

Student Identity & Agency in The Classroom

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Project & Goals

Working alongside a first students in a math class at Logan Elementary, we used ambitious teaching strategies to deepen mathematical understanding of students with low socioeconomic backgrounds.

Outcomes:

Students gained a conceptual understanding of first grade level math topics while being served in relation to their backpack full of experiences.

Background & Critical Issue

Background:

Brought about by a Gonzaga Field Experience for our EDTE 401 Math Methods Course.

Issue Addressed:

Mathematics education in a first grade classroom with varying levels of mathematics knowledge.

Logan Elementary

We worked with Logan Elementary in a first grade classroom. Our job as student teachers was to help develop students mathematical knowledge. Each student has a different socioeconomic background. During our time working at Logan Elementary we were able to use students socioeconomic backgrounds to help create mathematical lessons that each student was able to learn from.



Logan Elementary School Source: Map Quest

What We Did

Day-to-day: The three of us met in person with the first grade students twice a week

What we did: Helped students work through mathematical problems and at the end of the semester carry out our own mathematical lessons and activities. Our lessons took into account students backgrounds and experiences that could affect their learning and day-to-day interactions in the classroom.

Content: First grade foundational math skills including:

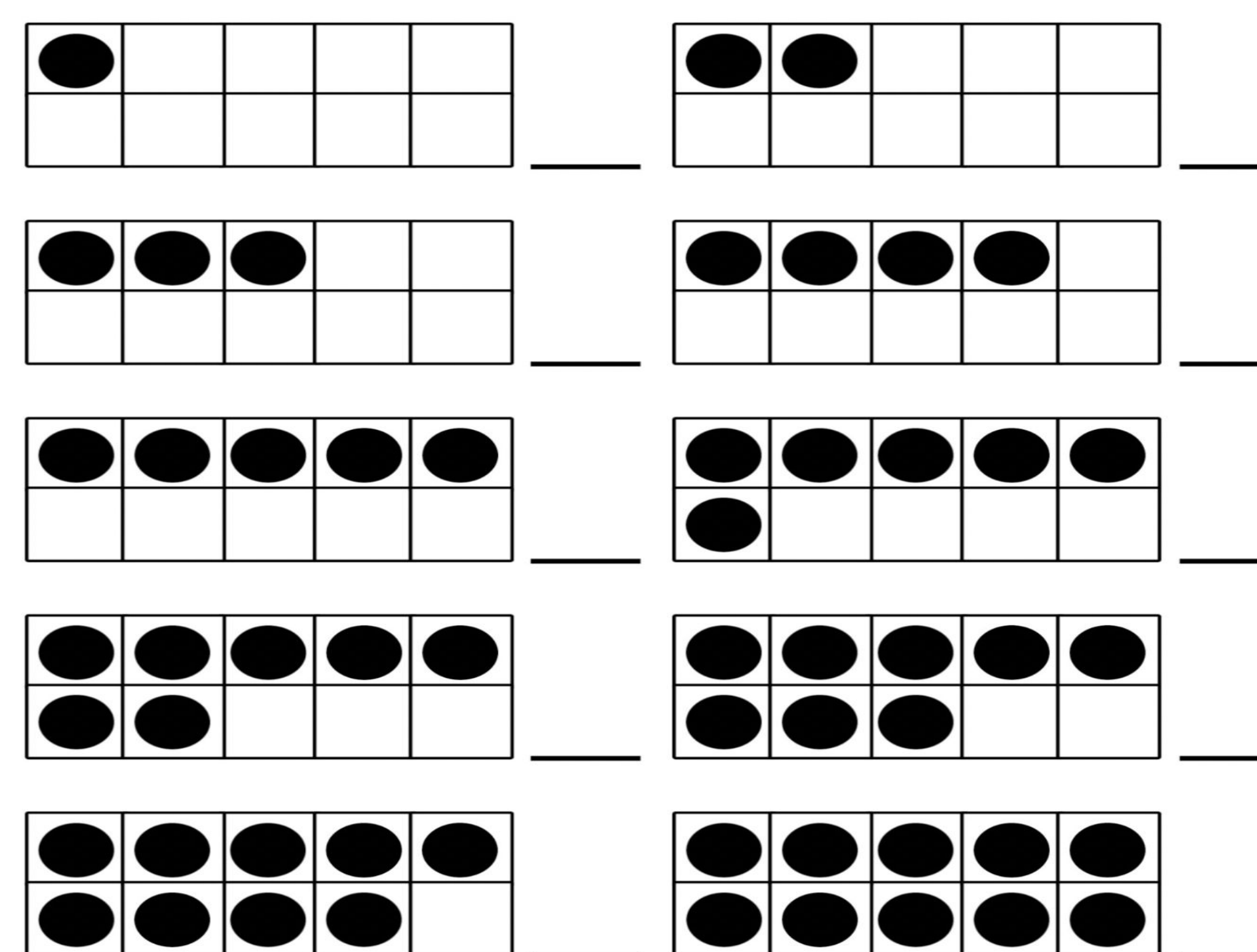
- numeral identification
- identification of ten frame quantities
- addition and subtraction

What was Accomplished: Students increased in math knowledge and understanding. Together we successfully implemented ambitious teaching techniques while keeping in mind student's backpacks and what they bring to school.

What We Learned

Students come into the classroom with an already packed backpack, each student is coming from different resources and prior knowledge. These student bases are created from their cultural backgrounds, their community, their family, their linguistics, their interests and their peers. These bases are what fills their "backpacks". Being in the classroom with students from all kinds of socioeconomic backgrounds allowed us to learn how to use their varying backgrounds to create lessons that students will learn from through ambitious teaching. We learned how to use different mathematical strategies and representations to help students understand how to add and subtract.

