BUILDING STRONG FOUNDATIONS: EFFECTIVE MATHEMATICS TEACHING STRATEGIES IN THE MATATAG CURRICULUM

by:
Reicy L. Due
Teacher III, Daang Bago Elementary School

The Matatag Curriculum for Grade 4 in the Philippines emphasizes building a strong foundation for basic skills, focusing on deeper conceptual understanding, and fostering the development of critical thinking. When teaching Mathematics under this curriculum, the goal is to guide students through problem-solving, critical thinking, and the application of concepts in real-life situations.

Here are some effective teaching techniques and strategies for Grade 4 Mathematics using the Matatag Curriculum:

1. Use of Concrete-Representational-Abstract (CRA) Approach

The CRA approach is highly effective in helping students progress from hands-on, tangible learning to abstract mathematical concepts.

Concrete: Begin by using manipulatives like counting blocks, base-10 blocks, or even everyday items (coins, beans, etc.) to illustrate mathematical operations. For example, when teaching addition and subtraction, allow students to physically move objects to represent the numbers.

Representational: Once students are comfortable with the concrete objects, move to drawings, diagrams, and models. For example, use number lines or pictures to represent operations like addition or fractions.

Abstract: Finally, transition to using symbols and numerical equations. Students should be able to connect the physical representations to the abstract symbols and operations.

2. Problem-Based Learning (PBL)

In line with the Matatag Curriculum's focus on real-world connections, problem-based learning is an excellent strategy. It allows students to explore and solve open-ended mathematical problems that simulate real-life situations. For example:

Present a problem where students must plan a school event or organize a trip, requiring the use of addition, subtraction, and multiplication to manage money, time, and resources.

Encourage students to collaborate, discuss various strategies, and present their solutions in groups.

Benefits:

Develops problem-solving skills.

Enhances critical thinking and collaboration.

Encourages application of math in everyday life.

3. Differentiated Instruction

Every student has a unique learning style and pace, so it's essential to tailor the teaching methods accordingly.

For visual learners: Use diagrams, color-coded charts, and visual aids like videos to explain abstract mathematical concepts like fractions or geometry.

For kinesthetic learners: Incorporate hands-on activities, such as building geometric shapes using straws or paper to understand symmetry and area.

For auditory learners: Provide oral explanations, use math songs, or even group discussions to reinforce mathematical ideas.

4. Mathematical Journals

Encourage students to maintain math journals where they write down their thoughts, explain how they solved problems, and reflect on the lessons. This strategy:

Helps students internalize mathematical concepts.

Promotes metacognition, or thinking about their own thinking.

Supports students in connecting new ideas with prior knowledge.

In the journal, students could:

Draw representations of word problems.

Explain step-by-step solutions in words.

Reflect on the different strategies they used to solve a problem.

5. Interactive Technology Tools

Incorporating interactive technology tools can increase engagement and provide immediate feedback for students. Tools like Khan Academy, Google Classroom, and other math apps can help reinforce concepts. For example:

Use math games and apps to help with multiplication and division facts, or even to visualize fractions and decimals.

Use virtual manipulatives to represent number operations or explore geometry concepts like angles and symmetry.

6. Collaborative Learning (Group Work)

In the Matatag Curriculum, collaboration is essential for the development of communication skills. For mathematics:

Use group activities to solve multi-step problems or complex word problems. Group work allows students to share different approaches to solving a problem.

Assign peer teaching tasks where stronger students help others, reinforcing their own understanding of the concept while helping others learn.

7. Math Talks and Discussions

Incorporate math talks as a daily or weekly routine. During a math talk, present a challenging problem (related to the topic of the day) and have students discuss their approaches, strategies, and reasoning. Encourage them to explain their thinking clearly and to listen to their peers' ideas.

Benefits:

Strengthens mathematical reasoning.

Helps build oral communication skills in mathematics.

Promotes the exploration of different solution strategies.

8. Scaffolded Instruction

Scaffolding is crucial in helping students progress from simpler to more complex tasks.

Start with guided practice: Begin by solving problems as a class, allowing students to participate in every step. Ask leading questions that guide them through the process.

Gradually release responsibility: As students gain confidence, reduce your direct involvement and let them solve problems independently or in small groups, providing support only when necessary.

9. Use of Word Problems

Word problems help students connect mathematics to real-life contexts. Use word problems that involve:

Money and shopping scenarios for teaching addition, subtraction, and multiplication.

Measurement problems where students calculate area, perimeter, or volume.

Time-related problems to enhance understanding of time and scheduling.

By integrating word problems that reflect real-life situations, students can see the practical application of math in the world around them.

10. Assessment for Learning (Formative Assessment)

Assessment should be used as a tool for learning, not just as a measure of what students know. Frequent formative assessments can help guide instruction and give immediate feedback.

Exit tickets: At the end of a lesson, ask students to write down one thing they learned and one question they still have.

Quizzes: Short quizzes can help track understanding of concepts such as multiplication tables, fractions, or geometry.

Observations: Pay attention to how students approach problem-solving, their reasoning, and their ability to communicate their answers.

Using the Matatag Curriculum as a framework, it's important to emphasize active learning, critical thinking, and real-world applications in teaching mathematics to Grade 4 students. By applying varied techniques—such as the CRA approach, collaborative learning, technology integration, and hands-on problem solving—you'll create a dynamic

and supportive environment where pupils develop not just their mathematical skills, but also their self-confidence and their love for learning.

References:

https://www.prodigygame.com/main-en/blog/teaching-strategies/