

Video Lesson Reflection

After a week of careful planning, I arrived at class ready to teach slope and the slope formula to a group of eighth grade boys and girls of mixed ethnicities. I was in high spirits and had great expectations for the day. The class went well, though not as well as I might have hoped. Videotaping that lesson helped show me my strengths, some of my opportunities to improve, and helped remind me of the importance of letting go.

I am confident that I know the content. I am firm in my knowledge that I know how to convey that content to others in a meaningful way. I have been doing it successfully for years as a math tutor. I am not intimidated by a group of students. I feel at home in front of them, and trying to impart on them some little piece of the knowledge I have gleaned over the years. I made a point to show the students what to include in their notes, and explain how they can use them to help them review and finish their homework. I took the time to break down and define, not only the key word slope but also the important terms that combine to make its definition, such as ratio, vertical, and horizontal. I even told the students why knowing these terms was important and related the terms to the students prior knowledge. I can relate to my students on a personal level. I am not afraid to make mistakes in front of them, and show them that it is ok not to be right the first time. These are my strengths in the classroom.

But for every good there is some not so good, and I had my share of those too. I have not been in a classroom of thirty students on a regular basis before. I know that I need to improve my classroom and time management skills. My mentor teacher simply yells for the students to 'be quiet and listen' when he wants their attention. This is what the students are used to. But my voice just doesn't carry over the crowd like his does. I need to find a method of getting the students attention that works for both my students and I. Also, bell-work and the correcting of homework during class take too long.

There was twenty minutes wasted at the beginning of the class period! In the future, I will watch the time closer and not be as quick to say, "They haven't finished yet. I'll give them a minute more."

Especially when I know they haven't finished because they didn't start for the first 6 minutes of the class period. I know that if I am more consistent in my expectations with this class that they will rise to the occasion.

I have to admit, watching the video of my lesson was difficult. Not because I did anything that seemed inherently bad, but because I let a golden opportunity slip away. I was so doggedly determined to impart on the students all the information that they needed to have to finish a pre-determined homework assignment (which I had no control over), that I didn't stop to reevaluate if they were ready for all that information. It quickly became apparent, even while teaching the lesson, that it was too much information for one class period. The concepts I was trying to teach needed to be broken up into two class periods in order for the students to truly understand the concepts and be able to use them as they continued further into the realm of linear equations.

I should have let go and given the students time to explore the concepts in small groups, instead of going through so many examples on the board with the class as a whole. I should have trusted my students that they could work together and explain to each other how this new concept worked. They have proven that they are intelligent, that they work well together, and that they do have the combined problem solving skills to take on new challenges. I was so concerned with the importance of the material that I couldn't relinquish control. I feel as if I did the students a disservice by talking through most of their class period, instead of letting them explain the concepts to each other. I will strive to improve on this in the future.

In the end, I am glad that I was given the assignment to videotape myself teaching. I learned things about myself that I don't think I would have learned otherwise. I can't wait to get in the classroom again and hone my strengths as well improve on my shortcomings.