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Making Sense of Mathematics for Teaching the Small Group

By Juli K. Dixon, Lisa A. Brooks, and Melissa R. Carli

Study Guide

This study guide is a companion to the book *Making Sense of Mathematics for Teaching the Small Group* by Juli K. Dixon, Lisa A. Brooks, and Melissa R. Carli. *Making Sense of Mathematics for Teaching the Small Group* provides a framework for how K–5 teachers and administrators can enhance student learning through effective small-group instructional practices.

This guide is arranged by chapter, enabling readers to either work their way through the entire book or focus on the specific topics addressed in a particular chapter. It can be used by individuals, small groups, or an entire team to identify key points, raise questions for consideration, assess conditions in a particular school or district, and suggest steps that might be taken to promote a healthy school culture.

We thank you for your interest in this book, and we hope this guide is a useful tool in your efforts to create a healthy culture in your school or district.

Chapter 1

Best Practices in Small-Group Instruction

1. How does the grade 2 lesson shown in the video Add Three-Digit Numbers With Regrouping differ from the typical small-group instructional model? In what ways does the teacher support the students within the small-group setting?

2. What are the six teaching strategies that represent the best practices for small-group instruction? Please explain each.

3. Reflect on the strategies you implement in small-group settings. How might you utilize the six teaching strategies to enhance student engagement?

4. Compare the teacher's roles in the small group to the students' roles. How do the roles differ? How do they relate to one another?

5. Define *classroom management*. How might you manage the structures of your classroom and the pulled small group?

Chapter 2

The TQE Process in Small-Group Instruction

1. What are the three components of the TQE process?

2. How does the grade 4 lesson shown in the video Locate and Name Decimals on a Number Line to the Hundredths Place demonstrate the TQE process?

3. What are the characteristics of a good task? What are some ways you can adapt an existing task to make it more challenging for students?

4. What is the purpose of effective questioning in small-group instruction?

5. Collecting and utilizing evidence can enhance student learning. What are some sources of evidence that teachers can gather in order to increase student engagement?

6. Reflect on your current lesson planning and lesson implementation processes. Do you already incorporate some aspects of the TQE process? Where do you need to apply the TQE process to enhance your current lesson planning and lesson implementation practices?

Chapter 3

Discourse in Small-Group Instruction

1. In your own words, describe the teacher's and students' roles in fostering meaningful classroom discourse. What are the similarities and differences between your description and the guidelines laid out by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (page 51)?

2. What are the five strategies teachers can utilize to create productive discourse in the small-group setting? Please explain each.

3. Compare and contrast the two discourse patterns: IRE and IDE. In your opinion, is one more conducive to increasing student engagement and learning? If so, why is this the case?

4. What are the norms and rules already established in your classroom's whole-group and small-group settings? Based on these norms and rules, what expectations do your students have regarding their roles in facilitating discourse in the small group?

5. Consider the four effective teaching practices for facilitating student discourse. How might you use the TQE process to support the planning and implementation of these four teaching practices?