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Navigator Reflection

In my classroom, some of my lessons may be geared toward usage of the TI Navigator system for TI-83 graphing calculators. This system allows for a classroom of students to connect their graphing calculators to a computer with a projection screen for classroom activities and pre-assessments. The Navigator activity that I have chosen to work with is the “Parallel Lines” Learning Check file as found at the following website: <http://education.ti.com/educationportal/activityexchange/Activity.do?cid=US&aId=1833>.

Furthermore, this activity covers the following SOLs:

- G.3 The student will solve practical problems involving complementary, supplementary, and congruent angles that include vertical angles, angles formed when parallel lines are cut by a transversal, and angles in polygons.
- G.4 The student will use the relationships between angles formed by two lines cut by a transversal to determine if two lines are parallel and verify, using algebraic and coordinate methods as well as deductive proofs.

The “Parallel Lines” learning check does an excellent job at providing an informal in-class assessment of students who are learning about parallel lines. The learning check provides a diagram of two parallel lines cut by a transversal. All of the angles in the diagram are labeled one through eight, and the learning check asks a series of questions about the relationships between these angles: whether the angles are equal, what their sums should be, what vocabulary word should describe the relation between two angles, etc.

The learning check is just that—an informal checkup on student understanding. Informal assessment is useful in the classroom since it allows a teacher the ability to gauge student understanding without committing students to a grade if they have not had time to fully process the material. Using the Navigator System for informal assessment is

one of the quickest means a teacher can use to determine how much of the class understands a given concept.

Most of the questions in the Learning Check are very short and to the point, but the last question in the file is a free-response. The question asks students why/when two vertical angles would be supplementary. I feel that open-ended response questions are important in pre-assessment since they give you a better understanding of student progress in understanding a concept. These types of questions round out the lesson for the students, and thus this activity is an effective means of review for the class.