

Vignette 3

Mr. Yusuf's high school junior government students are hard at work on their latest class projects. A couple of weeks ago, Saria asked why the bilingual program she participated in since freshman year was discontinued. Mr. Yusef changed his original plan to study branches of government to respond to the class's interest in Saria's inquiry. Currently, the students are divided into five groups of four to study landmark Supreme Court cases around education and civil rights. Several students are using the computers in the back of the room to research the history of their cases. Others sit at the tables pouring over textbooks and library books they have just brought back from the school library. Mr. Yusuf moves from group to group checking students' progress and answering questions. He reminds students to refer to the assignment guidelines and grading rubric that he reviewed at the beginning of class as they plan their projects.

Elante's group has decided to hold a mock trial. Mr. Yusuf suggests that they look back at their notes from the previous unit when the superior court judge visited as they plan. Alec, Mihn, Olivia, and Joaquin will write a paper and create a PowerPoint presentation for the class. Micah's group has gone to the media lab to check out equipment so that they can make a video for their project. Saria's group chooses to hold a panel discussion about how their case has influenced their own educational opportunities and challenges, and invite family and community members to share their own educational experiences.

- *How do the rules and routines of classroom participation, conversation, and interaction affect (both positively and negatively) opportunities to learn?*
- *Does the teacher use students' unique preferences, identities, and backgrounds to create and support opportunities to learn? If yes, how so?*
- *How do issues related to the larger educational system (e.g., standardized curricula, class size, etc.) impact opportunities for learning?*

Reflections

Vignette 2

The third graders in Mrs. Arbenz’s class are into their third week of the thematic unit “Birds Around the World.” The class has a number of students who are struggling with decoding and comprehending the third grade basal readers her school district requires her to use as part of the reading curriculum, so Mrs. Arbenz has included a number of activities and additional nature books and magazines to scaffold (provide guided support) students’ motivation and literacy skills. Students have participated in several activities including bird watching, examining bird feathers, and making bird feeders. Mrs. Arbenz teaches using several literacy strategies: identifying new vocabulary and key words, activating prior knowledge, questioning, and summarizing.

In today’s lesson on graphic organization, Mrs. Arbenz stands at the front of the room holding up index cards with bird names and pictures of habitats that represent the different categories of birds (e.g. wetlands, arctic, desert, etc.). William and Maki are sitting in the back row and cannot see the pictures, but they try to follow along based on what is being said. Fernando raises his hand to comment on the birds of San Juan, where he is from, and Mrs. Arbenz reminds him that they are talking about birds, not cities.

- *How do the rules and routines of classroom participation, conversation, and interaction affect (both positively and negatively) opportunities to learn?*
- *Do teachers use students’ unique preferences, identities, and backgrounds to create and support opportunities to learn? If yes, how so?*
- *How do issues related to the larger educational system (e.g., standardized curricula, class size, etc.) impact opportunities for learning?*

Reflections

Vignette 1

The final bell rings for Ms. Kilpatrick's third period Math class as students wait outside the door for their teacher to arrive. The students, ranging from 6th to 8th grade, receive special education due to learning or emotional disabilities. This class is at the lowest level within the school wide math curriculum the district adopted to address students' low scores on the statewide achievement test. Ms. Kilpatrick arrives nearly 10 minutes late and lets the students into the classroom. As she puts away her materials from her previous class in another building, the students move to take their seats, chatting amongst themselves.

Ms. Kilpatrick passes out a worksheet for the day's lesson and begins copying the problems to the board. As she does this, she states that they will be covering the addition and subtraction of positive and negative integers. She calls on the student on in the first row to give her the first step for solving problem 1. He stumbles through his response as the other students continue to talk around him. Angel and Pilar sit in the back row, speaking softly to each other in Spanish. After he supplies the correct response, Ms. Kilpatrick hastily fills in the rest of the problem, including the answer, and asks the next student in the row to tell her the first step for problem 2. Beven calls out to ask how to do the problem on his calculator and Ms. Kilpatrick says that he must save his questions until he is called on to do a problem. As she writes the answer for the fourth problem, Ms. Kilpatrick tells the class they must show all their work to receive credit.

- *How do the rules and routines of classroom participation, conversation, and interaction affect (both positively and negatively) opportunities to learn?*
- *Does the teacher use students' unique preferences, identities, and backgrounds to create and support opportunities to learn? If yes, how so?*
- *How do issues related to the larger educational system (e.g., standardized curricula, class size, etc.) impact opportunities for learning?*

Reflections