

Contextual Information: About My School & This Class

By Sandie Gilliam, Summer 2004

About My School

San Lorenzo Valley High School (SLVHS) sits among the redwoods of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Students mostly come from the communities of Felton, Ben Lomond, and Boulder Creek. While the school is not ethnically diverse, it certainly is economically diverse. SLVHS is the only high school in the San Lorenzo Valley Unified School District, which also includes 2 elementary school, 1 junior high, charter schools, and homeschool programs. Due to a lack of adequate state funding, the district recently closed two additional elementary schools.

More than ten years ago, this innovative high school adopted a block schedule for all classes. On Mondays of most weeks, students attend all 6 classes for 55 minutes. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, students attend their odd numbered period classes for 2 hours, and on Wednesdays and Fridays, they similarly attend even period classes.

About This Class

The students in the video are taking IMP 3, the third year of the college-preparatory mathematics Interactive Mathematics Program. There are 28 students in this class, which is made up of freshman through seniors. IMP uses an integrated mathematics curriculum. The IMP 3 students in the video are working towards solving a system of 12 equations in 6 variables.

About This Class Session: March 23, 2004

Since my school is on a block schedule, each of my math classes is 2 hours long. It is important, therefore, that each class period be broken down into different learning modalities for the students. The video from which this clip was taken consists of three different learning activities. In the first section, students are backwards mapping this 8-week unit, reflecting on the journey we have taken in order to have the skills and tools necessary to solve the unit problem. During the second part of the period, students are using logic in order to eliminate some of our constraints and simplify the work that they must do begin the solution.