

INTASC Principles: (2, 6, 8)
Themes: (IL)

Angelia knows from the beginning which INTASC principles and Division Theme she will be supporting in this explanation and reflection.

Explanation:

The math curriculum, which is used in my 5th grade student teaching placement, is Saxon. Included in the curriculum is a Test Analysis worksheet, which can be used to help students think through the errors they made on a test. I used this test analysis worksheet and met with the students, one-on-one, who scored lower than a B- on their most recent math tests. At the top of the sheet, the number of each problem the student missed was recorded. The student then had to determine whether s/he missed each problem because s/he copied it wrong, made a careless mistake, or did not understand a particular step or part of the problem, which is an important form of self-evaluation for the student.

I took each student down to the learning lab where we were able to work out of view of the rest of the class during study hall time and Mrs. Iverson was left in the classroom with the remainder of the class. This allowed for open and honest communication as we worked through each problem which was missed, making the necessary corrections, and discussing the mistakes. Upon further questioning and digging deeper into the math concepts, many different math misconceptions were uncovered. Some of the students had no idea how to complete double digit multiplication or they had difficulty with long-division. The students themselves felt they understood the problems and therefore did not have any questions to ask during instructional times. As I watched them work through each problem, discussing the steps along the way, we uncovered together the difficulties they were having and that they were unaware of having. (6) After the corrections were made, the test was re-taken using the alternate form of the test (Form B) provided in the curriculum, which allowed the student to apply his or her new understanding (2; IL). Six out of seven students improved their scores significantly, while one scored lower on his second test. (8)

Angelia verifies she meets the INTASC standards and IL, but her focus is on what she did and why she made particular instructional decisions.

Reflection:

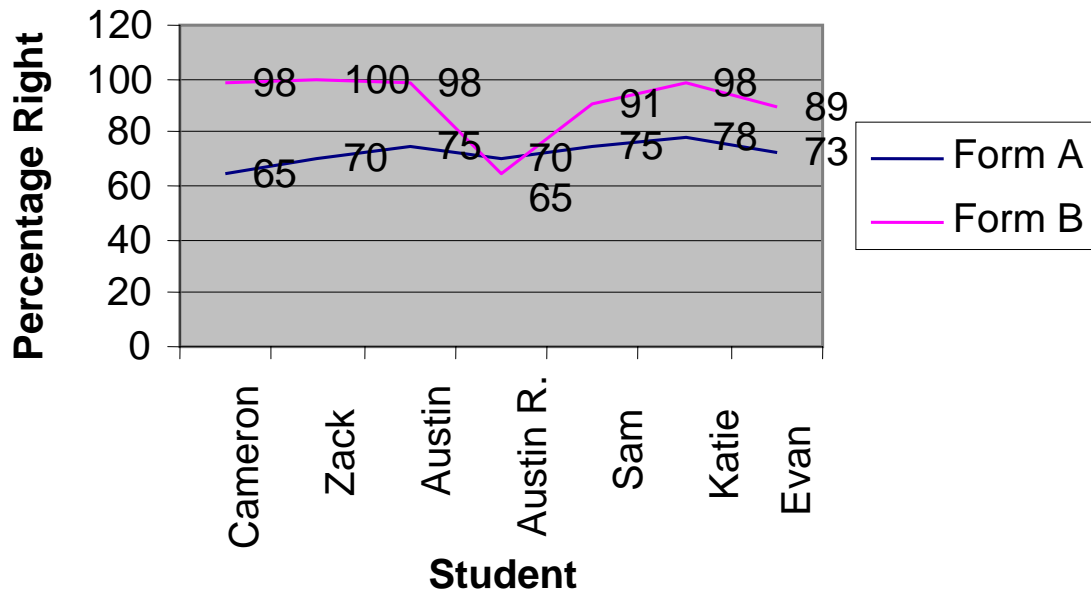
This proved to be a valuable experience, not just for me, but for the individual students as well. I was amazed at how easily each student wanted to “own up” to every mistake being a careless mistake. Through open and honest discussion in a safe environment, the students were able to discover the underlying difficulties they were having in their math lessons and the need for their honest evaluation of the mistakes they were making in their lessons. Having students show their work was also supported as an important piece of assessment to determine the underlying concepts which the students were having difficulties with and was a necessary tool to foster communication.

