

Preparing for the Teaching the Lesson Project

In this narrative, I will reflect upon the teaching of this particular lesson specifically how I supported and engaged my students during this class. I will discuss how I promoted a positive learning environment and how I engaged all students in their development of understanding of the lesson. This narrative will also include things I would change about the lesson delivery and things I would want to improve upon in the future.

Promoting a positive learning environment is very important in order to cultivate an environment in which students feel safe to learn and feel comfortable making mistakes along the way. Some specific ways I promoted a positive learning environment in this class in particular include starting off class with a smile and asking the students how their week is going. This lesson is special in that this was the first class period this year in which students actually got to stand up and start moving in the space.

Moving or dancing can be an uncomfortable experience for some. To make them feel more comfortable, I did all the movement activities with them and gave them all an opportunity to participate. I also encouraged a positive learning environment in this class by providing positive feedback as well as constructive critiques. I also taught proper etiquette on how to watch and support one another in dance class.

My instruction in this lesson strived to engage all students by initially presenting the material in several different ways. In this class, we listened to the song that many students struggled to count the day before. I clarified the proper way of counting this

particular song for all the auditory learners. I then explained the same song example with a visual illustration on the white board for all the visual learners. We then did a physical activity for all the kinesthetic learners.

The ability to listen and counting music, physically interpret the music, and dance on the counts is an imperative skill to have as a dancer. Giving all students the opportunity to participate in the physical application of their understanding of this concept will help develop their ability to perform dance sequences with musical accuracy. This also encouraged student engagement because all students were participating.

Students got several opportunities to march to the beat of a song, clap to the beat of a song, and march to the beat and clap on the downbeat of a song. All songs in 4/4 time signature. We then did several activities with songs in 3/4 time signature. Students had the opportunity to clap to a 3/4 song in sixes and they also practiced swaying initiated by the downbeats. We also practiced counting how many sets of eights and sixes in a segment of music. Students were all engaged with all the physical activities.

During this lesson, as well as using information from the previous lesson, I used several students' responses and questions to promote thinking and understanding of this material. The first set of responses I used was from the lesson the day before. The students completed a Schoology Activity stating whether the given songs were in 4/4 or 3/4 time signature. The responses elicited what I should be focusing on the following

day. One song in particular, the students struggled to count and determine the correct time signature.

Many times throughout the lesson, I asked for questions. One student asked about the different types of time signatures we would be using in this class. I replied that we would only be using 4/4 time signature and 3/4 time signature. I used this question to segue into the idea that as dancers we generally are not looking at the sheet music for the songs we are using. Because of this, many times we are just using our best judgement to determine the time signature so that we know whether to count the song in eights (4/4 time signature) or in sixes (3/4 time signature). I mentioned that a song we count in sixes may not be 3/4 time signature but may in fact be 6/8 time signature but for the purpose of our class the most important thing is that we know whether to count in eights or sixes.

In general, I do my best if a student raises a question that brings up an important idea that has not been addressed to the entire class, to make sure that I answer that question in a way that everyone can hear me. In the same way, if I have several students ask me the same question, clearly I did not do a great job giving all the vital information. In that case, I will also get the attention of the entire class to share that question and answer. Also, I use the students to help answer other student questions. If I know I have covered something in the lesson and a student asks a question about it, I may see if another student would like to answer the question for his/her peer.

Overall this lesson was very successful and I think the students were engaged and learned the intended objectives. In future, a few things I will take more time developing for this lesson include explaining the misconception equating slow tempo with 3/4 time signature upfront so students don't make that mistake. This was the biggest reason so many students missed one of the songs in the Schoology Activity the previous day. Also, pacing is still something I am working on. Figuring out how much time each concept or activity takes to teach and complete. I had planned to introduce "and" counts in this lesson as well but we did not have time to even start that new concept. Most important thing is to base pacing off the students and be prepared to adjust lesson plans as needed.

Also, I still need to work on balancing giving all the information for an activity before the students start moving and working on the activity with physically walking the students through the movement part of the lesson so they know what I am talking about. Because movement is new for many of these students, just explaining it and not showing them, is not efficient for them. It is more helpful if they are able to see what they are going to be doing but also when they start moving without direction students tend to lose focus. It is all about finding the balance for each lesson.

Considering the big picture this was a successful lesson in which students were addressing the learning intentions for the day and meeting the success criteria. Students were engaged throughout the lesson and deepening their understanding of the concepts. This included the physical application of the meaning of beat, downbeat, and

time signature. Although this was a successful lesson there is always room for growth. I will continue to frequently reflect and adjust my lessons as needed.