

Participant Observer Report: Dr. Alicia Curry
Date: October 8, 2021 [3:00 p.m. -6:00 p.m.]
UNCF Funded Project: Rising Up: Active Learning
Focus: Active Learning Strategies Public Research Lesson by Dr. Yulanda Clinton

CDC Guidelines Implemented: all attendees were tested onsite, spatial room arrangement, a limited number of participants, and masks were required

Before the Lesson

On October 8, 2021, Talladega College Education Department Innovation Center hosted the Lesson Study “Rising Up: Active Learning.” Dr. Clinton was the facilitator of the lesson study.

She explained that various active learning strategies were utilized to ensure she reached all the learning styles. The lesson would support the following active learning strategies: jigsaw, one-minute write, and exit tickets. Dr. Clinton also indicated she would utilize LessonUp to ensure that students are engaged and active participants during the lesson. This activity supported the Alabama Code of Ethics for Educators standards introduced in previous lesson studies.

Dr. Clinton used the inquiry question: “What does it take to be a teacher who is ethically committed to students?”

Before beginning the activity, Dr. Clinton asked the students to log in to the LessonUp platform. She modeled how to log in to the LessonUp program (process displayed on a large screen) and gave the students the code needed to log in to the LessonUp platform. Dr. Clinton introduced the lesson by sharing a brief video with the song “Don’t Worry Be Happy” playing in the background. The students were instructed to utilize their eyes to read the text during the video presentation because this was not an oral presentation. Dr. Clinton asked the students if they were familiar with the song playing in the background. Many of the students could not identify the song. She reminded the students if they are happy with what they are doing as teachers, they will complete tasks successfully and stay committed.

After watching the video, Dr. Clinton asked the following question, “What does the Code of Ethics mean to you?” The students entered their responses in LessonUp. After all the answers were entered in LessonUp, the students were given one minute to take the words and descriptions from their notes and enter the data into the digital graphic organizer Mind Map (a timer was utilized).

Excerpts of Student Responses from the Mind Map [What does Code of Ethics means to you?]

- Being Honest and Trustworthy
- Being Helpful
- Building healthy relationships between the teacher and students
- Honesty/Integrity
- Fairness/Truthful
- Working Together
- Effective Teaching
- Having a strong set of beliefs that will further learning in the children
- Moral Principles
- Code of Conduct
- Working with the whole child
- Following all the rules (state rules/codes)
- Standards set in place to guide how people perform

Participant Observer Thoughts

Dr. Clinton opened the lesson effectively by introducing the following: the active learning activities used in the lesson, connecting the previous lesson objectives with the current lesson objectives, integrating technology (LessonUp platform), integrating music, and incorporating the importance of ethics in various settings. The students appeared to understand the purpose of having a code of ethics. The students did not have any additional questions about ethics during the opening part of the lesson. In addition, Dr. Clinton also explained the importance of utilizing active learning activities that address multiple learning styles. By identifying your students' learning styles, the instructor can align curriculum needs with learning styles, which could increase/enhance learning outcomes.

When integrated into the curriculum effectively, technology revolutionizes the learning process for all students. Multiple research studies show that effective technology integration can impact students' learning. Dr. Clinton recognized the importance of technology and utilized the LessonUp platform to ensure her class was engaged during the lesson. By using class discussion, the students were able to: increase peer engagement, receive clarification, confirm/address misconceptions, and gain a deeper understanding by listening to various viewpoints.

Another essential component utilized in the lesson is inquiry questions. Through inquiry questions, students can investigate interesting curriculum topics by nurturing interests, empowering the students'

voices, developing formal/informal research skills, and taking an active role in the learning process. Inquiry-based learning allows students to create connections about their learning topics. One possible suggestion is to allow students to construct their own inquiry questions during student-led lessons.

During the next part of the lesson, Dr. Clinton refers to the inquiry question presented at the beginning of the lesson “What does it take to be a teacher who is ethically committed to students?” Dr. Clinton asked the students to answer the question based on what they had learned from the video. She instructed the students to write down their response to the inquiry question, and they will come back to that question at the end of the lesson. She reminded the students that her lesson study activities supported the previous two lesson studies. She explained her class activities would focus on teachers’ commitment to students. She encouraged the students to share what word(s) come to mind when they think about ethics.

Student Responses [What word comes to mind when you think about ethics?]

- Concern of mature value [the professor asked for clarity, but no student took ownership of the statement]
- The way a person behaves
- Morals that depict a person’s behavior
- Being held to a high standard and following the rules and principles of ethics [Dr. Clinton reminded the student not to define a word with the word]
- Governs a person’s behavior
- Expectations [the professor asked for clarity, and the student explained her thoughts well]
- A set of beliefs governing what is morally right and wrong
- Rules and moral principles

After the student responses were shared, Dr. Clinton shared the definition of ethics the class would use during the lesson study. “Ethics is a system of moral principles that govern a person’s behavior or the conducting of an activity.” She emphasized the importance of modeling ethical behaviors that we want our students to exhibit. She used practical examples in education to discuss how the teacher behaved ethically or unethical to support her discussion.

