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April 3, 2021

EDG615 Practicum – Elementary Education (Grades 1-6)

Edtpa – Assessment commentary

The math lesson was taught in a first-grade general education classroom. The class consists of 9 males and 7 females. All students in this class are general education teacher. The ethnographic map of the class is as follows: 8 out of the 16 students have a Hispanic background, 4 out of the 16 students are Caucasian and 2 have a Caribbean background and 2 are African American. The school where this class was taught is the first Magnet School in the district. The school was established in 2003 and is the newest of the district's schools. The school has an emphasis in exploration and provides opportunities for students to explore their world first-hand. The district has a strong ethnic population from diverse Hispanic countries, Jamaica, Haiti, African American as well as Caucasian.

During the lesson, students were engaged and worked well in "Think-Pair-Share" partnerships. During the formative assessment that took place during class, all students showed an understanding of "Greater Than", "Less Than" and "Equal". Students had to work in pairs and then show the results of their findings in their white board. All groups were given two numbers. Students had to identify which number was "Greater Than" or "Less Than" or if the numbers were "equal". Students had to write both numbers on the white board and then add one of the following symbols: "<", ">", or "=".

During the "Think-Pair-Share" exercise, all students showed a correct number sentence and were also able to identify the strategy they used to find out which number was "Greater Than", "Less Than" or "Equal". They were able to share their 'findings' with the rest of the class and share which strategy they had used. How they had come to that conclusion or finding.

Based on the exit ticket, most students understood the idea of "Greater Than" and "Less Than". Students were able to add the following symbols to the number sentences: "<", ">" and "=".

However, some students seemed to have difficulty understanding that the greater number is the one that is "gobbled up".

According to the results of the exit ticket, students did not seem to have enough time to complete all the questions on the exit ticket. It appears that students, even the top 4, had difficulty in writing a sentence and then drawing a picture that illustrated their sentence. The exercise consisted in writing a number sentence that used the words "Less Than", then the second part of this exercised asked the student to draw a picture that illustrated their number sentence. This seems to indicate that a greater emphasis needs to be put into academic vocabulary, writing sentences and problem solving. At the same time, the exit ticket seemed more academically demanding than the exercise in class. The exit ticket may need to be simplified in the future and concentrate on the one strategy used in class.

Students also showed confusion in identifying the strategy that helped them know which number was "Greater Than" or "Less Than". Whether it was the 'Tens' or the 'Ones'.

Based on the results of the exit ticket, a re-engagement lesson has been prepared to clarify what makes a number “Greater Than” or “Less Than”. It appears that students need reinforcement understanding the ‘Tens’ and ‘Ones’ place value, writing number sentences both in written language and drawing pictures. The re-engagement lesson also includes sentence frames and a picture that illustrates the number sentence. The re-engagement lesson for the whole class emphasized “Greater Than”, “Less Than” and “Place Value”.

In addition to the re-engagement lesson for the whole class, an additional lesson was prepared for three students that seemed to struggle with place value. In particular, these students seem to struggle with “One Ten” and “Ten Ones”. The re-engagement lesson for these three students was split in two sessions. One session consisted on working with ten frames. Students had to count butterflies and place them on the ten frames provided. If the number was “14” students could visually see that the one ten frame was filled and the other ten frame only had 4. Once a ten frame was filled, butterflies were placed in one jar. Students could see that the jar contained ten butterflies but was only one jar, therefore students had “One ten” and “Four Ones”. The second session consisted of watching the story “Ten Flashing Fireflies” by Philemon Sturges. Students counted the fireflies in the sky and the fireflies that were collected in a jar. This exercise emphasized ‘Making Ten’. Once all the fireflies had been caught and placed in a jar, there were ten butterflies but one jar. Students were encouraged to count the fireflies outside the jar and the fireflies inside the jar. Different combinations were used to “Make Ten”. In addition, a jar and 10 butterflies from the previous lesson were provided. As the story progressed, students were encouraged to take the butterflies one by one and place them inside the jar. The butterflies outside the jar and inside the jar were counted to “Make Ten”. This provided kinesthetic as well as visual strategies to help students make the connection with ‘Tens’ and ‘Ones’ and provide a better understanding of ‘Place Value’.

Following the re-engagement lessons, it was observed that students had a greater understanding of ‘Place Value’, ‘Ones’, ‘Tens’ and ‘Greater Than’, ‘Less Than’ and ‘Equal’. Students were able to do independent work on their GoMath books and as the classroom teacher and I circulated around the room, it was noted how the students were able to complete their work and show an understanding of ‘Place Value’.

The following lessons concentrated on addition. As the classroom teacher and I circulated around the room and helped students, it was observed that students had a greater understanding of place value, of ‘Tens’ and ‘Ones’. They were able to respond to formative assessment questions and show their thinking. Students’ drawings were clearer and showed a deeper understanding of ‘Place Value’.