One-on-one time is so valuable for many reasons, but proved especially effective in creating a significant impact on student learning by improving their test scores dramatically. Building into my class time avenues for self evaluation and allowing students to apply what they have learned as a result of their own evaluation and efforts to learn and improve will be an important part of my classroom. This proved to be an effective way to improve the test scores for all of the students except for one. His mistakes were inconsistent from one test to another. It impresses upon me further the need for differentiated instruction to meet the need for every student in my class.

When I have my own classroom, I realize that one-on-one time will be harder to come by and I will use these many of the same questioning techniques I learned from the Saxon Test Analysis Forms in order to plan and re-teach my students through mini-lessons.

In her reflection, Angelia notes the insight she gained as a teacher as well as the impact this had on her students. She provides a graph to represent the actual results.

Test Results Before and After Self Evaluations



Integrating Subjects

Explanation

When I began planning the *Frankenstein* unit for the English 12 classes this semester, I decided to integrate science into the unit. The basic theme I emphasized in my unit – the consequences of irresponsibility in the pursuit of knowledge – lent itself well to the ethical issues involved in scientific experimentation. Before I began the unit with my classes, I approached Mr. “O”, one of the biology teachers at the high school, and asked him if he would be willing to give me a brief presentation about cloning in order to address the controversial and ethical issues of creating life. Mr. “O” agreed to assist me, and we met twice to discuss the details and specific purpose of the presentation (10). The presentation, along with expanding student understanding of the novel’s theme, served students as a resource from which to draw information that could be used during the end of the unit debate answering the question, “Was Dr. Frankenstein justified in creating the Creature?”

Good description of making a curricular decision and an instructional one which supports it.

Mr. “O” recently visited my classes and presented information to the students through a PowerPoint presentation about cloning and the ethical issues involved in cloning. Students were encouraged to take notes over the presentation to use as a resource in the debate. As Mr. “O” spoke, he referenced Dr. Frankenstein and presented the question that I had established as the debate topic. Although he never answered the question for the students, he provided information that could be used for either position in the debate. During Mr. “O’s” presentation, many students asked questions regarding what they had heard in the media about cloning. I was able to continue this conversation with the students about the ethical issues of creating life in 2004, and we related it to Dr. Frankenstein in the 18th Century as well (1). Upon the completion of the presentation, students began brainstorming potential answers to the questions: “Were Dr. Frankenstein’s actions ethical?” and “Was he justified in creating the Creature?” During this brainstorming session, I observed students referencing materials presented by Mr. “O” as support for their response to the debate questions.

A clear picture of the lesson is drawn and she states how it has been successful in helping her students begin to think at a higher level.

Reflection

The integration of science into this literature unit helped make this particular novel relevant to the students. The scientific elements provided some application of the theme of *Frankenstein* to a current moral and social issue.

Observing my students’ reactions to the cloning presentation reinforced the importance of making what I am teaching meaningful to my students. The fact that each student had taken a biology class served to provide some frame of reference in terms of the scientific explanations, making the presentation material somewhat familiar to the students. This familiarity sparked participation from the students; they asked questions and made for a conversation that could easily be traced back to the novel the class was reading. As I observed the students brainstorming, I noticed that students were able to make this connection – from ethical issues today to ethical issued in the novel – on their own, using modern examples from the presentation as support for debate arguments. This demonstrated to me that they had some understanding of the overarching questions I presented as the debate topic.

She makes the statement that the integration of subjects made the novel more meaningful to students and tells how and why she knows this to be true. She reflects on what she has learned about herself as a teacher, and how her teaching has affected her students.

I believe I could have taught this particular unit without the integration of science, but the unit would have been lacking. This blending of disciplines provided me with a way to assist students in creating meaning within *Frankenstein*. Although students have not presented their debates in class as of yet, I am looking forward to seeing the external evidence of what the students have learned throughout the unit. The connections across the disciplines were clear in this particular unit, however, I have realized that I do not always capitalize on potential interdisciplinary connections in my units. I was able to in this case, which led me to realize how important these connections can be. I will need to be consistently aware of connections from language arts to other disciplines – these connections are valuable ways to make material meaningful to students.

