Charity Beals  
Teaching Demonstration Reflection

Looking back on my teaching demonstration, I think about many things. To make myself feel less nervous, I thought of the class as the students I had on Jeju Island. In my lesson plan and teaching demo I thought about those students. I also thought, “How can I predict what kinds of language needs they have?” After hearing Dr. Brown’s comment that the teaching demo should have had more language, I completely agree. I wanted to put more language objectives in the demo. I had planned on writing the vocabulary on the chalkboard (thus the reason why I had the KWL chart on the other end), but I had completely forgotten about it until I only had 5 minutes left. If I did not have a time restraint, I would have stopped reading and went back over the strange and new words. I think in my nervousness I had forgotten that I wanted to write the words on the board as we discovered them. I am disappointed that I forgot about it. Although I covered many words, I forgot to write them out for the students. I remember doing this in Jeju, so I think I forgot because I was teaching in front of my classmates. I do acknowledge that it is very important.

Although I tried to view the classmates as ESL students, I failed, because otherwise I would have wrote the words down on the board and probably draw a picture if possible to explain the new vocabulary. Whenever students did not know a word in a reading in Jeju, I always ran to the dry erase board, wrote the word, and tried to draw a picture describing that word as well as explaining in simpler words. I wanted to do this in my demo, but completely forgot.

Language-wise I wanted to cover speaking, listening, writing and reading. I made sure I covered this in my TULP, but I think I neglected it in my demo. I had also wanted to have more group and visual activities, but felt that they would have taken up too much time in the demo.

Now that I think about it, I could have used the timeline in my TULP as a great activity that would cover all four spectrums. I could have printed out paragraphs about famous astronomers, have them read and make a little chart of the person, and put them together in a timeline after presenting their person. Oh well, that is what reflections are for. I know that I planned my demo with good intentions.

I think part of the reason why my demo lacked some language objectives because I am unsure of students’ needs. In a real classroom, at some point I could get a feel of
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what they would need, and be willing to explain in various ways to get the material across. I feel my language objectives are completely in the hands of my students, thus unpredictable. I need to put myself in an ELLs position—thinking about how strange some words and constructs are.

When watching the video, I think that I moved a little too much, due to my nervousness. I also read words wrong, did not make good eye contact with students, and often forgot to call students by their name, just saying “and you?” This nervousness definitely comes from having to demonstrate in front of Dr. Brown and classmates. I am a pretty calm person, so I tell myself not to be nervous, and to have confidence. I also tell myself this while getting a shot, but once I feel that needle, my whole body tenses up against my will. I think this is what happened concerning my nervousness.

In all of the demos, including my own, I really liked that the teachers could answer almost all questions. Being knowledgeable is very important. But it was only because I was interested in the material I decided to cover and studied up on it. I, too, was unsure of the difference between rotating and revolving until seeing a diagram. Because it was difficult for me, I wanted it to be clear to students. Through my own learning I am able to teach. This is what makes me sad about teachers who depend solely on textbooks and their answer sheets.

I also like the idea of reading a book and sharing connections to the book, which is Dr. Wooten’s idea. I have to admit, when Dr. Wooten gave us a demonstration about doing this sort of activity, I thought it would be stupid, since she would be reading a child’s book to adults. But then after we shared, I learned so much from other people’s experiences. So I thought it would still be appropriate to use for middle and high schoolers. They too may think that it is a stupid idea at first, and then hopefully when they share their connections they will be amazed by what they learned from one single book.

Another thing I forgot to do is present the objectives. I had put it in my lesson plan for the demo, but did not do it because I thought I would not have time, and (peer pressure) because the two teachers before me did not do it.

Lastly, the materials Anne-Todd used impressed me. I think one thing that detracted from my demo was a lack of colorful yet meaningful visuals and vocabulary
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with pictures (I had a book with good pictures, but that does not really help with vocabulary). Even if I am dealing with middle or high school, having a visual along with oral presentations of new vocabulary will help students of all learning personalities figure out meanings. I do not have access or experience with using “teachery” material since I have been out of a public school classroom setting for many years. I need to remember what kinds of materials did teachers use (visually) to help me learn things.

I am the kind of person that mostly learns from other peoples’ mistakes. However, since I accepted the task of being one of the first presenters, I also accepted the fact that I will make my own mistakes and reflect on them. In this kind of situation, it is very helpful (and not risky). I cannot say it was a bad or good experience, but definitely one with lots of learning about myself and my future students.