

Guidelines for Watching Videos of Teaching

The teachers who agreed to be recorded in these videos have complex and challenging classrooms, just like you. When we watch videos of others it is easy to see things that we might do differently. It is then all too easy to move to a critical stance, focusing on what the teacher “should” have done differently. But we have found that such a stance is not helpful for learning.

These videos are not scripted or rehearsed. They are real classroom sessions. Remember that teaching is a complicated activity, in which the teacher is required to do many things at once. As you watch these videos, alone or with others, we recommend following the rules below:

1. Assume that there are many things you don't know about the students, the classroom, and the shared history of the teacher and students in the video.
2. Assume good intent and expertise on the part of the teacher. If you cannot understand his or her actions, try to hypothesize what might have motivated him or her.
3. Keep focused on your observations about what students are getting out of the talk and interaction.
4. Keep focused on how the classroom discourse is serving the mathematical goals of the lesson.