Dr. Clinton checked for understanding by utilizing a pre-teaching vocabulary discussion activity. She wanted the students to be familiar with keywords discussing ethics before their next activity. The following words were displayed on the screen: remunerative, fairness, role model, professionalism, confidentiality, trust, accountability, compassion, relationship-building, caring, integrity, commitment, unity, and expectations. After sharing the keywords, Dr. Clinton asked the students if any words needed to be defined. A couple of the students did not understand the meaning of remunerative. Dr. Clinton informed the students the keyword would be discussed briefly and shared the definition a few minutes later. Another student asked Dr. Clinton to define confidentiality. Dr. Clinton opened the question up to the class for a response before she shared her response. One of the students responded confidential means it is private. Dr. Clinton explained when something is confidential; you cannot share that information. As teachers, you cannot discuss personal info about students in the teachers' lounge, baseball field, park, or at a neighbor's house. She reminded the students that all teachers must abide by the Alabama Code of Ethics.

Participant Observer Thoughts [Pre-teaching Vocabulary]

Before completing the scenario activity, Dr. Clinton utilizes the pre-teaching vocabulary strategy to expose students to new or challenging vocabulary words. When instructors pre-teach vocabulary, they facilitate reading comprehension. Also, the students had an opportunity to address any misconceptions they may have about the keywords before activity instruction.

The next part of the lesson focused on three Alabama Code of Ethics for Educators standards related to student commitment. The three standards were posted around the room for the audience, but they were also posted at each group's table. The lesson focused on the following standards: Teacher/Student Relationship (Standard 4), Remunerative Conduct (Standard 7), and Maintenance of Confidentiality (Standard 8). Throughout the lesson, Dr. Clinton utilized a color wheel (a digital wheel that displayed each student's name) to select who would respond to the question. The students appeared very excited each time the wheel was used. Using the wheel kept the students' attention during the entire lesson because you never knew who name the color wheel would select.

Dr. Clinton selected various students to read each standard and asked the class follow-up questions to check for understanding. Dr. Clinton and the students used authentic examples to support their discussion. In addition, Dr. Clinton referred to articles about ethics in Lesson Study II conducted by

Dr. Robinson (article discussed standardized test information). She ended that part of the lesson by sharing a teacher's interview (interview with Mr. Jones) with the students that supported the importance of commitment to his students. Dr. Clinton shared keywords and phrases in the interview that supported Mr. Jones as a committed educator. She allowed the students to share their thoughts about Mr. Jones in LessonUp. She reminded the students that "kids don't remember what you try to teach them, but they remember what you are." "They remember what they see, they remember what they hear, they remember how you treat them. "Students don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

Participant Observer Thoughts

Throughout the lesson, Dr. Clinton used a wheel of names to select the student who would respond to the question. This is very useful in the classroom. The wheel of names allows a randomized opportunity for each student to participate. In addition, this activity supported student engagement because the students were eagerly waiting for the wheel to stop and reveal a random name for each question. Utilizing the wheel, allows the students to see the randomized nature of selection to know that the professor is impartial in selecting participants. The students could implement this activity during their clinical experiences in P-12 settings.

The next part of the lesson required the students to analyze educational scenarios to determine if the teacher was displaying ethical or unethical behavior. The students numbered off 1-4 until all the students received a number (modified Ten Minute Jigsaw Activity). The students constructed the groups according to their numbers. Dr. Clinton told the students to go to the appendices section C-F to view scenarios in their packets. Each group discussed their scenario and selected which standard they believed the teacher violated. The Expert Home Group Questions guided the activity (questions displayed on the screen). Although the students took notes on their Guided Note form, they also typed the responses in LessonUp. All the students returned to their homegroup. Due to lack of time, the Jigsaw directions were modified, all the responses to the questions were not answered. One group member was selected to read the scenario, but the group members could support the group presenter as needed.

Group 1 Focus: Electronic Communication with Students

Group 1 Findings: The group reported Standard 4 was violated because the teacher gave her personal phone number and email address to the students, leading to an inappropriate relationship. In addition, the students indicated

the teacher was discussing things that were not school-related, which could lead to an inappropriate relationship. Dr. Clinton discussed the importance of understanding the difference between caring and unethical behavior. Although the teacher's intentions seem good, the Alabama Code of Ethics was violated.

Group 2 Focus: Physical Contact with Students (Hugs/Pat on the Back)

Group 2 Findings: Most of the students in the group believed that Standard 4 was violated. However, one group member believed Standard 7 was violated and supported his justification.

Dr. Clinton reminded the group member that remunerative conduct usually involves a monetary value (paid or something tangible). After reviewing the scenario again, the student agreed with his group members that Standard 4 was the best selection for the scenario. The group explained that the teacher could lose his job because one of the students stated that Mr. Jones's hugs or physical contact made him uncomfortable.

