

Reflective Journal

Since I was young, I love my teachers because they know a lot more than I do. They bring me to the interest and excitement from knowledge, especially those in Science. They also turn me into a more polite and approachable person with their efforts and love. Each time when I was asked about my career preference, I answered “teacher”. I would like to become a teacher who care for students’ personal growth and let them enjoy in the scientific knowledge.

When I first heard about the Learning by Engaging and Teaching (LET) programme, I was appealed by the programme because I did not only have the chance to think in the perspective of a science teacher, I could also have the opportunity to look into and experience how a science teacher thinks.

I have participated in the training workshop “Teaching and Learning series: Basic Teaching Skills Training for UG Science Students” conducted by Independent Learning Centre (ILC). In the workshop, I was told to complete a table about lesson planning. The table helped teachers think of how time should be spent such that the lesson could be facilitated to raise students’ interest and let them learn efficiently. At first, I was scared by the fact that teachers have to face this table before every lesson. This seemed to escalate teachers’ workload in a great extent. However, very soon, I know that this task will become less time-consuming when the teacher becomes more and more experienced and rich in scientific knowledge. This table would then become a rule of thumb in teachers’ mind to plan for their lessons.

In the workshop, we also had a chance to plan for a lesson with a topic that we were interested in. As a beginner, the planning was a hard job. I spent time on thinking how I should spend the time so that all concepts were included while students’ could learn them in a more interactive way. This time of difficulty reminded me that I should equip myself with more ways to interact with or raising attention of

students.

After the workshop, I met secondary school students as a laboratory demonstrator in a summer course for secondary school students. Some students were interested in the life in university while some students were more playful. As they were using apparatus that they have not seen before, I, as a demonstrator, had to give clear directions on how those apparatus shall be used. During the demonstration, I recognized two points. In terms of the demonstration skill, I reflected that I should pay more attention on the small details that beginners would not pay attention to. This idea is just like teachers elaborating more on common mistakes that students would usually make, which are created from the gap of learning and teaching. For example, in a Mathematics lesson, students may face the term “at least” and mistakenly think that it means “larger than” instead of “larger than or equal to”. Here, the role of a teacher would be to raise students’ attention to the correct use of the term through explicit elaboration or impressive interaction. The same idea could be applied to the laboratory demonstration where small details should be reminded explicitly or beware of. The second point was that students tended to listen to teachers more if the teachers sound more powerful and confident. I learnt to speak in a little more authoritative tone.

Originally, each student helper was responsible for one experiment. We would be facing students in 2 sessions. Some of the helpers raised the idea of following the same group of student and demonstrating different experiment by one single demonstrator. At that time, I agreed. Very soon, I doubted if I have made the correct decision. It was because I was not that well prepared for the second experiment. Again, I gained two points from the situation. Firstly, I should think twice before making decisions because they directly affect students’ learning. Secondly, quick response and adaption towards new environment are needed. This is true

because teachers need to face different types of students and new syllabus from time to time.

In short, although the duration of the events I engaged in were not long, I was reminded much about what quality I should acquire as a teacher and plan for events or seek for opportunities to gain those relative experience.

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Chemistry