

During my time student teaching here at Daegu International School “modification” became my middle name. There are a multitude of students at different levels here. As previously mentioned we have students who leave school at 2:30PM and go to academy until 9:00PM where they study more mathematics, english, or whatever else they need. On the other hand, we have students who are still learning English and need help practicing writing sentences and learning vocab. I will explain two different times, one where I had to modify my instruction to accommodate the ESL learners and where I had to challenge my students more because they had already seen the material before.

I have two students who are from Japan and only speak Japanese and are English language learners. These students do not have the benefit of knowing Korean, because most of the time the korean students are able to communicate to each other in their native language to find the equivalent vocab and understand the content. Although for these two, it requires a math dictionary and 1-on-1 time with their ESL instructor and myself. In Geometry class we were learning proofs, which are required to be written in complete sentences and coherent. Obviously, this is a massive challenge for these two since understanding the content and remembering vocab is difficult and takes a lot more effort. So on my first quiz I gave the class I decided I was going to give them a different quiz then the other students, a modified quiz, one that has a matching question as opposed to a fill in the blank. I recognize that this is not equal with the other students, but my goal is for them to understand the content. By creating modified tests and quizzes, I'm able to much more accurately assess their mathematical abilities and comprehension of the material. I feel that this was effective in helping them learn the logic behind a formal proof and how a proof works, which is my goal for every student.

Out of my approximately 30 eighth grade students, around 75% of them attend academy. This means that they need to be challenged and I need to push the material in a new way so they are being introduced to new concepts. When I first started taking over the classroom and realizing that some students already knew what was going on, I decided to at least teach them new concepts and engage them in mathematics. One strategy that I have been constantly using is being a promoter of all content areas. This means that in my class I put a strong emphasis on correct grammar in proof writing, a focus on the history of mathematics and the people who created it, in addition to coming up to the board to present multiple times a class period. One specific example that stands out is I have one student who is constantly using concepts that we have not learned in class to complete problems, which when we present problems can be confusing for some students. This student is also in love with mathematics, in fact they're going to a science fair with a project based solely around mathematics, so I realized that I need to keep challenging this student and not let them get bored. Otherwise I felt as if I could have a negative effect on their love for math, rather than fostering the strong relationship they already have. So during a lot of the independent times where students are working on their own at their desks, I began stopping by this student's desk and giving them lots of open-ended questions. These “what-ifs” and “why” questions began opening up a whole classroom dialogue when other kids began becoming interested as well. These classroom conversations about mathematics have been incredible learning experiences, because the kids began to learn how to talk about mathematics rather than just do exercises from a book.