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EDEL 188
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Complex Instruction Project

Summary:

The use of Complex Instruction as a form of cooperative learning in the classroom has proved to have a positive connection to increased learning and achievement within groups of children that may usually be considered to be low performers. This Complex Instruction rotation that I designed was created to instruct the entire class about the concept of point of view as it pertains to the Civil War, as well as to assist those learners that need additional assistance to perform successfully within the classroom environment with their peers.

I used the Classroom Structure project that I completed earlier in the semester to create an effective form of instruction. I wanted to educate all students in the class and possibly assist the students I has previously pinpointed (during the Classroom Structure assignment) to find a more positive position within the social and academic status of the classroom.

Unfortunately, I was unable to design a full Complex Instruction unit due to the time constraints in my classroom. After receiving instructor permission, I designed four rich activities and decided that there would only be two rotations. I formed four groups (three groups of five, one group of four) and each of the groups completed two of the four activities.

The big idea that I was trying to get across to my students was the effect of different points of view as it applied to the conflict of the Civil War in this country. I also wanted students to learn more facts about the Civil War, such as location of battles and the order of important events that took place (this was the suggestion of my cooperative teacher). I feel that the big idea may have been lost due to the inclusion of more concrete activities that did not truly support the concept of point of view. However, I tried my best to talk about this concept with students as they were performing the tasks and during the reporting out of their projects. In this way, students learned additional facts about the Civil War through the CI rotation, as well as being exposed to the larger concept of different points of views.

I wanted to include point of view since that was the theme that I integrated during my solo weeks. I feel that it is very important for students to understand that [conflict is often a result of different points of views clashing together.] Students will be exposed to the idea of looking at things from another person's perspective and trying to understand different points of views as ways to learn from one another instead of fighting each other.

One of the activities I included required students to find the names and locations of important battles in the Civil War and create a map of these locations. I included this activity for a couple of reasons. I wanted students to become more familiar with the names of battles and I also wanted students to make an inference regarding the location of the battles. During the Civil War, a majority of the fighting took place in the south. I wanted students to understand how this affected the people of the south, how this may have influenced the fighting, the advantages and disadvantages this created for both the north and the south. Basically, my goal was to have students use their knowledge of the

*This shows
your under-
standing of
the
theory!*

*Here's the
purest stmt.
of your big
idea.*

concept of point of view to make inferences about how the location of the battles affected the various groups of people that lived during this time in American history.

Another activity I included required the students to create a Union soldiers uniform from the state of Vermont. During Social Studies class the students and I had discussed how most of the regiments of the army designed their own uniforms to represent the region of the country from which the soldiers were from. I wanted students to draw on this prior knowledge to create a uniform to represent a Vermonter's point of view. I gave the students many different types of materials that they could use to create a uniform and gave them very little direction as to how the uniform should be put together in order to see what the outcome would be. This allowed students to use their own creativity.

an excellent rich activity

The third activity that I include in the CI rotation was the task of creating a skit that represented the events of a story that I had read to the entire class as a read aloud selection. The name of the short story was Blue or Gray: A Family Divided, by Kate Connell. This book captured the true story of two sisters that were divided by the Civil War. One sister lived in Tennessee with her family and the other sister lived in Ohio. Both of the sisters had sons that were soldiers during the war, one for the Confederacy and the other for the Union. The students were to use their prior knowledge of the story to reflect how families could be affected by the events of the Civil War and to communicate the consequences that this division may have had on the family once the war was over. Students created dialogue and represented the feelings of both sides of the family, which required the students to look at the situation from very different points of view.

wonderful activity

The fourth activity required the students to create a timeline of events that they felt were important to the Civil War. This required students to employ decision-making skills regarding the importance of events that took place during that time period and the effects that those events had on the lives of people in the north and the south. After deciding which important events they wanted to include, the students then had to accurately record the events in chronological order on a timeline that they created as a group. Students were told that they would need to be prepared to support their decisions they made regarding the events they chose and to be prepared to discuss why those events were important to the north, the south, or both.

