**Peer Tutoring Sample Journal**

# **What are some effective teaching strategies of the teacher?**

* Uses PowerPoint notes
  + Contains diagrams (visual)
  + Has point form summary (verbal)
* Periodic hands-on labs
  + For kinesthetic learners
  + Allows students to apply the skills they have learned
* Occasional demonstrations
  + For visual, kinesthetic learners
* Takes time to answer questions, even if slightly off-topic
  + Keeps students engaged
  + Helps create relationships of science topic to real-life situations
* Gives other students chance to participate in discussion
  + Occasionally limits students who have already participated

# **2.) What strategies worked and what didn't?**

* Problem: learning *all* the student’s names
  + Worked: asking to hand out the tests
    - Got to see all the names at once
  + Didn’t work: Observing classroom discussions
  + Worked: focus on a few kids each class
    - I would visit them more often during the class
* Problem: not giving the full answer to a question
  + Worked: re-read the question out loud to them and rephrase it so they know what the question is looking for
  + Sometimes worked: referring them to the correct textbook section
    - Students sometimes couldn’t find it
  + Worked: passing on the question to the teacher
    - If it was a question that I wasn’t sure of myself or I thought I wouldn’t be able to explain well, I would pass along the question

# **3.) What are the ways in which the relationship with the students change?**

I started off the year with no relationship at all with the students. When I first walked into the classroom and saw the Grade 8s I had no clue about their maturity. I found that it was hard to take my experiences of Grade 8 and apply it in a teacher’s perspective. During the first few weeks, I relied heavily on body language and incidental cues to quickly determine each student’s personality. I felt bad for categorizing the students into broad groups because I was aware that each student was unique. But this was a really crucial part of getting to know the kids because I had never met them before.

In the beginning, I think I felt what a new teacher would feel: having everyone (or almost everyone) know your name but not knowing theirs. At the beginning there was some stiffness, and most kids ignored me, but after October both I and the students seemed to be more comfortable with each other. Some of them are comfortable asking me questions, while others prefer to ask [teacher] instead.

# **4.) What cues have I picked up from body language?**

Because I didn’t know the students at all, I relied on body language to identify their personalities. The best way to do so is to have one-on-one conversations and such, but in a classroom setting this is almost impossible. The only thing that was available was body language and I noticed that I intuitively picked up on them.

Some of the assumptions I made at first were pretty biased, like thinking that the people who sat at the back were mischievous. In the end it did seem to apply to some of the kids, but not all of them. I realized the importance on not attributing a person’s actions to his/her personality too much, and realizing that the behaviour might just be from the situation. For example, one of the students in the class had a writing impairment that made it hard for him to form neat letters. If I didn’t know about it beforehand, I might have attributed his messy writing to his personality and assume he was unengaged and uninterested in the course. This could have led to negative assumptions that wouldn’t benefit either one of us.

# **5.) What insights does tutoring brings to my own learning?**

Being able to participate in a class where I was not the student is an amazing opportunity, because I see the content from a teacher’s perspective. It really helps that I am taking psychology this year because I am starting to analyze behaviour a lot more. Being able to watch interactions between student and teacher from a third-person, perspective helps me understand the needs of each. One thing that stood out to me was the multitasking that teachers did. When [teacher] needed to transition to the next part of the lesson plan, she would do whatever was needed while she was talking so there would be a seamless transition. It was a habitual action that I didn’t notice until now.