

Session 6 - Panel of School District Mentors on the prep of our 1st and 2nd year teachers

Facilitator: Cathy Miller, UNI

Note Taker: Robin White, Grand View

Location: Rasmussen – CETL

NOTES:

Exciting time to be in math education. What does it mean to be a math teacher and how do we prepare students for the 21st Century?

Jim Maltas, UNI Teacher Education professor and teacher at Price Lab School (panel of one) -Our students will be in schools that are implementing the Iowa Core, so we need to change how we teach methods to give our students a good start in their career.

What does Jim see as some of the challenges teachers will face?

- Idea of Problem Based Instructional Task—new concept, not many texts on it. Skills needed to be curriculum developer which is not an easy task even for experienced teachers.
- Environment in classroom results in discourse which is not common in math classrooms. Need to keep the discourse going, but have limited experience. Our students aren't really prepared to know how to facilitate discourse to help their students to connect problems to other areas.
- Cathy invited by Judith Spitzli (sp) to participate in ESC—Every Student Counts. Looking at research based materials to see how students learn. As she visited schools, she hears this in the hallways, “our students need to know the ‘alphabet soup’ vocabulary”. Has written an article addressed to Math Methods instructors.
- Problem Based Instructional Task - Don't know if our students can develop them? Very difficult, so will need resources to help. Illuminate website a good source.
- Encouraged to contact local AEA since all are doing in-service on Every Student Counts.

What are issues the group would like to talk about?

1st and 2nd year teachers/mentors challenged to address:

- Assessment for learning/building, formative assessment into instruction.
- Shift in terms because core is to help teach math for understanding.
- Lesson planning help.
- Need variety of strategies to deal with diversity of the students they find in their classroom.
- Problem based tasks aren't just the length of a class period and within a regular lesson plan. Transitions change with the class.
- New teachers don't have enough experience to plan exits/closures for end of class to keep students thinking.
- How to do detailed lesson plans yet be flexible.
- Can't build lesson plan for today and then another one tomorrow.

Advice for new teachers:

- Change from a good student teaching experience in one kind of district and get job in a very different kind of district.

- No matter what district you're in, you'll have different kinds of students. Use scaffolding.
- Lesson plan isn't for a class, it's for the students you have in front of you.
- Plan for 3-4 sets of scaffolds.
- Have lunch with Special Ed teacher, they have lots of ideas.
- Become buddies with another teacher, even somewhere outside your school.
- Find a community network.
- Students totally connected all the time to technology, but schools aren't. Huge dichotomy.
- The new teachers don't have the technology they're used to. Many are leaving earlier than teachers in the past.
- Important at pre-service level to create communities of practice, and establish some social networks for them.
- Digital networks important.
- Dispositions of teachers and difference between being on a college campus and walking into a classroom as a teacher.
- Dispositional expectations different for teachers compared to being a college student.
- Connect with those in area with expertise on the subject.
- Greatest resource is often the resource teacher.
- Take other people with you for training.
- Give each other support.
- Look for other resources besides the math person, look to other content areas for ideas/support.
- Have a mentor, but also someone in school.
- Culture of some schools makes it difficult for some new teachers to grow.
- Plug into the AEA for help.
- Interpretation of Iowa Core is very different in various schools.
- Understanding by Design is not the norm in all schools; have to face the reality of the school. Ask questions during interviews.
- Modeling is expected, cooperation between colleagues among special education, classroom teacher and professors, if no modeling then it's hard for them to go into their school and create collaboration.

How to mentor someone who is ready to walk away because of all of the restrictions/challenges:

- Can't generalize, depends on person.
- Exhausting to be in front of students all day long, harder than we let on that it is.
- Have to do this, didn't allow for creativity.
- See spaces for professional freedom within the mandates; need to help pre-professionals learn how to do that.
- Meaningful Deliberate Practices: computational skills at the beginning of a class period, reviewing skills coming up in the...
- Rigor and relevance being de-emphasized.
- Daggett model...quadrant D is problem based instructional tasks, connected to real world, looks like it might be de-emphasized with Iowa Core.