

Module 5 Final Project

Annenberg Videos: Ohio's Academic Standards

I was able to choose two Annenberg videos for this assignment, one from the mathematics selections and one from the social studies selections. The mathematics video was called "Valentine Exchange." This video took place in a fourth grade bilingual classroom in Tuscon, Arizona, taught by Lilia Olivas. The social studies video was called "Understanding Stereotypes." This one took place in a fourth and fifth grade classroom in Seattle, Washington, taught by Libby Sinclair. When compared to Ohio's Academic Standards, both videos show similarities as well as differences.

In "Valentine Exchange," Lilia used valentines to help teach a lesson about patterns and functions. Ms. Olivas introduced the problem using a smaller number of students exchanging valentines. She used visual help by having some students come to the front of the classroom and make exchanges. This way, the students could check their own understanding of the situation. She then asked the students how many exchanges there would be in their class of 24 students. The students broke up into groups and were given a variety of manipulatives to help them solve the problem. They were able to discuss their strategies within their groups as Miss Olivas

went around the room to help guide her students' understanding. In the end of the lesson, the students had a large group discussion to talk about their strategies and conclusions (WGBH Boston, 1997). This helped make connections between students. This very much follows Cognitively Guided Instruction. I believe that this strategy is excellent for this age group of students. It helps provide the social discussion and physical movement for the students. It also helps students try things out and come up with their own conclusions based on the connections that they make. I was in an assignment last year preparing 6th grade students for the achievement tests in mathematics and reading. I tried to use this strategy much of the time. I was on the assignment for about three months. Unfortunately, the students were not used to this type of activity and it did not work well at first. Toward the end of my assignment, the students began to understand what I was doing and actually excited about learning this way. Still, this type of functional pattern idea was difficult for most of my 6th grade students to understand. I believe that this type of strategy is much needed in a regular classroom experience to help students grasp a better understanding of mathematical concepts and ideas.

In "Understanding Stereotypes," Ms. Sinclair does a wonderful job introducing stereotypes by allowing the students to think and write about what they think about stereotypes before discussing this subject. This is a difficult idea to understand. I see many adults confusing stereotype and prejudice as well as confusing actions with the actual stereotypes as Ms. Sinclair describes in the video. The students were able to discuss their own experiences with stereotypes. Later, the students worked in groups to come up with stereotypes they found in literature that they read in the classroom as well as describing the actions that came with these stereotypes. This

helped the students to differentiate between the stereotypes and the actions involved. Afterwards, the students came together as a group to discuss these experiences. Ms. Sinclair asked her students why they think they need to talk about this issue. The students realized that they want to consider stereotypes when making decisions in life. She uses this discussion to bring up that materials did not mention the Negro Leagues for their research. This propelled the assignment for a persuasive letter to the publishers of the searches to include this information in their materials. The students were able to discuss what should be included in the letter to help come up with a guideline. The students were able to share some of their rough drafts with the class to discuss good points and some points that students might wish to change. Ms. Sinclair also showed that the high school students did a similar assignment and actually were able to get the post office to include a stamp with a player from the Negro Leagues. The students told how excited they would be if the publishers would make changes in their materials due to their letters (WGBH Educational Foundation, 2003). Again, group work is great for this level of students. I loved how the teacher brought students together at the end of an activity to make further connections. I think that it was great to include the experience that the high school students had to help show the students that they can have a voice in the community and help make changes happen. This even motivated the students further!

In reviewing the Ohio Academic Standards for mathematics (2002) and social studies (2003) at www.ode.state.oh.us, I was able to match up some of the broad benchmarks and standards with each lesson. The mathematics lesson seems to go with the Patterns, Functions, and Algebra benchmarks B and G (Ohio Department of Education [ODE], 2002). Benchmark B asks that

students "use patterns to make predictions, identify relationships, and solve problems." Benchmark G mentions that students should "describe how a change in one variable affects the value of a related variable." The standards under Patterns, Functions, and Algebra are 1 and 6. Standard 1 requires students to "use models and words to describe, extend and make generalizations of patterns and relationships occurring in computation, numerical patterns, geometry, graphs and other applications." Standard 6 wants students to "describe how a change in one variable affects the value of a related variable." Through the use of manipulatives within groups, the class was able to follow Number, Number Sense, and Operations benchmark L, "use a variety of methods and appropriate tools (mental math, paper and pencil, calculators) for computing with whole numbers." Students were also able to follow Mathematical Processes benchmarks G, "use reasoning skills to determine and explain the reasonableness of a solution with respect to the problem situation," and H, "recognize basic valid and invalid arguments, and use examples and counter examples, models, number relationships, and logic to support or refute."

