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TE 803

Lesson Study Analysis

I am fortunate enough to be in a three-person teaching team. I see three different groups of students a day and teach the same lesson three times. This allows me to alter my lessons from class to class. We chose to use my classroom because of this opportunity. Christine Webb is also part of our team and is familiar with the same group of students; therefore, she taught the second.

Our lesson was on the study of Carnavals, particularly in Brazil, but we extended the learning to other cities that celebrate similar traditions. The first enactment of the lesson followed our plan fairly closely. However, during and after teaching, I immediately thought of ways to improve for the next class.

After the first lesson, we felt that the order of events flowed well, but that the directions and timing should be modified. The PowerPoint that stated the directions for each activity is where we made the most changes. The directions needed to be more explicit. Several students were off task and as a result, they were not prepared when asked to share ideas for a given activity. For example, we originally told them, “After the reading, reflect on what you read in the third column.” For the next lesson, we quantified the directions and told them, “Write three reflections down after you have read.” We also gave them sentence starters, “This made me think of ….” Or “I wonder about…”. In the beginning of the lesson, we had a warm–up slide with questions to get their brains thinking. We initially typed “Think about…” before the questions. For the second lesson, we typed “Write two sentences about…”. This kept the students on task and held them accountable for the questions.

The students struggled a bit with the note taking aspect of the reading in the first lesson; therefore, in the second lesson, we decided to model how to take notes using the first paragraph of the reading. We wanted to show the students which information would be important to take away from the text. The second class finished the reading and notes more quickly than the first. The second group also took more detailed notes and their reflections were more organized.

Another aspect we changed was during the actual group work. In the first class, the groups only made one diagram per pair and we noticed one person was doing all the work while the other was off task. For the second class, we had each student make their own. They would each read their part, fill in their side of the diagram, and then get their partner’s information for the other side. Following that, they would discuss the similarities between the two locations and both write them down in the center. This created more structure and held every student accountable for the work. In addition, we changed from having the groups discuss with other groups studying the same cities to a jigsaw where each group would learn about two new locations. As the students learned about the two new places they would be required to write two interesting features about their Carnavals. This allowed everyone to learn about all four locations.

The last major part we changed was in the timing of each activity. We determined the last activity to be the most important. Not to undermine the warm-up and inquiry portion of the lesson, but we felt the students should have more time to focus on working together to compare and contrast the different locations. As a result, we would limit the student’s comments and sharing to three responses for the earlier activities.

I appreciate that I can participate in a lesson study daily. Although it is not as in-depth and I do not receive feedback from others, I enjoy teaching the same lesson more than once a day. It does not take a year before being able to try revisions to the lesson. Lesson studies can be extremely valuable to maximizing student learning. I plan on using this method and collaborating with colleagues to achieve just that.