Group 3 Focus: Student Confidentiality

Group 3 Findings: The group reported that Standard 8 was violated. The group members noted that the neighbor could have reported the incident, which could cause the school to be liable for damages. Dr. Clinton reiterated the importance of understanding you cannot share students' personal information with others. Indeed, this was a clear violation of Standard 8.

Group 4 Focus: Teacher Using Position for Personal Gain

Group 4 Findings: The group reported that Standard 7 was violated. The group indicated that the teacher could not use her job for personal gain and should not charge the students a fee because she is the teacher of the class. Another group member added if she charged students that were not in her class, the scenario would be different. Dr. Clinton also indicated that the teacher should not have utilized her work email for personal gain.

At the end of the activity, Dr. Clinton referred to the inquiry question shared at the beginning of the lesson: "What does it take to be a teacher who is ethically responsible"? Although Dr. Clinton returned to the inquiry question, time had expired. Due to lack of time, the students did not get an opportunity to review their responses to the inquiry question or complete the Exit Ticket Activity (Exit Ticket utilized later as a homework assignment). Students entered their final answers to the inquiry question in the LessonUp platform.

Lesson Extension (Led by Dean McKay)

I Wonder Would Happen If Activity

Activity Directions: Share the lesson's strengths and suggest how the instructor could improve the lesson. Start by stating, "I wonder what would happen if we tried." The students created a graphic organizer on chart paper to display their thoughts. The students had approximately 7 minutes to complete the activity.

Participant Observer Thoughts

During the last activity of the lesson study, scenario-based teaching allowed the students to explore the Alabama Code of Ethics in depth. Scenario-based teaching supports analytical thinking, collaboration, communication skills, and it can also build the students' confidence about the topic they are exploring. The students were highly engaged and connected the scenarios to personal experiences during their group discussions. Although time seemed to be a concern, the instructor could extend the time of the lesson or consider teaching the lesson across two days. Another possible extension could be to allow students to create scenarios. When instructors allow students to personalize learning, this encourages students to utilize critical thinking skills to solve problems and make informed decisions.

Overall, this was an excellent lesson. After Dr. Clinton completed her lesson, Dean McKay extended the lesson by allowing the students to reflect on the activity and share suggestions. Student feedback creates a welcoming academic environment for students. It also allows the instructor to improve/modify activities to develop as a professional educator. Student-centered learning environments develop autonomous learners, which supports lifelong learning.

Lesson Extension Student Comments

- If we did not do the Jigsaw and selected another activity (how would the lesson go?)
- Time Management
- More time for response needed
- Utilize the Exit Tickets
- Reduce the number of Jigsaw questions for this lesson
- Make a song about ethics to make it more memorable
- The lesson was exciting, and that is why we ran out of time
- Incorporate all the education majors
- Make the lesson longer
- Need more students to attend the Lesson Study
- Invite retired teachers or experts in the field

- Make a TikTok
- We do a lot of Jigsaw in other classes (select different activities to enhance the lesson)
- More student interaction
- Create an activity that involves the teacher and student (act out the scenario)
- Utilize open discussion so we can share our own experiences
- Make a game about students and ethics
- Each group select their standards and create their scenarios
- Invite a current educator that could utilize real-life examples of unethical behaviors

Dr. Clinton's Self-Reflection Comments

- The lesson went well, and the students were engaged and involved and paid attention.
- I enjoyed using LessonUp (an excellent presentation platform)
- LessonUp allowed you to move from pencil and paper to technology
- Lost track of time
- Changed items in the lesson plan the night before

Dr. Curry's Reflection Comments

- Lesson engaging
- Connections made to previous lesson studies
- Great integration of technology (LessonUp/Mind Map)
- Utilize the timer in various parts of the lesson to assist with time management
- Dynamic academic environment
- Resources organized
- Short Scenarios which kept the students engaged during the group discussion
- Allow the students to create scenarios utilizing the Alabama Code of Ethics Standards (integrates reading/writing and it supports the objective)

Dr. Hamptons Reflection Comments

- Integration of technology
- Allowed the students to work through various scenarios and then guided discussions
- Referred to Lesson 2 by utilizing information in Dr. Robinson's previous lesson study
- Greatest transference of the lesson (Lesson Extension)
- We are faced with ethical decisions

- What would you do differently if you had to do this lesson all over again? (students mention TikTok)
- We see ethical dilemmas on CNN all the time
- How do we read between shades of gray as educators?
- Real-life administrators deal with ethics everyday
- Can you live with the decision that you made? (You need to be able to answer the question firmly with a yes, but sometimes it is hard)
- As an educator, you take on various roles (parent/role model) because your students are coming from various home environments
- Technology allows us to find out everything (Instagram)
- Be mindful of your Facebook page (your students/parents may be viewing your page, which could lead you to lose your job if you are posting inappropriate content)
- Kids watch everything you do (watch how you carry yourself)