Though each group only completed two of the four rotations, the groups reported their findings to the entire class, which enabled students that didn't complete a certain activity to become familiar with the content. After comparing the pre- and post-test scores, I found that this method was effective in improving scores for students in areas that where included in activities that they did not complete. This made me feel a little better about not being able to have all the groups complete all four rotations. The average point gain for the class was sixteen points. Please refer to the CI Assessment attachment included with this summary to learn more about the overall improvement of test scores after the CI rotation. Individual test scores are recorded in this attachment and I have designated the students of the identified children from the Classroom Structure assignment with an asterisk.

Wow!

Preparation for CI rotations:

Before performing the CI rotation, I prepared the students for the activity by talking about the responsibility of the different roles. We posted the results of different brainstorming sessions around the room, for easy reference for the students during their rotations. I also posted the CI norms, which we discussed in class and which were included in a handout that was provided. I also had a session with the class in which we brainstormed the various multiple abilities that would be needed to successfully complete the four activities. I recorded these multiple abilities on large chart paper and also posted those on the walls around the room. The following list is a record of the multiple abilities that the students identified for each of the activities:

*You did
this really
well! What
a pro!*

Activity One: Designing a Union Soldier's Uniform from Vermont

Hand-eye coordination to cut things

Using your imagination

Creativity

Artistic ability (drawing, coloring, etc.)

Reading skills

Use of prior knowledge (about uniforms, what soldiers needed to wear, etc.)

Listening skills (listening to others ideas in your group)

Activity Two: Designing a Timeline of Important Events

Research skills

Reading skills

Organization (knowing how to place events in chronological order)

Prior knowledge (of Civil War and the effects of certain events)

Accuracy

Drawing

Writing skills

Note taking

Counting

Decision making skills (prioritizing)

Activity Three: Create a Map of Important Battles

Research skills

Listening to others ideas

Organization

Accuracy

Mapping skills

Drawing

Writing skills

Reading skills

Prior knowledge (of the north and south and the different states in the U.S.)

Decision making skills (prioritizing important battles)

Activity Four: Perform a skit portraying the Shaw and Abbott families
Organization skills (organizing skit, assigning roles)
Observation skills (how were the families affected, etc)
Writing skills (to write dialogue)
Reading skills
Good memory
Imagination/creativity
Tone of voice
Listening to others ideas
Acting skills
Prior knowledge

Please see the attachments to this summary to view the actual activity and resource cards that I used during the CI rotation.

Vignettes of previously identified students during Classroom Structures assignment:

M6 – This student seemed to have a very positive experience during the CI rotation. M6 took part in the skit activity and the mapping of important battles during the Civil War. In the past this student has had a great deal of difficulty relating to his peers in social and academic situations. However, during these episodes he seemed to work well with his peers. During one instance, while his group was trying to decide how to perform their skit, the group experienced a conflict of ideas. However, when I approached the group to see what the problem was, I was excited to find that M6 was talking to the other members of the group and trying to formulate a compromise with his group members that would satisfy all the were involved. I took this opportunity to assign competence by acknowledging M6 by name in front of his peers, identifying the multiple ability of good listening skills and letting the group know that by employing this ability of listening to others, M6 was able to assist the group in making a decision so they could move on to writing the dialogue of the skit. I connected this behavior to the profession of being a lawyer, which facilitates negotiations between conflicting parties. M6 was visually proud of this accomplishment and the other group members agreed that M6 had been able to help them listen to each other's ideas. This was a definite change from the past, in which M6 often portrayed himself as a victim of other's unfair behavior towards him. In this situation, M6 was able to take a lead role in facilitating the successful completion of the task by his group. I was impressed with his change in attitude. ✓

F8 – This is a student that moved into our school district during the winter. I was interested to follow her process, since at the time of the classroom structures assignment she was still finding her "rank" within the social status of the classroom. I was happy to discover that this student did very well during the CI rotation. Her group was one of the best organized and used a great deal of teamwork to pull together their projects successfully. During her experience in our classroom she has established a reputation as a hard worker, which the other students seem to respect. However, she is a little on the quiet side and often leaves the talking to her peers. While her group was working on Activity Two, I witnessed F8 employing good decision making skills which she voiced to her peers about which important events should be included in the timeline. I took this

opportunity to assign competence by acknowledging her by name to the group and identifying the multiple ability of prioritizing. I tied this ability to the group by pointing out her decision was based on the impact of a certain event and that it would make their timeline better. I connected this ability to prioritize to an ER doctor who has to make decision about which person to treat according to the severity of the situation. The group was able to see the connection between their situation and that profession. I was impressed when one of her peers complimented F8 on her ability to make a good decision.

