

Jeanette Cutone

EDL 651

Dr. Kamler

October 23, 2013

Written Observation

Ms. Math was observed on Thursday, September 26, 2013 from 1:10 to 1:50. I had the pleasure of observing her teach a Geometry Lab class that day consisting of four female students and three male students. All students were in attendance that day. Geometry Lab is a class designed for Special Education students to receive preteaching, reteaching, and practice in addition to their Geometry class. The classroom desks were set up in groups of five and as the students came in they found their desks and took out all necessary materials. Ms. Math was in the classroom prior to the bell ringing and had the “Aim” and “Do Now” on the SmartBoard. The students were self-directed and it was obvious they knew their daily routine and expectations.

Class began at the bell and Ms. Math asked students to focus on the SmartBoard to complete the “Angels and Parallel Lines” word wall. Ms. Math displayed excellent questioning techniques and elicited answers from student volunteers. Students gave answers such as “complimentary”, “straight”, “perpendicular”, “congruent”, and “supplementary”. This “Do Now” activity activated students’ prior knowledge and it was clear students knew and understood these terms. All students followed along and were on task throughout this activity. Ms. Math made sure all students gave an answer. The students all demonstrated a solid foundation of the knowledge needed to move forward with the lesson. Following the “Do Now” Ms. Math led students in completing a practice example in which they had to write out their explanation of an answer. The class struggled with this as they did not understand why they had to physically write out their explanation. Ms. Math

handled their frustration with concern and care. She calmly explained that this new step is part of the new core curriculum the school has adopted. Although they still seemed upset about this new step, the students solved the problem correctly with the guidance of Ms. Math. After the class worked on this explanation together, Ms. Math distributed a practice worksheet and assigned each group to complete one problem. About ten minutes was spent on this group practice. During this time Ms. Math circulated the classroom and monitored student progress. She clarified directions, reworded questions, and guided students. It is clear Ms. Math's students respect her and their warm rapport was evident throughout the lesson. While circulating from group to group students smiled as she approached and offered them her help. Ms. Math ensured all students understood the problem prior to leaving to visit the next group. There was one particularly unmotivated student who kept his head down on his desk and seemed disinterested. Ms. Math noticed this immediately and constantly refocused and redirected this student. Ultimately, the student did complete his example. With about ten minutes left in the class period Ms. Math began to review the examples. All of the examples were on the SmartBoard so it was easy for students to follow along. Prior to the bell ringing Ms. Math reviewed students' homework for that evening and made certain they understood it.

Ms. Math uses technology with ease. Moving forward, one suggestion for Ms. Math is to use different colors to distinguish different angles (i.e., use blue for perpendicular angles, red for supplementary angles). This may be helpful to these Special Education students in particular because they typically learn best visually.

Ms. Math had a clear purpose to the lesson, which was made clear to her students. The lesson demonstrated evidence of planning and preparation. Also, Ms. Math checked students' understanding frequently throughout the lesson. This was accomplished by questioning her

students. Ms. Math proved she understood these students by varying the questions based on students' differing levels and abilities. Furthermore, her students were focused and engaged through the entirety of the lesson. It is evident that even in her second year at South High School, Ms. Math has certainly become an asset to both the Special Education and Math departments.

Commendations:

- Ms. Math's lesson was well planned and clearly organized.
- Ms. Math has set a high level of expectation in her Lab class. Students having their notebooks open at the beginning of class evidenced this.
- Ms. Math used a variety of instructional techniques and strategies: direct instruction, group discussion, individual practice, individual instruction, and cooperative learning were seen in this lesson.
- Ms. Math constantly checked for students understanding of the material by asking questions which progressively got more difficult as the lesson went on. This shows that Ms. Math knows her students' cognitive levels and abilities.
- Ms. Math provided constant positive feedback to her students. Even if students offered incorrect answers, she embraced them positively and guided students to the correct answer. It is clear Ms. Math values all students' ideas, which kept students engaged in the lesson.
- Ms. Math is comfortable using technology, which helps this population of students learn most effectively.

Recommendations:

- Color-code angles on the SmartBoard to ensure students are following lesson. Several types of angles were discussed during this lesson. Perhaps having a color-

coding system where one angle is always drawn in one color will help students follow the problem more effectively. This, in turn, can increase students' retention of content information.

- Have additional examples available for students who complete the practice ones quickly. This will continue to build their skills, and also will boost their confidence on subject matter.
- Encourage students to elaborate on their explanation of their answers. Common core state standards require students to provide an explanation as to how they got a solution to a problem. Encouraging students to expand upon these explanations will help students understand the reason behind the mathematical computation. Students can engage in conversation with their group members about this, not just the teacher.

Ms. Math

Special Education Mathematics Teacher

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