

LET Reflective Journal (Individual Report)

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In 2015, I served as the demonstrator for various life science courses offered to secondary students, including those who are members of Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education. Throughout the year, there were four courses which I was involved. The courses were about Hong Kong ecosystems, oceans, bionics and also modern biotechnology. I enjoyed being one of the course demonstrators because I learned a lot from the course as well as other course demonstrators, and even the students themselves. Besides, I made friends with other demonstrators who come from different departments, such as biochemistry and environmental science. Some of them are even postgraduates and they taught me the teaching skills and also time management skill, so that the course can proceed smoothly. Furthermore, I am very glad that I become good friend with the students of my group. We chit chat and even exchange our contacts. I was like their “big sister” who gives advice to them and also play with them during the free time of the course. I had so much fun not only from the course itself, but also the interaction between me and the students.

Although I had a really great time serving as the course demonstrator, there were also difficulties that I had to face and solve accordingly. First of all, I somehow felt embarrassed because of getting no response from the students when I tried to chat with them. I did not get along with the students well every time when I first met them even though I could achieve that for most of the time. Sometimes, I had to try my best to start a conversation based on a topic that could arouse their attention and interest, but then I failed. However, I can always get along with the students well after meeting them for two to three times. I think it is a must for me to be patient in order to get close with them. If I easily give up after I have tried for a few times, I am sure I would never become good friends with them. Furthermore, being friendly and cheerful is the key to help me to stay close with the students. By doing so, all of us enjoyed the learning of the course very much.

On the other hand, one of the difficulties that I faced was the dead air moment during the course, especially the tutorial session. Although all the course materials have been well prepared by the course convener, we, the demonstrators, still have to prepare for the tutorial session which starts right after every lecture. We are expected to be not only familiar with the course materials, but also to lead the discussion among the groups. Nevertheless, students may somehow be too shy and are not willing to say a word or ask a question. At that moment, as a demonstrator, it is a big difficulty for me. It is much more difficult to start a discussion than to simply teach the students some basic knowledge or key concepts that they are expected to know after attending the course. To solve this problem, I have to spend more time on going through all the course materials, in order to have a good grasp of the key concepts and that I can ask the students questions and then teach them during tutorial session even when no one is willing to participate in a discussion. Therefore, the tutorial session will not be a waste of time and that is what I have done to solve the difficulty.

Since I was not in Hong Kong when the LET training workshop was held, I could not comment on the effectiveness of it. However, I participated in the training camp held in July and I find it very useful for my performance of being a course demonstrator. During the training camp, there were various activities or tasks that you could not finish without the help from others. Thus, this allowed me to realize how important it is to have good communication with my groupmates, so that everyone in a group can come to a consensus and achieve the same goal together. Other than good communication skill, leadership skill has also been trained during the day camp. By having good leadership skill, it does not mean you can easily order your groupmate to do anything for you. What it truly means is that your groupmates are willing to work for you and achieve the goal that you have set. A good leader should be a person who can tell others what to do but at the same time listen to what other say and give respect to everyone. Just like being a course demonstrator, everything cannot proceed smoothly if I have no communication with my groupmates or have no leadership skill demonstrated in front of the students. Since two course demonstrators are responsible to take care of one big group, it would be a disaster if I could not cooperate well with my partner and the class order would not be

maintained, and we could not give the best to the students. As a result, the experience that I got from the training camp definitely helped me a lot.

The experience from the LET training camp and most importantly that from being a course demonstrator help me a lot. Since I am passionate and interested in pursuing my career in the education field, serving as a course demonstrator allows me to give a try on teaching students. Throughout the whole course, I learned how to teach students with a professional yet friendly attitude, so that students would be willing to listen to you and follow your instructions. Besides, I also enhanced my communication as well as leadership skills through the collaboration with other demonstrators and demonstration of basic lab techniques during the lab session. Other than the experience of being a course demonstrator, the experience I get from the LET training camp also helps me as mentioned in previous paragraph. All these not only increase my interest in education, but at the same time allow me to better equip myself for future challenges and opportunities to get involved in education work.

In conclusion, this year has been a life-changing year for me. I have never imagined that I could have a chance to be one of the course demonstrators. I am so glad to be able to participate in this year's LET programme which facilitates my work to a very large extent. Everything just comes to me in the perfect timing. I am thankful for having all these opportunities which better shape my future and I have become more and more determined to pursuit my career in the field of education. I will treasure every chance to teach because I really enjoy the process and noticing the changes in the students, especially when they become more interested in studying biological science. I count this as my little achievement and I wish I could achieve more in the near future.

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