There were also broad benchmarks and standards that could go with the social studies lesson. This lesson follows social studies Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities benchmarks A, "explain how citizens take part in civic life in order to promote the common good," and B, "identify rights and responsibilities of citizenship in the United States that are important for preserving democratic government," (ODE, 2003). The Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities standard that fits these benchmarks is 2, "explain why personal responsibilities (e.g., taking advantage of the opportunity to be educated) and civic responsibilities (e.g., obeying the law and respecting the rights of others) are important." I also feel that this lesson supports Social

Studies Skills and Methods benchmark D, "use problem-solving skills to make decisions individually and in groups." This would be standard 10 under the same category, "use a problem-solving/ decision-making process which includes: a. Identifying a problem; b. Gathering information; c. Listing and considering options; d. Considering advantages and disadvantages of options; e. Choosing and implementing a solution; and f. Developing criteria for judging its effectiveness."

There are, of course, similarities of the lessons in the videos and the standards. In the mathematics lesson, Ms. Olivas provided for a dialogue that included visual aids that helped students find a pattern and make predictions to solve the problem using that pattern. Although the word variable was not discussed in the classroom, the students were able to discuss how changing one variable effected the problem and the solution. Ms. Olivas incorporated a wide variety of manipulatives for her students to use when working in groups to come up with a solution to her proposed problem. Thus, within the classroom multiple tools were used to help solve the problem. Through the teacher's discussion, children were able to determine whether or not a solution was reasonable and valid.

In the social studies lesson, Ms. Sinclair also displays similarities to the standards. It seems that the students would agree that looking out in their decision-making for the use of stereotypes helps to promote good. This would fit personal responsibilities as well as civic responsibilities. Through Ms. Sinclair's discussion within the classroom, the students were able to use problem-solving techniques to help make decisions on how to deal with a problem at hand. They found that their materials did not include information on the Negro Leagues, therefore they would not be able to find much information on their research project. They were able to discuss how they

could attempt to change this through the creation of a persuasive letter. The students were also able to consider criteria for this letter that would help it to persuade the creators of the materials to include such information in the materials.

There were also differences between the lessons in the videos and Ohio's standards. Ms. Olivas' lesson provided one pattern, so she would need to provide more opportunities throughout the year to revisit using patterns when making predictions to solve a problem. The students would also need more examples of how changing one variable can affect another variable. The students also would need more chances to use their reasoning skills and abilities to determine the validity of a solution to a problem. Problem-solving skills should be used throughout the year - not only at one lesson. The students should also be introduced to a wide variety of tools and methods for finding a solution throughout the year. Though these standards matched up to the lesson, this lesson is only a snapshot of what takes place through the school year.

Ohio's standards also show differences with Ms. Sinclair's social studies lesson. Understanding stereotypes and being able to use this understanding when judging one's own decisions is only one way to promote common good. Students need the opportunity to explore other routes of taking part in civic life throughout the year. The students also need to look at other rights and responsibilities of citizenship within our country that help keep a democratic government. The students also need more opportunities to work on problem-solving skills as individuals as well as chances to solve problems within groups. Students need to be able to look at other problems that are meaningful to them to help find more problem-solving skills. The use of a persuasive letter is just one opportunity to do so.

These students in the fourth and fifth grades are unique in comparison to the preschool to third grade students that I am used to. They are going through a lot of changes, physically and mentally (NMSA & NAESP, 2002). We need to provide for these changes through the incorporation of physical activity as well as more abstract ideas and more intricate activities (McAdoo, 1999). Students are ready for a more difficult workload, and we need to give them the opportunity to do so.

This grade level is also at an important turning point between elementary school and middle school or high school grades. Therefore, transitioning may be difficult (Mullins & Irvin, 2000). These students need to be eased into some type of classroom or teacher change in order to be ready for switching classes in the upper grade levels. They also need help in organizing their assignments and activities as they are able to handle more responsibilities and assignments. Students should also be offered some visits from the upper grade levels and/ or visits to the upper grade levels to give them an idea of what will be expected of them in the future. Knowing such information can help students to mentally prepare for a change.

There are some ideas that I feel are helpful in teaching these grades as well as early childhood grade levels. We teachers need to realize that our students do not learn or work at the same rates, and we should not expect them to do so (Kenkel, Hoelscher, & West, 2006). The following ideas are based upon information from Wormeli's article (2006). We always need to provide for some type of physical movement for our students as any person needs to be able to get up and move around. All students benefit from some type of visual aid, including manipulatives and models. Teachers should also include differentiated instruction and assessments. We need to realize that our students have different ways that they learn better, so we

need to provide a wide variety of ways to teach information and skills to our students. We also need to provide our students with multiple ways of showing what they understand and what they have learned. In this way, students are able to use their strengths to better display what they have learned. In order to keep track of our students' understanding and make up for any misconceptions, we need to include formative feedback as soon as possible to our students. In addition, there is a wide use of media and technology in our society today (Azzam, 2006). Students are using these things more as well. We need to provide activities using these in our classrooms to help our students keep up with the media and technology as well as to help keep them motivated by using things that they are familiar with.

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