

Example Teacher Reflection Excerpt

(White Male High School Teacher – 5 Year Experience - Algebra II Course Recorded)

Excerpt from his “Results” section

During the course of the lesson, I interacted with students eighty-one times, thirty-five times with girls and forty-six times with boys. During the course of the lesson I gave academic praise 16% of the time to thirteen students – six girls and seven boys. I never gave nonacademic praise. I gave academic criticism to only one boy during the lesson. I asked thirty questions during the lesson – twenty three low-level and seven high-level. Of the low-level questions asked 28% of the time, twelve were asked to girls and eleven to boys. Of the high-level questions asked 9% of the time, three were asked to girls and four to boys. I provided academic facilitation eleven times during the lesson – four times to girls and seven times to boys. I short-circuited students three times during the lesson – once to a girl and twice to boys. I provided academic information 19% of the time to fifteen students during the lesson – five times to girls and ten times to boys. I provided non-academic information to the whole class four times during the lesson.

A more in-depth discussion of the results will be in the next section, but at first glance I noticed that I was more likely to provide academic facilitation to male students, however, at the same time I was more likely to short-circuit male students. I also noticed that I asked three times as many low-level questions compared to high-level questions.

Excerpt from his “Discussion” section

After much thought regarding my interactions with students in class, I created an intervention plan. I hope to turn short-circuiting into facilitating. There are many times when instead of taking the time to ask a student to explain their reasoning, I simply tell the student what to do. I need to make sure that students can work through their confusion and not simply give them the answer. Secondly, I was

very disappointed by how many low-level questions I asked. I need to ask more high-level questions. Students stay on task more when they are forced to answer high-level questions. As a teacher, I can truly know if a student understands the concept when I ask a high-level question. Furthermore, I believe that I need to spend more time creating guided questions, so that I plan my questioning ahead to ensure students explain their reasoning and truly communicate their understanding of mathematics. Thirdly, I want to focus on praising effort more than ability. If students are not praised for their effort, then they won't see the power of work. If students are praised for their academic ability, then when they are not praised, they will feel stupid. Moreover, this will also help to lessen any negative stereotyping regarding female math students in my classroom. After all, we all need to be put forth effort to be successful.

After looking over the student survey results, I noticed that two boys felt that I did not expect the same from all students where no girls felt this way and one boy felt that I did not treat all of my students fairly when it comes to discipline. I found this to affirm the fact that I still have steps to take to create a truly equitable classroom. I need to be consistent in my body language, voice tone, discipline, and level of assistance when it comes to dealing with students. I also believe that I need to spend more time discussing the difference between fair and equal with my students to ensure that my students understand that everyone will need something different to be successful.

As I look towards the future of my teaching career, I hope to be a more equitable teacher after ten years than I was after five. Our textbook lays out four aspects of equitable teaching that I hope to implement in my teaching practice, "(1) learning is not the same as achievement; (2) achievement gaps often reflect gaps in opportunity; (3) all students can be pushed to learning mathematics more deeply; (4) students need to see themselves in mathematics" (Horn, 2012). After much thought, I believe there should be one more; students need to see themselves as mathematicians. So many times my students ask me, "Mr. *****, is this right?" When I responded, "Yes, however, you are not finished yet," they seemed confused. Students have been conditioned that math problems are either right or wrong.

However, many times students going about a math problem the “right” way, they simply haven’t fully simplified their answer. I want to teach my students that the process is just as important as the answer; only then will they truly see themselves as mathematicians.