Explanation:

The following is a lesson that I taught to 1st grade students at Happy Elementary School during my field experience for Reading I methods. The purpose for teaching this lesson was to help the students identify the digraph /th/ as the initial or final sound in a word and also to practice their weekly spelling words. I began the lesson by showing the students a story on the overhead projector, that included many words with the digraph /th/ to encourage active inquiry. (6) After a word was identified by a student as having the /th/ in it, I circled the word with a marker. When the story was completed, the students were given two index cards, one card that looked like this th___, and another card that looked like this ___th. I proceeded to read many words with /th/ in them, asking the students to hold up the card that correctly represented the word. When I could see that every student was holding up the correct card, I read another word aloud. The digraph cards were collected and the students were given bags of letters made on index cards to practice their weekly spelling words. After all students had placed the letters from the bags in a line on their desks, I proceeded to read their first spelling word. Once the word was read, the students had to manipulate the letters on their desk to make that word. After I had walked around the room to make sure everyone had spelled the word correctly, the class chanted the word by saying and clapping the word five times and snapping once. This process was done until all spelling words had been practiced. I demonstrated my ability throughout the lesson to create instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners by using both visual aids and bodily/kinesthetic activities to encourage learning. (3, IL)

Good initiation activity gets students involved in the lesson from the very beginning. Appropriate #6 citation. Good support for INTASC #3.

Reflection:

The italicized portion of this reflection, though very important, is a continuation of the explanation. It depicts the behavior of students during the lesson and tells the reader what the teacher learned about using digraph cards as an assessment tool. Further reflection, including how this teacher will use knowledge gained from this experience in subsequent lessons would make this stronger.

It is evident that the students learned whether the digraph /th/ is the final or initial sound in a word, by their participation in the card activity. There were only one or two students who were looking at their neighbor's card before making a decision on which card to hold up. As highlighted in my evaluation, using the digraph cards was an excellent way to assess student learning and check for individual understanding. There was only one student that had difficulty with making his spelling words from the letter cards. I stood by this student for the remainder of the lesson to keep him on task. The students that are frequently a discipline problem for the classroom teacher were actively engaged during this lesson because they could demonstrate their knowledge, not just tell or write about it. From this lesson, I learned that children like to be actively involved while learning. I know this because during the lesson all students stayed on task. (RS)

Explanation:

This lesson plan was designed to introduce students to technology in their classroom through the use of computers. The students have been working on reading journals for several weeks and each student has numerous hand-written journal entries. We will begin using computers to type entries twice a week for approximately fifteen minutes each time. The functions that were taught in Microsoft Word were to guide the students in the direction of exploring options to use when typing. I taught the basic components of this program and then allowed students to experiment in Word and begin typing (6).

This explanation is brief and to the point. She clearly states her objective for the lesson and her expectations for its implementation. But it leaves the reader wondering how the functions in Microsoft Word were taught. Good citation of INTASC #6.

Reflection:

This lesson did not go as smoothly as anticipated. After demonstrating procedures to open and use the program, I expected students to have little trouble practicing on their own. I am extremely comfortable with this program, leading me to believe I may have gone too fast through my lesson.

She realizes things did not go as planned, but fails to see the connection between *demonstrating* how to use a computer and *teaching* students how to use a particular program. Although going too quickly through the lesson may have been part of the problem, there certainly could be other reasons students struggled.

As an artifact accompanying this explanation – reflection, she included the lesson plan which does not name any prerequisite computer skills she expected students to have in order to be successful in this lesson.

Several students could not turn on the computers; while others were confused on how to open a blank document. I expected excitement from students as they are in new seats and exploring new computers. However, I did not anticipate the amount of problems I encountered. Several students were searching the internet and playing games instead of typing reading journals. I reminded those students of the rules and consequences and sent them back to their assigned seats.

Were the students excited? Did any of the students explore the computers as expected?

In teaching this lesson again, I would plan to cover the same functions of Microsoft Word and spend time with each student to assess understanding. I would have students type their journal entries another time. This lesson would have been more effective if I had taught at a slower pace and allowed more time for students to explore the program. (9)

She is already thinking about ways she might do this differently & better. In fact, later in the portfolio, she includes a follow-up lesson to this one. Below is an excerpt from the explanation – reflection from that follow-up lesson.

I revised and re-taught this lesson using scaffolding to provide students with more guidance. I put emphasis on explaining the rules that apply to using the computers and I did not require students to type a journal entry. My goal was for students to have time to practice with the programs and for myself to have the opportunity to sit down with each student and observe their progress.

The students responded much better during this lesson with the extra time given to practice instead of typing and with the one-on-one time I was able to spend with them. I have included this lesson in my portfolio as evidence that I serve as a reflective scholar contemplating the effectiveness of what I teach...

This is an excellent example of a Reflective Scholar.