

Unit Plan Reflection

My Unit was taught in a fourth grade classroom and focused on Addition and Subtraction with Whole Numbers and Money. The ability level within my classroom covers a wide range of students who do not speak English, students who can barely speak English and students who test at a fifth grade Math level. Therefore, assessments and adaptations and extensions became very important in my classroom and especially important for this Unit. In reflecting on the work my students did through out the Unit there was a vast difference across the Unit on which students participated and which students successfully completed the assessments. Through out the Unit, I tried to assess my students in a variety of ways, whether it was their participation through out the lesson, or a short written assessment after the lesson was taught, or their homework assignment from the individual lesson. One thing I found helpful in planning my lessons was completing a pre-assessment with my students. Each student was assessed at the beginning of the lesson with a diagnosing readiness, allowing me to place the students in three different groups depending on their success with the pre-assessment. After the pre-assessment the students' individual homework assignments or in-class assignments were based on these three groups. One of my main assessments was assigning the lesson worksheet from the book for homework, and depending on which group you were in R (Re-teaching), group P (Practice) or group E (Extension) resulted in which worksheet you received for homework. By assigning worksheets based on the individual students ability created an opportunity for not only adaptations for the students who may struggle with the lesson but also extensions for the students who find the lesson "too easy". Although

the adjustments to the different assessments for my students was beneficial in assessing them on their individual understanding of the lesson, relying on the homework assessment to be one of my main focus areas in assessing my students proved to be more difficult than I had planned. Based on the cultural environment of where my school is located, homework assignments are not as important; therefore it is a rarity when all students bring back their homework assignment the next day. In planning my unit, I did not take this into consideration and therefore assigned an assessment for homework almost every night and there were students who did not bring one assessment back the entire Unit. Therefore, if I were to teach this unit again, I would not rely so much on my homework assignments for assessments, rather I would allot more time in class to work on the assessments, therefore allowing for a wider range of assessments.

Another issue that came up during the unit that tends to come up during all lessons is student participation. In planning my Unit, the success of my lessons did not necessarily depend on student participation, but I did take anecdotal notes through out a variety of lessons hoping to assess my students on their participation in class as well. One thing I noticed was it was constantly the same students who were answering the questions. After the first week, I realized I needed something to change up my lessons, because having the same students participate and provide the class with answers provided a dependency on these students from both their fellow classmates and myself. One thing I tried to do the following week to get all students involved and hopefully participating in the lesson was to have an activity that involved all students. In my lesson for adding two numbers using column addition, I had the students participate in addition races at the board. A group of three to four students would come up to the board and I would give

them an addition problem and they would race against the other students, the first student to complete the addition problem correctly received a sticker. All the students were very involved in this activity, and I thought that the students who were not racing at the board would feel disengaged from the lesson but to my surprise all the students were very focused on the students at the board and cheering their fellow classmates along as well as helping me check their addition on the board. I feel this activity was a strong way to get every student involved and active in a lesson. With mathematics, it is easy as a teacher to stand up there and feed the information to the students, but we have to remember may can be exciting for all students and by using manipulatives and other mathematical activities can get students excited and ready to learn. The next day when I began to teach the lesson, they all asked continued to say: “Ms. M can we please to some more races today?” Although I had all students actively participating in that specific lesson, it was still difficult to incorporate all students in my instruction. In future lessons, I would still plan to assess students are their in-class participation, but I would work more on involving everyone. From time to time I would call on students whose hands were not raised just to simply read a problem or tell us what to do next in the problem to hopefully keep them engaged, this did work but only so much. Therefore, I would continue to use this approach but also research more ideas for a variety of ways to get students interested in the specific lesson. My Unit focused on addition and subtraction, something fourth graders should be familiar with, and I feel I could have used more manipulatives and activities to get the students excited about the lesson and feel as though they have some knowledge to bring to the lesson.

Finally, in looking at my students' participation and assessments in comparison to their understanding of the lesson, I noticed that the more actively my students were involved the more successful they were on their assessments. With this Unit on addition and subtraction, I feel like I assumed as though this Unit should be a breeze for my students, but I realized after the first few lessons that if my students did learn this in past grades they completely forgot it or they never learned it at all. Therefore, I had to simplify my lesson plans to fit the specific topic of each lesson, but by giving them different worksheets based on their ability levels allowed me to provide adaptations and extensions that were needed at the end of the lesson. This also gave students at a lower ability level the opportunity for success. For example, in one of my lessons about Translating Words to Expressions, two students who are at a lower ability level and rarely participate successfully complete their assessment from this lesson. Both students completed the assessment with zero incorrect responses, but more importantly when we reviewed the lesson topic the next day; one of the students was actively participating in the review. This showed me that although the students may not be participating in class they still might understand the material from that day's lesson. Also, some students who may usually be the successful students during the Unit may have areas in the Unit where the struggle, and those students who may struggle with a variety of math topics may find a specific lesson in which they can thrive. One example of this would be, in the final lesson Solving Addition and Subtraction Equations a student in the highest group, who usually completes every assessment correctly with only a few mistakes, incorrectly answered every problem on the worksheet for this lesson's assessment. This shows that although this student tested on the higher end of the class and seemed to have no

problems in the past, should not be overlooked in planning through out the Unit and may need more adaptations than just a different worksheet assessment. Overall, I believe my Unit was successful in balancing the different ability levels in my classroom and my instruction.