this is such a powerful event

M10 - This student did not have an outstanding performance during the CI rotation. I feel that the students I grouped him with may have affected his behavior during the completion of the activities. Unfortunately, I did not see much of an improvement in his learning behavior. He was very vocal in his opinion of how things should be done, however he did not place much thought into what he was saying. More than once I needed to redirect this group because they were off task and were not following the directions that were given to complete the task. One of the activities that his group worked on was that of the skit about the two families that were divided by the Civil War. I was not impressed with the effort that this group put into their skit and the outcome was a performance that was hard to follow. However, I was impressed with M10's ability to stay in character during their performance in front of the class. I took that opportunity to assign competence to M10 in front of the entire class by acknowledging him by name and stating that the use of his imagination and his acting ability helped others in his group to feel more comfortable acting out roles, which helped their performance. I tied this ability to the profession of a teacher, who sometimes acts out parts of a book to help students understand the character they are reading.

*→ smart observ. on your part
skits often need a couple of days to work themselves out!*

F2 - This is an average student in our classroom, mainly due to the lack of effort that she puts forth, not her ability. This student likes to be the center of attention and likes to receive praise, however she rarely puts forth the effort to create work that is worthy of recognition. It can be hard to find ways to positively reinforce her behavior because we often have to remind her to do her work, to complete her work and to stay on task. During activity four, in which her group was to create a skit, I encountered a situation of conflict, which was being fueled by F2's unwillingness to change her mind. At one point, everyone else in the group had voted and decided on one action to take and she was still writing the skit in direct conflict with what the rest of the group wanted. At one point, students were voicing their opinion that they did not want to work with her. I was about to step in and redirect the group when M6 was able to come up with a compromise that everyone (including F2) was able to decide upon. Unfortunately, I was unable to witness an episode that I felt was worthy of assigning competence to while I was observing F2 working with her group. I wanted to assign competence, but I didn't want to do just to be doing it. I felt that this would be ineffective.

Conclusion:

I am definitely an advocate for implementing cooperative learning in the classroom. I feel that Complex Instruction could be a very effective tool in affecting the social and academic status of students within the classroom. I have learned that there is a

great deal of preparation involved in setting the students up for success during CI rotations. I don't feel that the CI rotation that I employed was overly effective in changing any of the academic or social status of the children in my classroom. However, I feel that this was due to the fact that this is not a usual instructional method that is employed in my classroom. I think that this method would need to be a continual routine strategy that is used in order to see positive effects in the outcome. If this were established as a normal routine in a classroom, the students would be able to meet the expectations of the roles and flourish in their respectful responsibilities. I feel that identifying the multiple abilities before assigning a task assists students in knowing what they need to do to successfully complete the assignment. I also feel that listing the multiple abilities makes it much easier to assign competence. The students looked at me a little strangely while I was assigning competence, because (again) they weren't used to this type of behavior from me. However, after I finished my statement, the students were able to make the connections that I was trying to communicate and seemed to accept them as true statements. Again, I feel that continual use of assigning competence could definitely have a positive effect on a student's academic status within the classroom.

The implementation of CI within a classroom can have definite effects on the social and academic structures of the classroom. I think that any type of cooperative learning strategies can have this type of influence. However, within the CI rotation, roles and responsibilities are much more defined, which makes it much easier to identify competence and behavior within the group. As I learned during the classroom structures project earlier in the semester, social and academic rankings are definitely connected. I feel that any instructional strategy that is geared towards positively influencing academic performance through social interactions is worth all the work and preparation that it takes to use in the classroom.

