

Reflective Journal

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Introduction

Albert Einstein once said "Learning is experience. Everything else is just information." That is what we believe before we join the LET program and things turn out to be great, fruitful and rewarding.

We were assigned to be demonstrators in a lab session in a program called "Science Academy for Youth Talent" offered by the department for the secondary school students. Remembering that we were quite uncertain about receiving this duty as we did not know how to express ourselves in a way that those secondary students would understand. Luckily, we had the chance to join the two programs, Teaching and Learning Course and An Experiential Learning Program, under the LET scheme.

An Experiential Learning Program

As the event is held by Faculty of Science, not only the student who are major in chemistry like us joined the event but also the student majored in other science subject, such as Biology, Physics, Mathematics, Statistic etc. We appreciated that the Faculty provided a platform for us to make friends with them because it is difficult for us to make friends in different majors. We joined different activities which held by the staffs in the camp and learnt soft skills together. We can share the impressive memories with them and strength our relationship.

As mentioned, we learnt many soft skills form the event. One of them is communication. As the weather was unstable afternoon, we had indoor- activities instead of outdoor one as planned. In one of the activities is that we had to make a helicopter model with sticks and joints provided but only one of us, CEO can read the whole picture of the product. Thus, the CEO had to send message to the "workers" through the "manager". From this activity, we learnt that communicate to other indirectly is difficult as the message cannot be completely sent to them as wish. The message maybe modified by the one involved in the message transmission and as the listener may not know the terms we had and fail to understand the real meaning which really wanted to pass. Just like in normal, people usually misunderstand what we said and this may cause negative effects in relationships. To solve the problem, effective communication is the key. Refer to the activity, we can set some terms between friends, classmates etc. and the message sent should be simple and clearly so that the real meaning of the messages can be sent out.

Another soft skill we learnt is trust. One of the activities is that we had to ring a bell 4

meters high one by one without any props. We had to support each one such as some of us serve as the support and some of us protect the one who were going to ring the bell. Finally, we did it and all of us were happy as we trust each other such as we trust someone will provide us a good support and we trust the other will protect us from falling even they fail to ring the bell. As this trust was built among us, we had not to worry about the other concern and mainly focus on the bell ringing. In life, we learnt that trust each other can make us push further than alone. In project making, if we trust our teammates that they will finish their part well, we have not to worry about them and mainly focus on our own part and put all our effort into it and do the job best. An impressive quoting is in my mind: Walking with friend in the dark is better than walking alone in the light. This reason behind the quoting is mainly about trust.



Teaching and Learning Course

Another workshop is called Teaching and Learning Course. One could learn about different teaching and learning situations in a classroom or in a lecture hall. The teacher taught us skills on how to express ourselves, how to manage the students and how to prepare to be ready to teach. One interesting little trick the teacher taught us was to use a piece of A4 paper to break a chopstick! "Impossible?" No! We did it and so did other students. Once again, one had to think as this is not magic it is logic! The teacher also taught us how to catch people's attention by raising our voice or by saying something hilarious. Besides, we had learnt how to deal with various behavioral problems of students and the qualities one should possess to be qualified as a good teacher.

Science Academy for Youth Talent

In the summer, we were demonstrators for Science Academy for Young Talent which was the program for students of the Middle School. We encountered several problems. Regarding the experiment we demonstrated, it was an experiment to analysis the iron content of Spinach. During the experiment we demonstrated, some students was prefer to playing as for fun rather than take it seriously for learning. To overcome this problem, we roughly introduced the purpose of experiment and how to do it. Also, we set some regulations that they should obey. For example, it is not good to play in the laboratory as it is very dangerous. The reason why we thought it was work was the students were concerned about their safety.

The second thing we done was that to enhance their interest in the experiment. Since there were many instruments that they had not seen those before, we roughly talked about the function of the instrument and how it does help analyze the content that they measured. Also, we let them imagine if they were the ones who were in charge of checking the quality of Spinach. Therefore, they could take it seriously for learning but not just for fun.

Nowadays, more and more secondary students are more dependent. What we could do was we always ask "do you understand and tell me what you understand". We think enhancing the effectiveness of learning is to think the problem and solve the problem by ourselves. Therefore, in the experiment, we always asked what the next step was and what reaction when performing this experiment.

Conclusion

It is, of course, useless to just theorizing. Thus, with what we had learnt during those two workshops, we had utilized the skills that we had acquired when being demonstrators. As William Arthur Ward said "The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires." During the lab session, we had told the students about the instrument in the lab, explained how it worked, demonstrated

how the principle applied and inspired them that they also had the potentials to study in the university. We might not be the great teachers suggested by Sir Ward, but at least we were a friend to the students so that they were willing to listen to us and interact with us. Another crucial thing about teaching is to show your patient and understanding. To be patient means to hold back your inclination to some bad emotions. All one have to do is to bear in mind that whenever a student asks a question, that means he or she is baffled by it and it is the teacher's responsibility to rescue them out of the deep dark well. Last but not least, this is a wonderful and memorable experience. Everything in this program had widened our horizons in different perspectives and we believed our communication skills have been improved. It is nice to have written this reflective journal to retrieve some memories and to work as a team once again.