Observer Response Report-Ernestina Xavier

Observer as Learner

The primary "learner" in this protocol is the observer. The observer's only purpose is to learn how to improve his or her own practice.

Pre-Observation
Set up a time that you can observe a ten minute Number Talk

Debriefing (optional)
The observer often asks the observed questions that might help him or her better understand the choices made by the observed. The observer often shares an insight or other learning that occurred as a result of the observation, and thanks the observed teacher for sharing her practice.

Note
Given the potential feeling of vulnerability on the part of the observed in any situation, it's important that the observer try to ask questions during the debriefing or respond in the blog in a way that does not put the observed on the defensive.

Report Observation:

1. How was the environment safe and accepting for all kinds of learners? Explain what you noticed.

The students were all seated in their usual seats. This provided students with enough desk space to create their quick images. Because they were all seated, Sammy walked around showing each child the quick image. Some of the students got to work as soon as they saw the image, trying to quickly recreate the image while others glanced for a while longer. I enjoyed watching because each one of them had a different way of recreating the image. Some students used both hands and brought the colored tiles together while others placed them individually. No matter their strategy, all the children gave the same expression once they had created their image, a satisfied grin.

I noticed that once the students were asked to share their ideas, some hands flew up while others crouched deeper into their seats. This usually lets me know which students need more assistance. I especially like calling on the children who retreat because its important for them to know their ideas are wonderful too.

2. How was the Protocol used during the number talk? Explain what you noticed.

Students were asked to look at an image and recreate it using the colored tiles. They were asked by Sammy and myself to give a thumbs up when finished. I noticed that the signal worked much better because children were not screaming "I'm done!" although we did have the occasional outburst, the lesson was quite calm. I think that sharing was a key part in this activity because the children got to see that there is more than one way to reach an outcome. They were all very eager to share how they got to their answer. I could see that it made some children proud to have reached the same answer in a different way.

3. What did you notice about the teacher as a "facilitator, questioner, listener, and learner"?

Sammy was the facilitator, and I played the role of the questioner and listener. We both walked around and watched as the children tried to recreate the images. I think she did a great job explaining the activity to the children because they all knew what was being asked even if they did the shape incorrectly, I could tell they were trying to recreate it. I also like the aspect of sharing because she drew their tiles as the children explained so that the other students got to see their exact process.

4. How did you see mental math to increase efficiency and knowledge of number relationships?

When we had the children share their strategies, many children explained that they had grouped tiles together when they saw the image and that helped them to recreate it. Some children counted all the tiles and tried to remember a shape. I noticed that some children struggled with number relationships because they used many more tiles than the quick images that were shown.

Teacher Response Report-Sammy Lingamneni

Self Observation

"Self-Observation" also addresses the fact that often the most interesting lessons, the ones that seem to have so much potential for learning, just happen, and can be just a brief but important time of your day.

Observation

We are all observing all of the time. Usually most of what we observe is placed in short-term memory and is soon lost to us. Telling the story of our observations both helps us retain the memories and gives us a chance to make sense of what we have seen.

Debriefing

You will use the 'BLOG' as your 'DEBRIEFER'. As the debriefer (entire school community) is not present at the event, the debriefing needs to start with the story. These questions are designed to help deepen the your understanding of your practice. You may want to audio tape/video your ten-minute lesson. You may ask for a note-taker (someone who just takes notes and gives them to you at the end). You may want to try several Number Talks before you submit your reflection.

Tell the story. You may want to start out with: Why did I choose the specific computation problem?

I chose "Quick Images" because it is a part of Number Talks (a part of the Daily Routine) in our T.E.R.C. Investigations curriculum for First Grade.

1. How did you set the environment up to be safe and accepting for all kinds of learners? Explain what you noticed. What moves might you keep and tweak?

I had students sit at their desks to be less distracted and for all students to be able to see while also having space to use the color tiles. I walked around to each group of four students with the "Quick Image." I allowed students three seconds to look at the "Quick Image." I allowed students a couple of minutes to create the "Quick Image" they looked at and recreated. I set up the easel in the middle of the classroom for all students to see. I allowed four children to share their ideas and assisted them to share how they grouped the squares (their strategy) to remember the "Quick Image." I used one color marker to draw their creation of the "Quick Image" and another color to show how they grouped the squares in minds to remember the image they saw.

2. How did you use the Protocol during the number talk? What worked? What small changes might you make? What questions still linger?

I gave students explicit directions of the activity. Students were given time to do the mental math before having the opportunity to share. Students signaled with their thumbs up when they were finished. Four students shared per "Quick Image." I didn't allow as many students who were incorrect share, which I will change the next time. I believe that it is just as important for incorrect answers to be shared as it is for correct answers. By allowing students the time to see the incorrect answer and work through how to make it correct can reinforce their thoughts and learning on the concepts being taught.

My questions are:

- Is it okay for the teacher to walk around to each group with the image, instead of showing it on an overhead projector?
- How long should the image be shown?
- How long should students have to work their mental problem solving?

3. What did you notice about how you played the role of "facilitator, questioner, listener, and learner"? What reflections can you share?

I facilitated the initial lesson with our students by giving the directions and showing the "Quick Images." Ernestina and I were the questioners and observers when students were working independently and we walked around to observe students and discuss their problem solving and when we were questioning their strategy during sharing. With this activity observe someone else conduct the lesson, but I learned what worked and what needed to be changed for the next Number Talks.

4. How did you see mental math to increase efficiency and knowledge of number relationships? What appeared to work for some students? How might you change it to support more learners?

Our students really enjoyed the Number Talks lesson. They definitely used different strategies and learned from each other's problem solving. They were all engaged. All students came up with ways they grouped the squares to remember the "Quick Image," and they were able to relate this activity to writing equations

for their strategy of grouping. Next time, I will show the image a couple seconds longer for some of my students who showed to struggle with the grouping concept and were trying to remember each squares on its own. Once they are able to do a few successfully, I will show the "Quick Image" to them for a shorter time.