← under

such honesty here —

CI Assessment
Name: Deirdre Davis

School: Chamberlin Elementary

Grade: 5

Code (B1..., G1...)	PRE	POST	GAIN
M1	60	100	40
F1	80	100	20
* F2	60	80	20
M2	80	80	0
F3	100	100	0
M3	100	100	0
M4	80	80	0
M5	80	80	0
* M6	60	80	20
M7	80	80	0
F4	80	80	0
F5	40	80	40
M8	80	80	0
F6	60	100	40
M9	60	80	20
* M10	100	100	0
F7	100	100	0
M11	40	100	60

*F8	40	80	40
			$\Sigma = 300$
			average gain $\Sigma / \#S = 16$

* = identified children

A Nation Divided: The Civil War

Key idea: Different points of view effect the way people relate to others

ACTIVITY ONE: Design a Union soldier's uniform from Vermont Activity Card

In 1861, the Civil War began in this country. The Northern states fought the Southern states. People from the north fought to preserve the Union, while people from the south fought for states' rights. Troops began to assemble in each state to go to war. Different troops from various locations designed their own uniforms to wear when they went off to war.

Discuss:

- How do you think it would feel to prepare to go off to war?
- What equipment do you think a soldier would need to go into battle?
- Why do you think troops from various locations wanted to have different uniforms?

Your task: Design a uniform for a Union soldier from Vermont.

Things to think about:

- What colors would someone from VT use and why?
- What type of hat would they wear?
- Would there be any type of special decoration to represent VT?
If so, what would it be and why?
- What special features, if any, would a VT uniform have?

*** Be prepared to share your uniform with the class and explain why your group created the uniform the way that you did. Explain the colors, decorations and special features.**

Materials: Pictures of Civil War uniforms, scraps of materials to use in creating the uniform, paper, glue, scissors, markers, pencils

Evaluation Criteria:

- The group creates a sensible uniform for a VT Civil War soldier.
- The group clearly explains the design of the uniform, including why they chose the design that they did.

Time Limit: You will have a half hour to complete your task as a group.

A Nation Divided: The Civil War

Key Idea: Different points of view effect the way people relate to others.

Activity One: Design a Union soldier's uniform from Vermont

Helpful Information

- Regiments were groups of soldiers that came from different locations.
- Regiments made up the troops that fought together in the Civil War.
- Regiments were allowed to design their own uniforms, to distinguish themselves from other regiments.
- Some regiments in the Union and Confederate armies modeled themselves on Algerian light infantry troops in the French Colonial army. The regiments were called Zouves, from a tribe of that same name. Their uniforms were very colorful, with red baggy pants. Would this help or hinder them in battle?

A Nation Divided: The Civil War

Key Idea: Different points of view effect the way people relate to others.

ACTIVITY TWO: Design a timeline of important events of the Civil War that reflect both the northern and southern point of view.

In 1861, the Civil War began in this country. There were many important events that took place that led to the Civil War. These events were viewed differently by people, depending on what part of the country that you lived in.

Discuss:

- Why would events be viewed differently by people depending on where they lived in the country?
- What were some of the different points of view that northern and southern people had? What about a slave's point of view versus a white person's point of view?
- Were there differences in how a woman viewed the war versus a man's point of view in the war?
- What were some of the important events that took place? What made them important?

Your task: Create a time line of important events that led up to the Civil War.

Things to think about:

Why were the events your group chose important?

What were some of the events that made the south angry?

What were some of the events that made the north angry?

How did these events effect the lives of slaves?

***Be prepared to share your timeline with the class. Your group must be prepared to explain why you chose the events that you did. Remember to include different points of view in your explanation.**

Materials: Paper, markers, textbook, informational materials about the Civil War, scissors, pencils, glue

Evaluation Criteria:

- The group creates a timeline of events leading to the Civil War that includes at least 10 important events.
- The group clearly explains why they chose the events they included. The explanation also includes different points of view.

Time Limit: You will have a half-hour to complete your task as a group.

A Nation Divided: The Civil War

Key Idea: Different points of view effect the way people relate to others.

Activity Two: Design a timeline of important events of the Civil War that reflect both the northern and southern point of view.

Helpful Information

- Sometimes black slaves fought back violently against slavery. The most famous revolt was led by a slave preacher named Nat Turner. By the end of the rebellion 150 people, both black and white, were dead. Turner's rebellion greatly frightened white Southerners and led to Southern state governments passing new laws that made a slave's life even harder.
- It was important to keep a balance between slave and free states. The Missouri Compromise was one way the country tried to do this.
- Use pages 214-224 of your Social Studies textbook to help you with this task.

