also important to take into account the amount of help that the students with special needs got from their paraprofessional or special education teacher as I did not specify that this was a test.

To say that these students are externally motivated by grades is an understatement. The students in Mr. Steffensmeir want to be above average and do the best they can on assignments to achieve the highest grade. If I was given the opportunity to work with these students on a long-term basis, it would be important to bring back the previous things learned and have each day be a constant review while learning new material and making connections within mathematics and the real world. It would be beneficial to have learning centers in which students can expand their mathematical knowledge to projects and various learning opportunities to give students a greater learning experience linked to all learning styles and multiple intelligences.

I am fully aware that there are many different learning styles present within each classroom; however, it is important that I vary my lesson plans to fit each learner's needs and preferences. It was important to me that we used direct instruction and guided practice with almost all aspects of learning as well as incorporating group work and visual aids for learners that learn best with that type of lesson.

Overall, I believe this was a good way for students to be evaluated as they are not frantic about performing well to maintain a good grade. Understanding that not all things should be graded is important as well as students understanding that each activity and lesson has a purpose

and is equally important as anything else. Mathematicians do not just solve problems and learn
“for nothing.”