It is important to realize where your students come from and how you can make learning applicable to them. The students mathematical knowledge varied in this classroom. After being in classroom we were able to see how you can develop each students mathematical abilities even if they are not all working at the same place



Caption: 10 frames used for students

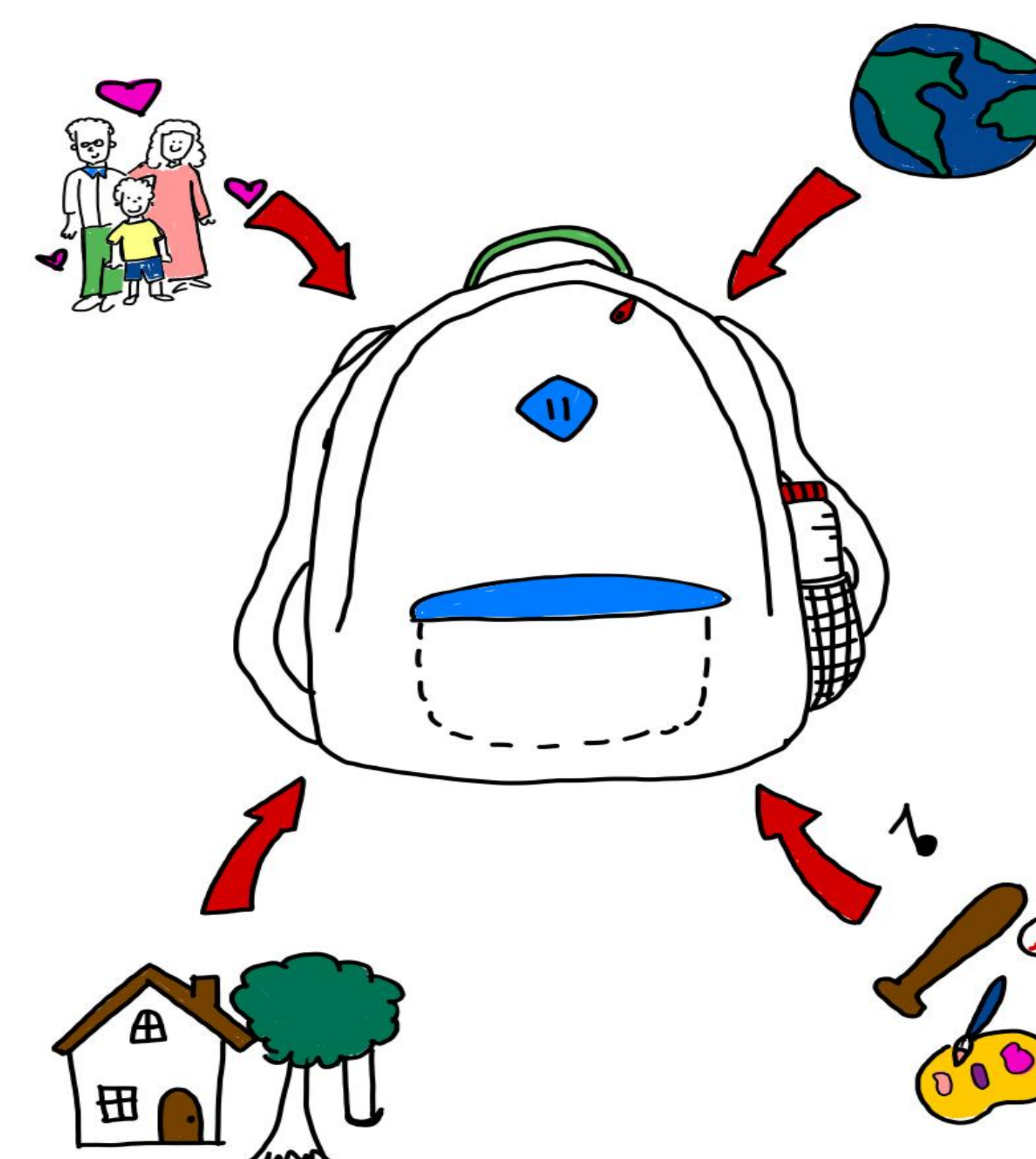


Caption: number sense flashcards used for students

What is Next

Using this experience to remember the importance of understanding each student's "backpack" and how we are able to help deepen their understanding of mathematical knowledge. We can these experiences to our future classrooms through ambitious teaching.

For the students, this experience strengthened their relationship with math, seeing themselves as capable mathematicians who can apply their knowledge to their community and beyond.



Caption: illustration of a student's backpacks

Civic Perspective

Our work with the Logan Elementary students helped us to understand the importance of accommodating learning that truly benefits the needs of our students who all have a different background. Learning should reflect the needs of the community and we were able to take student experience and use it to help us inform how we taught. We could then accommodate our lessons to make them beneficial for each student.

Project & Goals

We were able to fully understand the importance of being an ambitious teacher of mathematics, encouraging students to think conceptually about mathematical concepts. Applying understanding of multiple entry points, student experience, and positive mathematical discourse learned from our EDTE 401 course, helped us to put ambitious teaching as a priority for our future classrooms.

Project & Goals

We personally faced a lot of ups and downs learning how to best support our students in difficult situations. Each student we worked with had a different story, that we needed to respect and understand this. We used these experiences to formulate our teaching and be aware of knowledge the student would benefit from.