

Hector's Mathematics Lesson

① It is Friday, and the Period 2 Mathematics class is about to begin. Hector and his classmates, a mixture of Anglo and Latino children, crowd in from the busy hallway, find seats, and fumble for their homework sheets. Some never find them; a few— primarily a handful of boys located at seats around the edge of the room— pay little attention to what is going on. The teacher, Mr. G., appears not to notice (for the moment, the non-participants are quiet). Today, Hector is feeling confident; his older sister Marita, who excels at math, spent time at home helping him complete the assignment, the first he has finished this week.

② The teacher uses the next 15 minutes to review the 35 assigned problems for solving simple equations with one unknown variable. Mr. G. stands in front of the class asking for the answer to each problem and providing it if no one volunteers promptly. Twice, Hector tentatively raises his hand, as if to offer an answer; the teacher does not recognize him. The students correct their sheets and report how many they got right. Mr. G. then shifts to a 15-minute presentation at the blackboard on the finer points of solving one-variable algebraic equations. Hector begins to fidget during the explanation; his non-participating classmates are becoming louder and more noticeable. "I'm not very good at math," he explains in our later conversation. "Maybe Marita will help me."

③ The class ends with a period of seatwork— more practice solving for X. Seated at his desk near the rear of the room, Mr. G. enters homework scores into his grade book. Hector works sporadically at the seatwork task, but appears distracted by the small contingent of nonparticipating boys who spend the time engaged in unrelated talk. Mr. G. pays little attention, except to broadcast a general "Shh" now and again. At one point, Hector quietly seeks assistance from a nearby classmate, questioning her in Spanish. "No talking, please," says the teacher. Shortly, Hector and his classmates are headed out the door for Period 3.

④ After school, Mr. G. stands near the bus line, his typical Friday afternoon duty. He exchanges friendly barbs with some of the students waiting in line, and wishes each child a "good weekend" as they board. Walking back to the classroom, he reflects on the math lesson that transpired earlier. "Most of that class just doesn't seem to get it," he pines. A probe about instructional strategy indicates uncertainty on his part about his plan for teaching kids to solve for x. "Repeating the thing 'till they get it just doesn't seem to cut it," he reflects. When questioned about the progress of the non-participating group in the math class, Mr. G. intimates that he has tried hard to involve them and they "just don't respond; they don't seem to care about learning." But he feels an obligation to "plow ahead"; the state test is only three months away. (Knapp, Copland & Talbert, 2003, p.7-8).

Look at
inclusion
for these all have
'competence'
means.