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“Two Management Issues: Homework and Vocabulary

LAUNCH: Before viewing the video “Management Issues.”

Note: On the 8th grade video about “Exponential Decay” students are seen referencing their notebooks and files for prior problems. The teacher talks about her use of notebooks and files in her reflection for the “Exponential Decay” video.

Before participants view “Two Management Issues: Homework and Vocabulary” I should ask them what concerns they have about management issues. This is likely to generate a long list of concerns, from grading to pacing to notebooks. The video does not address all of these. I should plan to return to these concerns later because sometimes it is the anxiety about everyday concerns that impede teachers making progress on larger issues.

(I could also just use part of this video, either the chapters focusing on Homework or the chapters focusing on Vocabulary.)

I think I will launch this discussion by asking teachers to clarify their concerns about homework and about vocabulary.

- *What are some questions and concerns you have about homework?*
- *What is the purpose in assigning homework?*
- *What are some questions and concerns you have about vocabulary?*
- *What other management concerns do you have?*

If there are teachers with experience teaching CMP among the participants then I should encourage them to share their strategies during this initial discussion. We can refine these strategies in further discussion and place unanswered concerns in a “parking lot” to be sure that they get addressed at some point.

Note: Many of the concerns teachers have are addressed in the CMP Implementation Guide.

Getting Ready to view the video**Possible “Teacher” Discussion Questions:****In Previous Workshops Teachers Have Said:**

Note: This question gets to the heart of the anxieties. The teacher’s purpose in assigning homework might vary; the amount of homework and thoroughness of grading is related to purpose.

- What are some questions and concerns you have about homework?

- *How often should I assign homework?*
- *How much homework should I assign?*
- *How do I know which ACE questions to assign?*
- *Should homework count as part of a student’s grade?*
- *How much class time should I give for doing homework? For going over homework?*
- *How much time does it take to grade the homework? Are there tips to cut down this time?*

- What is the purpose in assigning homework?

- *To check the understanding of individual students.*
- *To assess the understanding of the whole class and help plan whether to move on or re-teach.*
- *To make individuals accountable.*
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- What are some questions and concerns you have about vocabulary?

- *Do students keep their own vocabulary lists or rely on the definitions in the student text?*
- *How rigid should I be about students using correct mathematical vocabulary?*
- *Can students access their vocabulary lists during tests and quizzes?*

Note: There are several good articles about orchestrating productive discussions. See appendix.

- What other management concerns do you have?

- *How do teachers get students to organize their notebooks?*
- *Are students allowed to use their notebooks in tests and quizzes?*
- *Are notebooks graded?*
- *How do you pace a lesson so that you don’t get far behind?*
- *How do you orchestrate a good discussion?*
- *Are there grades for group activities, like exploring or presenting solutions?*

VIDEO: “Management Issues: Homework and Vocabulary”
(*Moving Straight Ahead*, Investigation 2, 6 chapters, 33 mins)

Note: This video has been edited to focus on episodes in a classroom, showing a teacher handling homework and the development of student-generated definitions.

EXPLORE:
While
watching the
video

This video has been edited to focus on management issues. All clips show students working on *Moving Straight Ahead*, Investigation 2. In the first two clips we see the class discussing homework. In the second two we see students making their own definitions for y-intercept and coefficient and using them.

My focus questions should be about the purposes behind the teacher’s decision to handle homework and vocabulary in the ways we see on the video.

Focus
Questions to
consider while
watching the
video

Note: The
teacher assigned
homework twice
in 4 days, during
the videotaping
period.

- *Can you infer from the video how the teacher views homework? In what way is this a learning opportunity for her students? For her?*
- *Students are permitted to revise homework before turning it in, if they have come with their homework done. Otherwise they are expected to remove themselves during the discussion. What are the pros and cons of permitting revision?*
- *What can you infer students understand from their questions about homework? What do they still need to work on? Is what they need to work on something that the teacher can plan to address in the next Investigation?*
- *What are the pros and cons of having students make their own vocabulary lists in their own words?*
- *What questions arose while students were discussing these vocabulary items? Were these helpful in building or extending understanding?*
- *What is the teacher’s role in creating this vocabulary list?*
- *What is the teacher’s role in using this new vocabulary?*

It has worked well in the past to allow time for participant groups to clarify the questions *before* viewing the video. In small group discussions *after* viewing the video I have an opportunity to ask follow up questions, before orchestrating a large group discussion.

SUMMARIZE:
Large group
after watching
the video

At the end of the large group discussion I should give time for participants to reflect on the implications of the discussion for their own classrooms.