A Nation Divided: The Civil War

Key idea: Different opinions about what the war should mean to others.

ACTIVITY THREE: Create a presentation about the battles of the Civil War.

In 1861, the Civil War began. Many people on both sides of the war thought that the war would be a short one. However, it was not the case. The war did not end until 1865. There were many battles fought and many lives were lost.

Discuss:

- Why did people think that the war would be a short one?
- Why didn't the war end sooner?
- What advantages did each side have during the war? Disadvantages?
- What would be the best strategy for each side? Why?
- Sometimes both sides could win the same battle. Why do you think this happened?

Your task: Create a presentation about one battle that took place during the Civil War that includes at least ten facts.

Things to think about:

What part of the country were most of the battles held?

How long did the war last?

Did one side have a clearly better strategy?

Were there any other reasons for the battles being fought?

Were there any other reasons for the battles being fought?

*Be prepared to share your presentation with the class. Your group must be prepared to explain why you chose the battle you chose. Remember to include different points of view in your explanation.

Materials: Some different types of informational materials about the Civil War, map of the United States (see the map on page 10).

Evaluation criteria:

- The group creates a presentation about one Civil War battle that includes at least ten facts.
- The group explains the battle clearly.
- The group explains why they chose the battle that they included. The explanation includes many different points of view.

Time limit: 30 minutes (you should allow 10 minutes for your task as a group).

A Nation Divided: The Civil War

Key Idea: Different points of view effect the way people relate to others.

Activity Three: Create a map of important battles of the Civil War

Helpful Information

- The Battle of Bull Run was the first large battle of the war. The Confederacy called this battle the Battle of Manassas
- The Civil War was also fought at sea. The Confederate ship, the Merrimack met the Union ship, the Monitor in battle on March 9, 1862.
- The Battle of Gettysburg was the largest battle fought during the Civil War. It was a turning point in the war. Why?
- The Battle of Antietam was known as the bloodiest battle of the Civil War.

A Nation Divided: The Civil War

Key Idea: Different points of view effect the way people relate to others.

ACTIVITY FOUR: Perform a skit about the Civil War

In 1861, the Civil War began in this country. The states seceded from the union and fought on the northern side or the southern side. This event caused many families and friends to become divided as well. Brother fought against brother, friends fought against friends.

Discuss:

- Why would families become divided over the issues that led to the Civil War?
- What different points of view might people have, depending of the location of their home?
- How would it make you feel to fight against your own family? Would you do it?

Your task: Write dialogue for a skit about a family that was divided by the war. The family you will portray is the Shaw and Abbott family. (See the book Blue or Gray? written by Kate Connell)

Things to think about:

How would the war change Eli and Henry?

How could two sisters still stay close even though their sons may shoot at one another in a war?

Why did the Abbott family stay loyal to the Union and the Shaw family stay loyal to the Confederacy?

What reasons would a person have for deserting the army?

What would family members from different sides of a war have to say to one another?

***Be prepared to share your skit with the class. Roles should be assigned and you will perform. You don't have to memorize the lines; you can read them from your script. Be prepared to discuss why you wrote the dialogue like you did.**

Materials: paper, pencils, Blue and Gray? by Kate Connell, blue and gray arm bands to signify which side of the war you are on.

Evaluation Criteria:

- The group creates a dialogue that reflects different points of view regarding the Civil War
- The group works as a team to present a performance to the class, and is clearly able to explain why they wrote the dialogue that they did.

A Nation Divided: The Civil War

Key Idea: Different points of view effect the way people relate to others.

Activity Four: Perform a skit about the Civil War

Helpful information

- The Shaw family lived on a farm near Franklin, Tennessee and supported the Confederacy
- The Abbott family lived in Columbus, Ohio and supported the Union
- Edwina Abbott and Julia Shaw were sisters
- Edwina Abbott's son was named Henry, age 19
- Julia Shaw's son was name Eli, age 20
- Women helped the war effort by sewing uniforms, making bandages, running farms, serving as nurses and other ways.
- Some soldiers deserted due to the horrid conditions that the soldiers faced, others were afraid to die and some just had to come home to help run their family farms so their families wouldn't starve.