The “Think/Pair/Share” technique has proven to be useful in our classroom. We ask the students a question during a lesson and give some wait time to think about the question individually. We then ask them to turn and talk with their partners to share ideas. The students are then brought together to share their best thinking with their classmates. This has proven to be highly effective in our classroom because students have the opportunity to share their thinking out loud with their peers and learn from each other.

Questioning strategy techniques such as “Discussion Questions” and “Higher Order Thinking Questions” are also included in our daily teaching routine. Providing students with questions that promote thinking, understanding, and the opportunity to hold discussion is important for student learning. My mentor models the “annotated example of standards” technique during our writer’s workshop. She creates a teacher mock-up of a story that contains all the features that a student’s story should also contain. This provides students with a clear consensus of the learning expectations for that lesson or unit. I have not personally used that strategy yet but I have seen it work and will definitely use it as the year progresses. All KLT Strategies provide students with an exemplary learning experience and teachers with ongoing formative assessment strategies.

Katrina Garcia (‘13)
What it takes to be a Mentor!

Mentoring a student intern is a lot of work. Modeling, supporting, giving feedback and encouraging is not an easy task. However, it is definitely worth it! Mentoring has been rewarding. Modeling for an intern has allowed me the ability to reflect on my own teaching practice.

My intern has been given a wonderful experience to be a member in our self-contained classroom in a high needs school in the Bronx. This experience will undoubtedly provide my intern with the skills, knowledge and experiences that she can reflect on when she has her own class. Furthermore, my intern now has a repertoire of behavior and educational strategies she has seen, and some she has used, and can determine which strategies she feels are effective to implement in her future classroom.

I am benefiting from having an intern because I have the opportunity to reflect on my own practice. I do want my intern to get the most out of her clinical experience. I want her to be able to say she has learned a great deal from being in our classroom.

I did not know that the role of a mentor would be so time consuming, however I do know that the rewards this experience brings will be everlasting for my intern, myself and most importantly our students.

Nmeregiri Nwogu,
Mentor Teacher P.S. 55

Two Heads Are Better Than One!

Co-teaching for us means when two or more teachers share the teaching responsibilities within a classroom. In our classroom, we have very diverse learners. We feel that using various types of co-teaching helps us to meet their needs. We usually use parallel teaching, where we break up into small groups after the mini lesson, in order to better individualize the lesson and clear up any confusion.

We have also used “one teach, one assist” and “team teaching.” We want all our scholars to strive for greatness. Using a co-teaching approach helps us achieve this goal and helps us meet the educational needs of our scholars.

Co-teaching requires time and dedication. We spend endless amount of time during our prep and lunch periods planning and discussing ways to better our instruction. Co-teaching is not an easy approach of teaching, however it is extremely rewarding. Co-teaching develops an appreciation for diversity. We can better individualize instruction for our students. In our classroom, there is a sense of respect for teaching and for all our scholars. Our scholars are spending more time working in small settings, working cooperatively and learning content. In addition, we witness peer modeling during group work. Our scholars are taking the initiative to teach each other. We have seen an increase in participation from all our scholars. This style of teaching helps both of us as teachers but most importantly it helps our young scholars to succeed in their education.

Steven Mayol (’13) & Ms. Gina DeBellis,
Mentor Teacher P.S. 1

School Spotlight: P.S. 73

The MATH UP extends a warm program welcome to Mrs. Vivian Bueno, the new principal at P.S. 73. Mrs. Bueno takes over as the head of the school following the retirement of Mr. Jean Mirvil. Mr. Mirvil retired after more than 28 years of dedicated service the New York City Public School system including 5 years as principal at P.S. 73. During his tenure, he implemented dual language education programs at the school and showed great support for bilingual education. This support is echoed by his predecessor Mrs. Bueno, a former assistant principal at The Rafael Hernandez Dual Language School P.S. /M.S. 218. She believes that being bilingual is inherently advantageous and bilingualism should be encouraged and supported. Although Mirvil has left the New York City Public School system, he still remains very much a part of education. He plans on returning to his birth country of Haiti and to help improve education for students with special needs. We thank Mr. Mirvil for his support of the MATH UP Program and wish him all the best for the future. We welcome Mrs. Bueno and appreciate her continued support of our program.

MATH UP plays a very positive role at P.S. 73. The interns have joined the school in the mission to provide students with differentiated and quality instruction. The goal is to help all students meet their academic requirements. P.S. 73 teachers and administrators and Lehman College’s MATH UP interns are dedicated to serving their urban community and to offering English Language Learners and students with special needs the best quality of instruction possible to help them succeed. The school serves many poor and struggling students who need access to rich text and materials. MATH UP program and the teachers and administrators at P.S. 73 work hard to provide the students with the resources and education they need to overcome the barriers and challenges they face. We want our students to feel ready and able to be the change that is needed in their community.
Learning the Skills of a Future Educator

For example, one technique that I love to use is Popsicle sticks. Each student’s name is written on a Popsicle stick, and placed in a cup/tray. Throughout the day, I randomly pick a Popsicle stick out of the bunch if I need to call on students. The beauty of this technique is that no one knows who will be called on next. The question is raised, students have time to think about the answer and then I choose a Popsicle stick. I have experienced a lot of success using the “Keeping Learning on Track” strategies, in addition to building on questions that I use to assess their learning.

I hope that my implementation of these strategies throughout this semester has benefited my students. I feel that I have become a more effective elementary school teacher. The purpose of using different strategies is to create a balanced classroom. Due to the diverse academic needs in my classroom it is important that I am able to reach out to every student by using various teaching/learning strategies. I feel that as a teacher, I never want to stop learning, so that my students will benefit. As a student, I entered the MATH UP Program with a desire to gain knowledge and grow professionally to become an effective elementary school teacher.

Vanessa Veerasammy (’13)
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