

I believe the role of school is to prepare students to be well informed members of our society. This means I need to teach my students how to think critically, know when they're reading or watching biased material and how to find the facts, be curious, creative, and collaborative, and that being wrong isn't always a bad thing but a thing to be learned from. In order to foster all of these skills, my classroom needs to be a community of people who are accepting of one another. It's hard to feel okay with being wrong if you feel like you're being judged. A positive classroom environment is so important when trying to foster these ideas. In my classroom, I anticipate doing a lot of group work and activities. I feel that math is a collaborative activity and that by letting students work together on problems, they'll be exposed to more approaches to the same question or problem.

Checking for understanding is something that I feel is so important in math classes. In my experience, math can get really frustrating really quickly. By checking in with students regularly, I can help to avoid some of that frustration. Checking for understanding will be done in a number of ways, one of which will be a math journal to keep track of any questions or struggles students are having as well as successes that they have had. This will give them something that they will be able to use to write and reflect about things that they have learned as well as keep track of their growth throughout the class. At the beginning of each unit I will do a pre-assessment to see where students are at to be sure they aren't missing any key prerequisite skills and to see what they already know. This will hopefully keep students from being left out because of missing prior knowledge and keep students from being bored from too much review. Another part of this will be "warm-up" activities that will review prerequisite skills that are missing or just key to what we are working on. This will be done in a variety of ways, but will be beneficial to students who need more practice with those skills as well as solidify those skills for students who are already confident in them.

Technology is definitely something that will be used in my math classroom. I feel that math is a very hands on and visual subject, it's hard to imagine trying to teach a lesson on slope without any pictures or graphs. I think it's really important for students to be able to "see" what's happening in math, whether that's drawing the graph of an equation or finding a pattern in solutions. There's a huge variety of mathematical technology out there which can be used to further explore an idea, to design a creative project to solidify an idea for students, or to help illustrate a concept. All in all, I believe that the real purpose of technology is to supplement instruction and give students the opportunity to express their understanding of a concept without taking a paper test all the time.

I feel that the balance of pedagogy, content, and technology would come with the creation of a good unit. The three components of teaching are so important, it would be hard to place one above the other over the course of a unit. Of course, that's a big picture idea of the three components, there will be lessons within that unit that will require more or less of each. Some days will be spent learning to use a program that will supplement instruction and there will be less time spent on content and vice versa.